



比較教育研究中心

COMPARATIVE EDUCATION RESEARCH CENTRE



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ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Bangkok Office
Asia and Pacific
Regional Bureau
for Education

Policy Forum

Regulating the Shadow Education System: Private Tutoring and Government Policies in Asia

8-9 April 2013

Summary Report

Introduction

The Policy Forum was organised by the Comparative Education Research Centre (CERC) of the University of Hong Kong (HKU) in conjunction with the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). It brought together 33 researchers, government personnel, practitioners and other stakeholders from 18 jurisdictions. Some of these jurisdictions, such as Hong Kong, the Republic of Korea, and Macao, have prosperous economies. Others, such as Malaysia, Thailand and Vietnam are emerging and middle-income countries; and yet others, such as Bangladesh and Nepal, have low-income economies. Since the countries represented diversity from East Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia and Central Asia, participants had an instructive basis to compare policies on shadow education. They discussed the contexts in which the policies had been devised, and evaluated the factors which underpin the effectiveness of regulatory and guiding systems. This report summarises the event, and indicates the participants' plans for future action.



Synopsis of the Programme

The two days included plenary presentations, group discussions, film viewings, and much informal discussion. These activities were designed to promote understanding and debate among participants. Throughout the Policy Forum, participants referred to written documentation of different sorts. A starting point was the 2012 book *Shadow Education: Private Supplementary Tutoring and its Implications for Policy Makers in Asia*, authored by Mark Bray and Chad Lykins and co-published by ADB and CERC. This book provided a factual and conceptual overview of shadow education in the region, and its appendix outlined the regulations of some jurisdictions. Other documents included comparative tables and country reports based on questionnaires completed in advance by a number of participants.

Day One

The event began with welcoming addresses from Stephen Andrews, Dean of the HKU Faculty of Education; Jouko Sarvi from ADB; Ramya Vivekanandan from the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education; and Mark Bray, UNESCO Chair Professor in Comparative Education at HKU. Participants heard that the event was conceived as a form of knowledge exchange, with financial support under that heading from HKU and with corresponding support from ADB and UNESCO.

The programme then moved to a keynote address by Mark Bray entitled ‘The Scale, Nature and Implications of Shadow Education: Global, Regional and Local Perspectives’, which identified the scope and conceptual frame for the event. Mark Bray noted that the term shadow education is in widespread use to describe extra lessons on academic subjects beyond regular school hours. The Policy Forum, he added, might wish also to consider other supplementary activities such as sports and music, but the main focus would be on academic subjects. Some of this instruction might be delivered free of charge, but the principal focus would be on lessons provided in exchange for a fee. These lessons might be one-to-one, in small groups, in large classes, or over the internet.

The participants then divided into groups in which presenters identified patterns of shadow education in their own jurisdictions. The presentations strengthened awareness of the range of contexts and features, some of which were linked to historical traditions and economic structures. For example, patterns in Georgia and Uzbekistan, which have a Soviet heritage, are rather different from those in Malaysia and Pakistan which have a British colonial heritage. Authorities in the Republic of Korea have actively addressed the shadow education sector over several decades, but their counterparts in Nepal have devoted much less attention to the issue.

Following a lunch break, the participants reconvened to hear reports from the four groups and to watch two documentaries on shadow education. One documentary focused on star tutors in Hong Kong, which is an urban and high-income jurisdiction in which much shadow education is delivered by companies. The other focused on Cambodia, which is a largely rural and low-income country in which much shadow education is provided by classroom teachers. The films provided visual accounts of the diversity of shadow education. Participants were prompted to share how the situations in the two films resonated with or differed from their own contexts.

After the film viewing, participants again divided into groups to extend the discussion and learn more about different examples. In some jurisdictions large companies are very visible, including franchised operations of international enterprises. In other jurisdictions, most tutoring companies are small enterprises which only serve their immediate neighbourhoods. The diversity in the corporate structures brings a corresponding diversity of relationships with government authorities. Similar diversity is evident in the nature and scale of informal tutoring by teachers, university students and others.

At the end of the day, participants reconvened in the central meeting room to share the insights and encapsulate the key themes from the discussions. They felt that much had been learned about diversity of contexts, which had prepared the ground for more detailed discussions in Day Two on the specifics of regulations and what has been demonstrated to work (and not work) in different contexts.

