

Using Soft Skills in Non-Formal Education

GBM2/WP9

Manual *Using Soft Skills* *in Non-Formal Education*

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this working paper is to seek the Governing Board's support in the pilot use of the manual "*Using Soft Skills in Non-Formal Education*" in interested SEAMEO Member Countries.

BACKGROUND

2. In October 2015, SEAMEO CELLL attended the workshop "Using Concept of Soft Skills in Non-formal Education" jointly organised by DVV International, Non-government Education Partnership - Cambodia, and PRIA (Participatory Research in Asia). The workshop was "a great success and provided the participants new insights to take home," according to a DVV International representative (cited in "Capacity Building Workshop").
3. To follow up, in February 2016, DVV and PRIA arranged the workshop "Regional Training of Trainers on Using Soft skills in Non-formal education" in Phnom Penh, Cambodia with the attendance of 17 experts from the region. The content of the training consists of (a) the concepts of soft skills, (b) perspective on adult learning and participatory training, (c) training methods in participatory training, and (d) team building, leadership, decision making, communication and collaboration and conflicts in teams. The SEAMEO CELLL staff who participated in the workshop acquired many useful skills within this intensive workshop and found the knowledge obtained suitable to use in the context of adult education in Vietnam.
4. The success of these workshops on soft skills development was due in large to the relevant contents that meet the needs of modern work and personal life. It helps provide an understanding of interpersonal communication skills, of decision making and leadership; and of

negotiation skills besides other skills like team working. The workshop material was thus useful because “the development of soft skills education, in particular entrepreneurial skills, personality skills, and social skills are very important and need to be developed.” (Hikmah, 1)

5. The important role of soft skills can be traced back to the 1996 Delors Report, where two of the four pillars - Learning to be (interpretative skills), Learning to live together (relational skills) – are clear indicators of the necessity of soft skills for functioning coherently and harmoniously in society.
6. Another key to the workshop success is the fact that the material is built upon participatory training methodology, which is central to adult education today as it has been found that adults learn best when the learning is relevant to their needs and when they are actively involved in the learning process. (PALDIN, 120)
7. The methodological and content values of the workshop material is proven in the fact that it is now available for download from much-trusted CLCPedia, an online resource by UNESCO.
8. Having recognised the usefulness of the material, SEAMEO CELL has requested permission from PRIA to put the workshop material into pilot use in Vietnam. For better dissemination nationwide, we are translating the manual into Vietnamese.

SCOPE

9. *Using Soft Skills in Non-formal Education* is a training manual for facilitators. It contains two sections. Section 1 focuses on the relevance of soft skills in non-formal education and use of participatory training methodologies in training on soft skills as opposed to the traditional method of training. It emphasises the effectiveness and efficiency of involving learners as knowledge seekers through real experience or simulation in the learning process.
10. While Section 1 is towards the theoretical aspect of soft skills, Section 2 presents a logical mix of readings and activities that serve as samples of class activities used to enhance understanding of various facets of present-day work life. (see Appendix: Table of contents)
11. In general, the manual is developed with an aim to equip facilitators in non-formal education with:

- knowledge of the concepts of soft skills like teamwork, leadership, decision-making and interpersonal communication, and
 - practical sample skills exercises for training soft skills that facilitators can apply in their teaching context and build upon.
12. This manual is free to use and it was developed to suit the Southeast Asian learners.
13. Considering its merits, we recommend putting the manual into wider use in interested SEAMEO Member Countries.

JUSTIFICATION

14. PRIA has engaged itself in participatory research for more than 30 years, and developed Participatory Training methodology. The methods within this umbrella methodology have proved their advantages over conventional methods of adult teaching and learning as they are based on insights into adult learning.
15. Soft skills have over the past 20 years emerged to become as important, if not more important, than specific job-related skills. According to results of research by Harvard University, the Carnegie Foundation and Stanford Research Center, 85% of job success comes from having well-developed soft and people skills, and only 15% of job success comes from technical skills and knowledge (hard skills). ("The Real Skills Gap.")
16. This manual, utilising the participatory training methodology, and presenting soft skill concepts and practice, will make an effective training material for facilitators who want to improve their capacity in the role of teacher.

IMPLICATIONS

17. This manual if used in train-the-trainer workshops is expected to bring about changes in facilitators' concept and practice of adult education.
18. This manual if translated¹ into the native languages of SEAMEO Member Countries will facilitate reading and enhance the professional development of facilitators at CLCs and other non-formal education centres, and serve as a resource of activities and exercises for soft skill training.

¹ SEAMEO CELLL has translated the manual from English to Vietnamese. Translation work has been done in LaoPDR and Cambodia too.

REQUESTED DECISION

19. The Governing Board is requested:

- a. to support the dissemination of the said material for pilot use in interested member countries, and
- b. to encourage local relevant agencies to translate the material into interested countries' native language so that the skills and knowledge can be disseminated to facilitators whose English competence is not sufficient for thorough comprehension of the text.

Work Cited

“Capacity Building Workshop On Using Soft Skills In Non-Formal Education”.

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Hikmah, Nurul and Sarti Hafsyah Siregar. “Development of Soft Skills Education in Non-formal Education to Indonesian Society”.

PALDIN. *Participatory Lifelong Learning and Information and Communication Technologies*. New Delhi: School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University.

“The Real Skills Gap.” *National Soft Skills Association*. 8 April 2016. Web. 22 September.

**APPENDIX: Table of contents of
USING SOFT SKILLS IN NON-FORMAL EDUCATION**

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