

NEWSLETTER ANTRIEP

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The Network

The educational management structures have grown in size over the years and the recent trends towards decentralisation have broadened the range of actors requiring new management skills. These include top level decision-makers and planners, implementors at the Ministerial departments, provincial and district authorities, local level functionaries, institutional heads, NGOs, etc. Developing a critical mass of skilled manpower at all levels is an essential precondition for improving management of education system. Such capacity building activities can be initiated and sustained only through development of a strong institutional framework.

Several institutions in Asia are involved in training and research in educational planning and management. Most of the institutions help their national governments in planning and implementation

of various educational programmes and schemes. However, there are not many occasions when these institutions meet among themselves and share their experience and expertise. Increased interaction and cooperative ventures among these institutions may be a rewarding experience to effectively harness the capacity-building potential within the region. Unfortunately, there is no established mechanism to facilitate interaction and to share expertise. The International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), Paris took initiative in this direction.

In December 1994, the International Institute for Educational Planning, Paris (IIEP) in co-operation with UNICEF organised a workshop on Decentralised Management of Primary Education in Kathmandu, Nepal. A number of research and training institutions from various Asian countries participated in this workshop. During discussions, these institutions realized the usefulness of such meets and expressed the desirability of evolving a system for having regular formal meetings and exchanges to share experience and expertise in the area of educational planning. This is how the Network concept came into being and formed the basis for the network activities. Based on the deliberations of this workshop a proposal was developed for the network activities.

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As a follow up to the Kathmandu workshop, the First Annual Meeting of the Network was held at NIEPA in New Delhi from 05 to 09 December 1995. The Meeting brought together 12 institutions from 8 Asian Countries (Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Korea, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) and the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), Paris. The theme chosen for the First Annual Meeting was Decentralised Management of Primary Education and Capacity Building.

Apart from the discussions on the main theme, the annual meeting decided that the Network should formally be known under the acronym ANTRIEP (Asian Network of Training and Research Institutions in Educational Planning), and that the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA), New Delhi would act as a 'focal point' for the Network activities in the initial years.

Network Objectives

The overall objective of the Network is to create synergy between participating institutions to reinforce their capacities to respond to the growing and increasingly diversified needs for skill development in educational planning and management in the region.

More specifically the Network has the following operational objectives:

(i) to ensure regular exchange of technical information among the network members about specific issues relating to capacity building in educational planning and management;

(ii) to facilitate continuous upgrading of knowledge and skills among the professionals of the participating institutions through learning from each others experience; and

(iii) to help launch research and training activities in the areas of common interest.

Network Activities

It is envisaged that the ANTRIEP objectives will centre around the following areas:

1. Exchange of publications and other relevant information among member institutions.
2. Exchange of professionals in the form of short-term study visits, resource persons in on-going programmes etc.
3. Organisation of annual meetings of professionals of member institutions.
4. Launching collaborative activities among countries on themes of common interest.
5. Bringing out of ANTRIEP Newsletter twice a year, the focal point being responsible for the publication and distribution of the Newsletter.

Many of these activities require resources which need to be mobilised from internal and external sources. At present the ANTRIEP activities are receiving support from UNICEF, ODA and IIEP. The IIEP will provide academic and technical support to the network until it becomes self-sustained and self-directed. It is expected that other agencies will also join.

The membership of the Network is open to all Asian Training and Research Institutions involved in Educational Planning and Management. There is no membership fee. The member institutions are encouraged to inform other institutions interested in becoming members. Member institutions remain members by merely taking part in network activities. Any institution which may like to be a member may please contact IIEP or NIEPA.

ANTRIEP Activities

The first Annual Meeting of the Network (ANTRIEP) was organised Jointly by NIEPA and IIEP with funding support from UNICEF and ODA. This meeting was attended by 17 participants (including faculty members from the organising institutions) from 12 institutions of 8 Asian countries and resource persons from Bangladesh, India and Nepal.

The meeting chose NIEPA as the focal point to coordinate ANTRIEP activities in the region for the initial years. The IIEP will continue to provide academic and professional support to the network until it becomes self-sustained and self-directed. The activities initiated by the Network during the period from January to June, 1996 are in the following areas.

The follow up activities of the Network include: (i) preparing a brochure on the ANTRIEP; (ii) exchanging documents and information among the participating institutions; (iii) bringing out an ANTRIEP Newsletter twice a year; (iv) organising regular annual meetings in different member countries; and (v) initiating steps to facilitate the Network activities.

The preparations for the brochure were initiated immediately after the Delhi meeting. IIEP and NIEPA corresponded with the member institutions to get more detailed information about them. In fact during the first annual meeting a format for providing information was discussed and finalised by the participants. All the institutions responded positively and provided information on the missions, staff strength, their funding sources etc. Based on these information, brief profiles were prepared on each member institution and presented in the brochure.