Day Two

The second day continued the pattern of mixed plenary work and group discussions. In the morning, parallel groups explored three particular themes. First was the overlap of business and educational regulations, with different government bodies being responsible for each and with a tendency for business regulations to be stronger than educational ones. Second were the challenges of policy implementation, i.e. moving from official documents to compliance with the regulations. Compliance requires wide dissemination of the content of regulations – preferably to consumers as well as to providers of tutoring – and mechanisms to monitor and penalise individuals and companies that do not follow the regulations. Even in societies with well-developed infrastructures, such follow-up may be challenging. The third theme concerned the types of policy innovation and implementation that have worked in various contexts. This question enabled the participants to reflect on and share the successful experiences in their jurisdictions.

The afternoon plenary session heard perspectives from a range of stakeholders, i.e.

- an officer in a ministry of education,
- an entrepreneur running tutorial centres,
- a researcher,
- a UNESCO representative,
- an Asian Development Bank representative, and
- a parent.

Each person reflected on roles, responsibilities, and policy recommendations. The voices of different stakeholders showed that different interests can create tensions and subvert good intentions from other actors. More positively, the session identified ways in which different stakeholders can operate in partnership to address common concerns for the overall welfare of society.

The final session of the Policy Forum summarized the two days of work and highlighted the participants' proposals for follow-up in their respective jurisdictions. The Policy Forum had demonstrated the value of comparative analysis for identification of needs and instruments. Equally, the Policy Forum had identified many constraints which required realistic appraisal. While knowledge exchange does not always lead to partnership for a common vision, that outcome is more likely to be achieved through mutual recognition of different perspectives and when stakeholders convene to identify common ground.

Lessons and Policy Recommendations

One major lesson from the event concerns diversity in the scale and nature of shadow education. For example, in the Republic of Korea nearly 90% of elementary students receive some sort of shadow education; and in Hong Kong, China, about 72% of senior secondary students do so. Although few statistics exist, proportions appear to be much lower in Uzbekistan and Nepal. However, this does not mean that the authorities in Uzbekistan and Nepal can relax. On the contrary, they would be wise to act now to steer the likely growth of the sector – avoiding the negative aspects and enhancing the positive ones.

The participants noted that different types of regulations may be needed for different types of shadow education providers. In particular:

- *Companies* which provide private tutoring should be subject to commercial regulations for payment of taxes, contracts for employees, etc.. They should also be subject to health and safety regulations on provision of toilets, fire escapes, etc.. The authorities may consider regulations on the qualifications of tutors and on the curriculum, though such matters require careful consideration in different societies.
- *Teachers* who provide extra tutoring are a different category. A strong case can be made for prohibiting teachers from providing private tutoring to the students for which those teachers already have responsibility. This can be done by regulations or by codes of practice, and ideally should have the understanding of parents and support from teachers' unions. Policy makers may also consider prohibiting teachers from providing private tutoring to other students. This is easier to propose and to enforce when teachers are paid adequately and cannot reasonably claim that they have to engage in extra work to gain adequate incomes to meet their family needs. Again, policy makers who wish to propose such regulations would be wise to seek the support from parents and teachers' unions.

- *University students and other tutors who work on an informal basis* cannot be regulated so easily. They commonly provide tutoring without contracts or receipts, and cannot easily be monitored by the authorities. However, governments can educate the consumers, explaining to parents how they might evaluate the quality of services and what risks need to be assessed. These risks can include harm to the children from tutors who do not have adequate professional expertise. It is not only a matter of curriculum but perhaps even psychological stress and, in the worst cases, child abuse.
- *Internet tutoring* is even more difficult to regulate because it can take place across national borders and because the tutoring is received in the privacy of the consumers' homes. Again, governments can educate consumers on ways to evaluate quality and assess risks.

Entrepreneurs in the industry may also undertake self-regulation. The Policy Forum noted the existence of various associations of tutoring providers, some of which set codes of conduct and have sanctions on members who operate inappropriately.

Participants were invited to identify roles that they play, and to indicate first what they would do differently as a result of the discussions, and second what they felt should be given immediate attention in their countries/jurisdictions concerning regulation of shadow education. Below are selected responses.

What the participants would do differently

Researchers

- I realise more clearly that context can vary enormously, and that regulation has to suit that context. I will integrate the lessons learned from other countries to recommend more appropriate regulations for national and local levels – to help regulations come to reality instead of just being on paper.
- The scale of corruption presents bigger obstacles than I realised. Perhaps we need to experiment with transparency and accountability mechanisms to make sure teachers and tutors are being honest.
- I will help research students that I supervise to think beyond the myths, capturing the cliché while critically reviewing the nature of myths in order to reach deeply the nature of questions to be investigated.

