

## **Case 2**

### **International Collaboration in Developing Countries**

#### **Introduction:**

##### Winter 1993

Leona was looking through the guesthouse window. Since the rain in September the streets become completely icy in the morning. This small city is located in 1500m above sea level and temperature in the winter drops to below zero. Ms. Leona Minami, who is an Education Expert prepared herself to be in -30C degree outside and waited for the car to pick her up.

It has been one year since Leona started to get involved in education program of this country. The country became independent from its neighboring country after 70 years and reforms are taking place in every sector promoting democratic movement. In education, New Education Law was established in 1993 and international organization for education was asked to provide technical assistance. During the past 6 months, she conducted survey in collaboration with local education research center and the project preparation was in good status. Leona, however, had a gloomy feeling this morning, on the way to the meeting with the Education Minister.

#### **Country in transition**

##### Summer 1993

Leona was working together with local experts who belong to the research institute directly under the Ministry of Education. The team conducted Training Needs Assessment for educational administrators as well as local government officials in charge of education. The area where the guesthouse is located resembles European Alps and it is only 20 minutes drive from the city center. She encountered one jeep which is rare to come across in this guest house area. She waved at the jeep and found out one of the passengers recognized her! “Leona! You must be Leona!”, he shouted in English. What a surprise! It turned out to be Prof. Keen, her old professor who gave her lectures at graduate school almost 10 years ago. “What on the earth are you doing here?” They laughed and started asking each other lots of questions!

Prof. Keen serves as one of the consultant team members who have been conducting Master Plan for Education Sector. This is a collaborated work of development bank and the government. They are the consultant team for development bank, composed of American and Hong Kong experts in

education, having worked on this Master Plan program for one month. They were staying in the same guest house and Leona and the team exchanged information and discussion have been working on this for one month.

During the visit this time, the problems have become clear. First, the city was suffering from shortage of electricity. Two out of four power plants were not functioning and thus, electricity supply was not sufficient to cover the whole city. Since blackout occurs every day, it was difficult to use computer constantly. Second, people suffer from shortage on basic goods. When working on the preparation of the project, the team cannot have enough paper or printing ink. Each agency and government offices exchange basic goods to prepare what was needed. Consultant for development projects spent the first few weeks to get hold of necessities to be able to function. Third problem was the shortage of human resources. Government offices have limited number of people who could communicate in English, particularly at the decision-making level. Different international organizations and foreign aids agencies were almost fighting for the qualified local professionals to be involved in their project. Further, young qualified professionals are on the list of study abroad and replacement for such persons was hard to find. Under such circumstances, international organizations and bilateral aids agencies felt the necessity of coordinating their activities to avoid unnecessary overlap.

After the independence, international organization who had been working with the multiple ministries took an initiative to coordinate among bi-lateral donor agencies, development banks, and other international agencies. Having participated in many coordinating meetings, it was clear that Leona's organization, specializing educational assistance, was in a position to be involved in training activities for educational administrators and school principals in collaboration with relevant local counterpart.

Leona was in the process of summarizing the result of the survey conducted during the summer. It was evident that during the transition, school principals and local educational administrators were facing tremendous difficulties. In the past, under the socialist regime, major role of school principals was to implement the activities following the instruction of the central government, including managing the schools, and training teachers. Now, school principals are given more responsibilities to with decreasing amount of budget. Schools have to come up with innovative ways to raise funds to support its management. Some of the principals of the schools visited, were busy taking care of school farms and others were busy writing new proposals to attract external funding and projects. The result of the workshop conducted for 53 school principals highlighted the keen need of training for school principals and teachers as well as local education administrators. Since this education

institute was in charge of training of school administrators, the project team was organized headed by Dr. Star, the vice director of the institute. Dr. Star was in his mid-30<sup>th</sup> with Ph.D. in Economics, with extensive network within and outside of the ministries. Although he just started learning English, he had no problem communicating with Leona. Dr. Begat, the director of the institute spoke no English, and thus necessary communication was via Dr. Star but it was evident that Dr. Begat had his full support for the project team.