The brochure has already been printed and circulated among the member institutions and other interested agencies.

Apart from this, some of the institutions had sent various other documents pertaining to their respective activities and functions. These included reports of certain workshops, information on research studies and Newsletters. It is interesting to note that many of the institutions do bring out Newsletters on a regular basis. These Newsletters which provide valuable information on the ongoing activities of the respective institutes are to be circulated among all the member institutions. All institutions concerned are requested to send these Newsletters directly to all the members of the Network.

The first annual meeting decided that the Network should bring out ANTRIEP Newsletter twice a year. As the focal organisation, NIEPA developed a format for the Newsletter. The format of the Newsletter was further discussed and finalised in another IIEP-NIEPA meeting held on 05 June, 1996 at NIEPA, New Delhi. Accordingly, it was decided that: (i) the Newsletter should be small in size; (ii) it should contain a write up on the ANTRIEP activities initiated during the period covered by the Newsletter; (iii) it should contain a substantive contribution on a specific theme prepared by any one of the ANTRIEP member institutions; (iv) it should highlight some of the important forthcoming regional training/ workshops/seminars and programmes to be organised by the member institutions; and (v) it should highlight some of the research completed by the member institutions. The topic selected for next Newsletter is Decentralised Planning and Management of Primary Education.

The present Newsletter, contains a write up on the ANTRIEP activities during January-June 1996 and an overview of training programmes organised by the member institutions. This being the first issue of the Newsletter, it also contains a brief introduction to the Network and addresses of member institutions of the Network.

NIEPA was in correspondence with the member institutions to get information. While responses were reasonably good regarding general information, they were however, slow to come in as far as information on the forthcoming international or regional programmes were concerned. It could be due to the fact that some of these institutions might not be organising such programmes. Based on the information available, an attempt has been made in this Newsletter to provide a write-up on the trends in training programmes in the area of educational planning and management organised by the member institutions. It is our hope that more and more information will be available on training and research activities of the member institutions in the months to come. And we may be providing information on forthcoming regional programmes to be organised by the member institutions in the subsequent issues of the Newsletter.

One of the decisions of the December 1995 meeting concerned holding of regular annual meetings. It was tentatively agreed that the theme for the next meeting would be on teacher supervision and support services to improve primary education. The IIEP has taken steps to facilitate the organisation of the next meeting, which will be hosted by the Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI), Seoul, in April 1997. As part of the preparations for the next meeting, the IIEP has already initiated steps to collate country experiences in the area of supervision and support to primary schools. It has initiated a regional project to study supervision practices in primary education in the Asian countries. Several member institutions

of ANTRIEP are actively involved in implementing this project. It is expected that the studies will bring out general pattern and trends in supervision mechanisms existing in the countries of the region and also innovative experiences. The Seoul meeting will provide a forum for professionals from the member institutions to share their experiences in teacher supervision and support with other professionals and decision makers. Some special time will also be set apart during the meeting to discuss broader issues pertaining to the future Network activities.

How to make the network function is one of the major areas of concern now. Initiation and continuation of Network activities require support and encouragement from the national governments of the participating institutions. It was recognised in the first meeting itself that the extent of freedom and autonomy of the participating institutions vary. Some institutions are more autonomous to take independent decisions regarding international and regional co-operation than others. To elicit support for the Network activities from the national governments, NIEPA has sent letters to all the member institutions requesting them to provide information about the governmental agency to be contacted. Some of them have responded, while others are yet to respond. This is an area which requires priority attention in the months to come.

Follow up activities initiated and the responses received from the member institutions in the past six months are very encouraging and they give us confidence and strength to further consolidate and expand the ANTRIEP activities. The progress made in the past six months is commendable. We sincerely hope that this enthusiasm will continue and the ANTRIEP activities will reach new heights in the coming years.

Kuldeep Mathur

Training Programmes of Member Institutions: An Overview

The ANTRIEP member institutions are actively engaged in the capacity building activities in the area of educational planning and management at the national and local levels in their respective countries. Some of the institutions like National Academy for Educational Management (NAEM) in Bangladesh, National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration (NIEPA) etc. in India are in existence for more than three decades; some others like the Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development (CERID) in Nepal, Academy of Educational Planning and Management (AEPAM) in Pakistan, Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI) in Korea and Balitbang Dikbud in Indonesia were established in the 1970s while Shanghai Institute of Human Resource Development (SIHRD) in China and National Institute of Education (NIE) in Sri Lanka have only a decade of existence. Institutions like National Centre for Educational Development (NCED) in Nepal and State Institute of Educational Management and Training (SIEMAT) in India were created in the 1990s. In other words, the member institutions vary considerably in terms of duration of their existence.