Government officials

- I realise that banning of private tutoring is unlikely to work, and that a better approach is steering and regulating.
- I will share with colleagues information from this Policy Forum on how shadow education is perceived, run, managed and monitored in other parts of the world.
- I will raise awareness among families and teachers about the implications of shadow education.

Owners/operators of tutoring centres

- I can strengthen self-regulation, especially on the quality of tutoring, curriculum design, and proper administration of contracts for students and parents.
- We can work more closely with teachers to ensure that the tutoring is truly adding value to the students and thus ensuring that the students are more effective in the classroom.
- We need stronger and more effective public-private partnerships in this domain.

Parents

- I will check the quality of tutors if my child is going to a tutorial centre.
- I will explore the potential of my child, and discuss with the schools the extent to which tutoring is (not) needed.
- We should trust our children's teachers, and avoid enrolling our children in too much tutoring.

Employees of international organisations

- We really need to assess/take stock of the situation and have policy dialogue with governments, trade unions, community bodies and other stakeholders. This includes expanding the knowledge base and promoting exchange of ideas.

- We could consider proposing some normative/standard-setting work, with guidelines and protocols.
- I will develop resource materials that will enable the education community to have better advocacy as well as understanding in this topic.

Others

- As a *teacher educator*, I will see the significance of helping future teachers to be more aware of the social environment when they set off to serve the education profession.
- As a *teacher*, I should aim at a better management of the stress of examinations.
- As a *civil society worker*, I will encourage awareness-raising and accountability programmes.

What the participants feel needs immediate attention

- Discussions should be extended at multiple levels:
 - global (e.g. through UNESCO),
 - regional (e.g. through ADB and UNESCO),
 - national (e.g. through forums organised as a partnership between governments, international agencies and civil society organisations),
 - local (e.g. through government and community bodies), and
 - school (to evaluate school policies, and see more clearly the positive and negative implications of private supplementary tutoring).
- The media – newspapers, internet, radio, television – can help to raise awareness so that patterns do not simply evolve by default. Two major concerns are:
 - *Equity*. Private tutoring can reinforce the advantages of the rich and the disadvantages of the poor.
 - *Efficiency*. Certain types of private tutoring can undermine the effectiveness of school systems. Tutoring is not always a good investment for parents and society as a whole.

These matters should be brought more clearly into the global discussion on Education for All (EFA). The scale and implications of shadow education must be more clearly recognised in the agenda of equal access to quality education for all.

- Further comparative research should be pursued on what works (and does not work), where, why and how. This will include details of regulations of different types, and processes of implementation and monitoring.

The Director and colleagues in the Comparative Education Research Centre (CERC) at the University of Hong Kong promised that they would themselves continue to play a part in these matters. The principal mandate of CERC is research, and the Centre is proud of what it has already accomplished in this domain. At the same time, the Centre is strongly aware of further needs. The huge agenda ahead needs attention from many more people at multiple levels. CERC will be glad to partner not only in the production of research but also in its dissemination so that the research can help improve the educational experiences of children and their families and can contribute to stronger societies.

Equally, UNESCO and ADB will use their own networks and professional domains to expand attention to the theme. This can be done both at the country level and regionally. Moreover both UNESCO and ADB work with many actors beyond the region, and the lessons from different parts of Asia can therefore be shared with the rest of the world as well as within the region.

More specifically, CERC committed to production and dissemination of various products from the Policy Forum. The first is the present summary, which participants are themselves encouraged to disseminate through their own channels. In due course, CERC will produce a more detailed analysis that draws not only on the discussions during the Policy Forum but also on other materials. This substantial document will be accompanied by a Policy Brief that presents the main points for readers who may not have the time to digest the longer analysis.

These materials will be placed on CERC's website, which has a specific section for shadow education (<http://cerc.comparativist.org/shadow-education/about-shadow-education>). CERC also looks forward to continued operation as a hub for knowledge exchange in this domain.

Annex 1: Participants

		<i>Name</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Organization</i>	<i>Email Address</i>
<i>Lead Organisers</i>					
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<i>Representatives/presenters on countries/jurisdictions</i>					
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The University of Hong Kong, 8-9 April 2013

Logos: UNCTAD, ADB, and the University of Hong Kong.