Leona, together with Prof. Pat and Dr. Star, was in the process of planning forthcoming activities. Questionnaire was prepared based on the finding of the field visits as well as discussion conducted among school principals from 53 local schools. The local project team was in charge of conducting questionnaire. Under shortage of basic goods such as paper and printing ink, translation was completed and necessary number of questionnaires was printed and ready to be sent out. The team was very happy with the preparation. Leona and Prof. Pat participated in the final discussion with the team agreed on the next visit plan and its activities, and left Ulaanbaatar with very positive notes.

## **Back to the Headquarters**

### **Autumn 1993**

Upon return to the headquarters of the organization, Leona was busy lobbying activities<sup>1</sup> in her sector, along with compiling reports and fund-raising activities. The budget decreases every year and introducing extra-budgetary funding sources was absolutely necessary. At the same time, in order to obtain the full support for smooth implementation of the project, she worked hard to communicate with other officers in budget section and contract section as well as colleagues. Leona was eager to implement this training project, which is one of the most needed areas in the country. She remembered seriousness of her local counterpart, dedicated attitude of local educational officers, school principals and teachers who were making extra efforts to sustain and improve the schools in such difficult period of transition. This made her to work even harder. Leona repeatedly appealed, “This project will be a part of development master plan of Country. No other organization was dealing with the areas of training for educational managers, and thus, we ought to take a leadership in conducting and promoting such activities. If we are not engaged in this area, who else would be able to contribute! As a result, this proposed project was identified as one of important activities in her section and the director decided to allocate regular budget to this project.

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<sup>1</sup> Lobbying: Negotiating with important and decision-making persons in order to gain their understanding and support for the agenda

This good news was immediately transmitted to Dr. Star by telex. Prof. Pat back to his country was also working on the fund-raising for this activity. Dr. Star informed Leona that responses of the questionnaire have been returned gradually they organized data analysis team within the institute. The winter in the country is extremely severe and thus, activities during the winter stop in November. Next workshop was expected to take place in mid-November and Leona's team planned to report the result of the needs assessment during the workshop. Leona had both full support of her section and necessary budget. This motivated young professional was busy preparing for the next visit along with other works she was in charge in her section.

### **Return to the country**

#### **Winter 1993**

Leona and Prof. Pat returned to the country earlier than planned. The result of the questionnaire was quite interesting. The workshop was expecting to have same group of school principals from various regions. This workshop was important in a sense that based on the result of the needs assessment, the team was expected to develop mid-term and long-term training program. At the same time, mission this time included to participate in two-day mid-term meeting of Mater Plan co-organized by the development bank and the government. Leona and local team planned to introduce the result of the needs assessment along with the overall plan of the training program to be included in the Master Plan. Prior to the winter, shortage of goods was becoming even more serious, but the local team managed to produce materials to be distributed at this important workshop.

Leona was familiar with the most of the participants of the mid-term Master Plan Meeting since she made an extra effort to communicate with other partners for development activities and share necessary information. Further, although different groups had argument from time to time, eventually, the participants were working toward the shared mission of "improvement of educational system" under the difficult condition, and thus, the government was able to come up with the most feasible plan. Having seated at the discussion table, Leona noticed the new faces in the room, a foreigner and a group of local staff, sitting across from Leona's team. Following the report from the Government officials and development bank representatives, each agency reported the current status of the activities and survey results. Then, the foreigner across from Leona started to speak eloquently.

"We conducted Training Needs Assessment using localized survey last summer. The survey result indicates that in-service training for educational administrators and school principals are facing the

crisis. Our government understands this serious situation and committed to provide financial assistance as a donor for the next three years. We have no doubt that under the collaboration between the University of Education and our government, the future training program for school principals will succeed.”