In terms of the missions and major activities, member institutions can be broadly divided into two. First, those which are essentially research institutions with very few training programmes being organised by them; second, those which are essentially research and training institutions. For example, Balitbang Dikbud, SIHRD, KEDI, CERID etc. are primarily research institutions while others are research and

training institutions. This note focusses on the trends in training programmes organised by the member institutions.

Nature of Training Programmes

The research and training institutions of the region focus mainly on the in-service training programmes. Some of the institutions have regular long duration training programmes leading to a degree or diploma. NIE, Sri Lanka has a post graduate (M.Sc.) programme in education management and two long-term diploma programmes - one 18-month post-graduate diploma programme in educational management and the other one-year diploma in school management. NIEPA has a six-month diploma programme in educational planning and administration. Other institutions also conduct long-term programmes, the duration of which is normally less than three months. For example, the NAEM of Bangladesh runs a two month regular programme for their civil service officers. Most of the other institutions have mostly short duration courses. Among the member institutions, perhaps, NIEPA is the only one running a regular diploma programme for the international participants. In other institutions, short term international programmes in the form of seminars/workshops etc. are organised mainly in collaboration with international agencies and organisations.

The short duration courses organised by the member institutions are mostly theme specific and target group specific. In general the themes taken up

for training include decentralised planning and local capacity building, institutional planning, training programmes to impart skills in computers and educational management information systems, and project planning and management. Of these, the latter two areas are of more recent origin. Perhaps courses in project planning may have been introduced as a result of the demand emanating from the externally funded projects operating in the respective countries.

Based on the location, the short duration programmes are either field-based/local-based or based at the institutions at the national level. For example, AEPAM in Pakistan, NCERT and NIEPA in India do have a number of programmes which are field based. Another interesting feature of training programmes in this region is that majority of the programmes are in the form of direct training. There are only very few programmes which attempt to concentrate on the training of trainers. This is important because in most of the countries even when educational planning is being decentralised, the corresponding capacity building efforts remain more or less centralised. Absence of training institution or alternate organisational arrangements at the local level may be the reason for such a pattern. However, in larger countries there is a need to take cognisance of this trend so that corrective measures can be adopted.

The reason for training systems to remain centralised may also be due to the fact that trainers or resource persons in the area of educational planning and management are not available in the local areas. In other words, lack of trained manpower in the area of educational planning and management acts as a major constraint to decentralise capacity building exercises. This is an aspect to be analysed more closely by the member institutions in their subsequent meetings. Given the profile and professional competency of the member institutions, it may be

possible to develop the required skills. In addition, the IIEP has specific training programmes of long and short duration to develop planning competencies in the developing countries.

Target Groups

It is interesting to note the client groups of the various training programmes organised by the member institutions. The most important client group seems to be educational administrators at the national, provincial and local levels. The next important client group is the institutional heads, mostly secondary school principals and heads of colleges. What is surprising is the relative low priority accorded to primary education in the training programmes. Most of the training programmes are addressed to heads of secondary schools than to heads of primary schools. In other words, there is scope for specific training programmes addressed to the heads of primary schools for improving the operational efficiency of primary schools in this region.

Another aspect which is not very clear from the profile of training programmes is whether they cater to the private sectors. Most of the member institutions except Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) in Bangladesh are directly or indirectly under the control of the public authorities. Some are funded by the public authorities but are autonomous in their functioning, while others are funded and managed by the government. May be due to such organisational arrangement that the member institutions cater primarily to the public sector institutions. Perhaps, there is a need to look into this aspect, especially in a situation where private institutions are being established in increasing numbers in all the countries of this region.

An important trend that has emerged in the recent past is the increase in the number of training programmes organised by the member institutions with external funding support. For example KEDI

is organising vocational and technical programmes for officers from Cambodia, programme for teacher educators from Sri Lanka; NIEPA has organised various training programmes for secondary school heads from Sri Lanka; NIE has organised programmes on quality of primary education for the Asian region, etc.

Capacity Building

It is a reality that all the national governments of the member institutions receive international funding for primary education projects. Capacity building is an important component in these projects. Training is one of the most accepted modes of capacity building under these projects. As of to-day

most of the training programmes are conducted in institutions located outside the region which is very expensive. When we look at the institutional capacity of some of the member institutions, one gets the feeling that such training programmes can be organised within the region. Therefore, continued discussions and evolving a common strategy for capacity building efforts will certainly be mutually beneficial to all countries of the region. Let us hope that the ANTRIEP initiatives will lead to such mutually beneficial collaborative ventures in capacity building in the area of educational planning and management.

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