Annex 2: Summary of Participants' Evaluations

Context and goals

This Forum has been modelled on a Constructivist Approach to Learning, which means that we have aimed for optimal actualization of the potential brought by all participants from across a sample of countries and the jurisdictions in the Region. Likewise, our preparation has been grounded in co-learning among our associates as a community. This questionnaire aims to engage all in a joint evaluation of how we can improve organisation for our learning together as a community.

Responses

Total number of respondents: 26

	Excellent	Good	Average	Poor
<i>Before the Forum</i>				
Information about the Forum	15	9	2	
Policy Questionnaires	12	8	1	1
Logistics	13	12	1	
<i>During the Forum</i>				
Coherence of Program	16	10		
Quality of the Discussion	18	8		
Logistics	18	8		

Over the two days, what did you enjoy most?

- Session 7 [the session with sharing from six stakeholders on the afternoon of Day Two]: sharing from various sectors. Indeed, the whole event is well planned to make session 7 a success.
- Multi-national experiences. I enjoyed the need of regulations most.
- Small groups discussion – ability to interact and get lots of detailed info from everyone.
- Discussion within country to country. Similar situation from South Asia but presentation style is different.
- The range of perspectives, the breadth and depth was interesting.
- Learning about what policy works in other countries. And if the policy does not work, what are the reasons. The most important thing is, can the same policy work in our context.
- Group discussions: getting to know the situation in different countries. Some are surprising and unexpected.
- Discussion in different themes with different people from different situations and countries.
- Presenting my country case and comparing the situation to other country cases. Making human connections and to know each other for further research works.
- Transparency and level of commitment with like-minded professionals from different areas of the community – excellent discussions and very thought provoking.
- Discussion.
- The discussion among group members and colleagues.
- Discussion/ panel/ personal communications with participants.
- Opening plenary and group discussion.
- I enjoyed most the contribution from engaged and engaging participants who inspired me to think more deeply about many issues which I did not have time to synthesize. The inspiration helped me to construct clearer questions for my future attention.
- The way private tutoring is regulated or otherwise in other places. Role of private tutoring in other places.

- Knowledge exchange and diversity of context.
- The openness in Informal discussions and small group discussion.
- Yes. To learn what happens in some other countries.
- Group discussion and the plenary.
- The group discussion.
- The openness and transparency of discussants.
- The Forum has brought a broad picture of shadow education as well as the ways different actors deal with it, which is really helpful in policymaking in my country.
- Everything was perfect! Most wonderful forum that I have ever participated. Thank you for everybody.
- A company of colleagues.
- I think the forum has been a perfect academic activity: preparation, logistics, agenda, number of participants and so there is little to do to make it better.

What could have been done to make this learning space more effective?

- Different local, regional and global idea and difficulties as well as ways of solutions are discussed, which would be most useful in the future.
- More presentations of the agenda and explaining clearly the focus and objectives of the seminar. Sometimes we seemed to be discussing everything regarding shadow education. Seats/chairs were very comfortable.
- I share all information what I have. Look possible way to more solutions in my country. We discussed very much further development within the country participant for shadow education.
- More collaboration and networking across borders. Thus, the discussion should not be limited to this policy forum, but more towards a movement which focuses on quality education for all.
- Chairs could have focused on the prepared questions to make the discussions more focused before more open discussion emerges.
- Good regulations. Mapping out about the shadow education. Research and development should be emphasized. Creation of many forum for discussions and networking.
- I found it excellent!
- Putting more private tutoring owners into the forum.
- Probably speech making will be better in terms of information richness.
- Perhaps policy forum should be longer.
- Regional context specific issues need to be focused sharply for gaining deeper understanding. Could be useful aftermath of the event.
- Perhaps participants can be given more preparation with some advance notice to expect a dynamic space of interactive learning.
- It is effective!
- It is very good. However, sharing some more practices and experiences based on the research could have been more useful.
- A policy proposal in the end as knowledge exchange product.
- Excellent condition, cannot think of more!
- Trip/ visit to one or two of the tutorial centers in Hong Kong.
- Sometimes we might need the projection to map our mind.
- Possibly a more efficient way to jot down the findings of the group discussions onto paper or in a categorical format (though that could be at the expense of open-ended questioning and dialectics)
- I enjoyed being able to share the perspectives from my own context, which not a lot of people were aware of as well as learning about contexts from others that I was not aware of.