Leona could not understand what he just mentioned. “Who is this expert? Who conducted the Training Needs Assessment?!” In fact, it was not just Leona who felt puzzled at this statement. Leona’s local counterpart team, education officers of the government, consultant team of the development bank, all looked at each other, wondering who they were. The mid-term meeting was completed as planned. By the time the meeting was dismissed, the mysterious foreigner and his local team had already disappeared. Next morning, Leona and Prof. Pat found out that the foreigner was staying in the same hotel, and they decided to talk over the breakfast. Mr. Badjey, the consultant of the research institute in Europe responded to Leona’s question, “Our survey result found exactly the same situation. It was coincident that we conducted the survey in the same region. How interesting! Our team has been organized within the University of Education and the activities are already in action. We have enough funding and nothing to worry!”. Leona requested him to share the survey document but he repeatedly mentioned “We are now finalizing the result. We will show it to you when the final version comes out,” and the details of the survey was never shown to anyone.

Meanwhile, Dr. Star and his team discussed with the team of the University of Education, negotiating how to collaborate with each other in conducting future training program plan. However, the leader of the University team strongly mentioned, “Our project is in charge of in-service training of educational administrators and school principals. We have no intention of collaborating with anyone.” And no further meeting was planned to take place. In spite of this helpless meeting, Dr. Star in his cool face said, “Don’t worry, we all work for the country. There is no way that we could not collaborate. We will discuss it again. They will participate in our workshop tomorrow and they must have decided to collaborate with us!” Anyhow, tomorrow is the first day of our important workshop for Training Needs Assessment. The team agreed to finish all the preparation for the workshop before the electricity is turned off for the day.

The day of the workshop: About 70 people gathered in the big room in the Ministry of Education. Local school principals exchanged opinion and discussed the issues and problem they were facing in local schools. Participants were having heated discussion. The first thing in the afternoon was the presentation on the Training Needs Assessments result. All the participants were concentrated in the presentation, and all of sudden, Dr. Dole, the leader of the University of Education local team raised his hand and added his comments. Leona felt happy, thinking, “The University team is participating!

Dr. Star was right. They are the educators, and they know the importance of collaboration in education sector.” However, Dr. Pat caught the face of the translator turning pale....The translator stood up and whispered to Dr. Star and Dr. Begat, instead of translating for Leona and Dr. Pat. Leona noticed and asked the translator, “What is Dr. Dole saying? Please summarize it for me.” But, Dr. Star was gazing at Dr. Dole as if he did not notice what Leona was asking. While Leona had no idea on what was happening, Dr. Dole’s statement was becoming high in its tone, and finally, he stood up and left the conference room with his two colleagues. All the participants looked lost and short coffee break was announced. Dr. Star approached to restless looking Leona and said quietly, “Don’t worry. There was a bit of misunderstanding. I will bring some tea for you.” Dr. Star and Dr. Begat left the room leaving Leona behind. Prof. Pat told Leona, “It seems that they have completely broken up in front of all the participants!” The translator who has been working with Leona from the beginning came to her hesitantly. “Dr. Dole had done what he should have never done... In front of the local participants, in front of ministry officials, he criticized Dr. Star. This survey was completely “made up” data and correct survey data exist in the University, not in the institute. Dr. Dole is an educator and such a behavior is out of question. I do not understand why Dr. Dole did such a thing. He is out of his mind. It seems that he has nothing to be scared of...as if nothing can intervene with him. That’s why I was not sure whether or not I should translate it for you and Prof. Pat.” She repeatedly apologized to Leona. “Thank you very much for telling me.” Leona could not think of any words to share with her.

After the workshop was completed, Dr. Star came up to Leona. He arranged an appointment with the Minister of Education for tomorrow morning. He intended to make sure the responsibility of each agency. The participants will include related section chiefs of the Ministry of Education, Dr. Dole of University of Education and Mr. Bagje, the consultant.

“Leona, we need to come up with the strategy. The order of our Minister will be the final words for all of us...” Dr. Star’s words stayed in Leona’s mind very deeply.