Sri Lankan Education Data Management Revolution Begins…

Intervention of KOICA and KEDI

Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and Korean Educational Development Institute (KEDI) are striving to carry out development cooperation programmes with the Ministry of Education (MoE), Sri Lanka under the mission of promoting the sustainability of educational data management.

Challenging situation

The availability of updated, accurate, timely data is the paramount factor for effective decision making and evidence-based policy making once such data are analyzed for particular purposes in the Sri Lankan education sector.

The MoE, Sri Lanka was facing a difficulty in collection of data due to the absence of a dedicated person at the point of data collection resulting in prevalence of invalid data in consequence of delays due to the refining and validation.

First ODA project with the KOICA and KEDI

With the first Official Development Assistance (ODA) project with the KOICA and KEDI initiated in 2020, bridged the gap between what was lacking in the data management in Sri Lankan education system and what was to be done initially to strengthen the process for a sustainable data management development plan. This first ODA is a result of the 'Asian Cooperation Educational Statistics Capacity Development' project conducted by KEDI from 2017 to 2019 as a consultation project for Mongolia, Vietnam and Sri Lanka. The action plan developed as the output of the ODA project which was implemented in Sri Lanka by nominating Data Officers in general educational institutes island wide joining hands with the provincial educational force, from the already available academic and non-academic staff in the education sector. This nomination was done by the school principals and the officials in charge of respective educational organizations following the clearly stated guidelines released by the Data Management Branch and Information System Development Unit of the Ministry of Education in 2022.

The distribution of Data Managers and Data Officers are as follows;

	School Level	Divisional Level	Zonal Level	Provincial Level	National Level	Total
No. of Data Officers	11,059	303	103	09	02	11,476
No. of Data Managers	-	299	97	09	01	406

The nominated Data Officers engage in the educational statistical related affairs successfully at present such as data collection for annual school census conducted by the Department of Census and Statistics, data entry process for the Mid-Day Meal Programme conducted by The World Food Programme (WFP), etc.

This has become a turning point in the school data management endeavors and moving forward to a blessed future with extended activities to get the technical and financial support from the experts in KOICA and KEDI.

Training Data Officers

The nominated Data Officers and Data Managers are scheduled to provide an online, self-paced training with the launch of the Data Management LMS platform with well-designed seven modules in both Sinhala and Tamil medium including 76 learning videos covering around 4-hour learning sessions. In successful completion of all online training modules which are specially designed for enhancing the capacities of data management, the Data Officers will be rewarded with an e-certificate which can be verified internationally. In this manner, the sustainability of the training of Data Officers is confirmed.

Commendations from the Minister of Education, Sri Lanka

The Minister of Education, Dr. Susil Premajayantha stated that the initiatives taken to upgrade the Sri Lankan education data management system in collaboration with the KOICA and KEDI are commendable. Further, he extends his gratitude to the Korean government on behalf of the Sri Lankan government for the helping hand extended for the establishment of a sustainable data management process while enhancing the quality of educational data.

Hon. Minister of Education: Dr. Susil Premajayantha, M.P.

Appreciation from the Secretary, Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka

Mr. M. Nihal Ranasinghe, the Secretary, Ministry of Education expressed his views, "The Ministry of Education is an organization that has a large amount of data related to 4.2 million students, 0.25 million teachers, 10,000 principals, and 3,000 education officials. Obtaining data at school level was a challenge in the past. The project implemented by the KOICA and KEDI together with the Data Management Branch and Information System Development Unit of the MoE found a perfect solution for this challenge. Accordingly, we were able to nominate a Data Officer for each school and for each educational office. I consider this as a great achievement for us as the Ministry of

Education. My special thanks are given to the Korean government, KOICA and KEDI institutes for their helping hands."

Secretary to the Ministry of Education: Mr. M. N. Ranasinghe

Views of the school principals

The school principals appreciate the initiatives taken for data collection, analysis and utilization by appointing Data Managers and Data Officers. For instance, Mr. H.G.L.A. Habaragamuwa, the Principal of Kalawana Gamini Vidyalaya emphasizes the importance of school level Data Officers. He expresses his views as, "....as a rural school with a large number of students, the availability of a proper mechanism and well-trained person to deal with educational statistics is vital. This programme should be greatly appreciated. I am witnessing how the Data Officer in Kalawana Gamini Vidyalaya gains novel experience and latest knowledge, skills related to educational statistics".

Guidance of the KEDI officials

The Korean educational statistical specialists of KEDI have guided the first ODA programme of Sri Lanka immensely to make it a success. The guidance of Dr. Jung, Dong-chul as the programme Director, KEDI for the ODA project; Capacity Building for Survey-Analysis-Utilization of Educational Statistics (2021-2023) was immensely helpful to implement the project output as the country's plan for educational statistics development in Sri Lanka.

Programme Director: Dr. Jung, Dong-chul

Mr. Lee, Han-seung has been coordinating with the Sri Lankan education data management capacity building since 2017 as the Programme Manager, KEDI and in this programme he has played a vital role in providing technical guidance, identification of key problems and preparation

of the project concept paper for the next ODA. He expressed his views as "… it is a great pleasure working with the Sri Lankan team in completing the first ODA successfully addressing and providing remedial measures to a crucial issue in the Sri Lankan education sector. At the same time, I strongly believe that training of Data Officers in educational organizations is essential for the successful implementation of digital initiatives and data-driven decision-making and policy formation in the education sector."

Programme Manager, KEDI: Mr. Lee, Han-seung

Sri Lanka looks forward to a blessed future in the educational data management developments with the assistance provided by the KOICA and KEDI. With this initiative, a massive project is awaiting to be implemented as the second ODA with educational statistical policy formation, development of infrastructure, connectivity and capacity building.