

# Narrowing the Gender Gap

## Empowering Women through Literacy Programmes



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



UNESCO Institute  
for Lifelong Learning

Narrowing the Gender Gap – Empowering Women through Literacy Programmes

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Empowering Women through Literacy Programmes

Case studies from the UNESCO Effective Literacy  
and Numeracy Practices Database (LitBase)

<http://www.unesco.org/uil/litbase/>



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Published in 2015 by  
UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning  
Feldbrunnenstraße 58  
20148 Hamburg  
Germany

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We would like to thank the following people for their support in developing case studies during their internships at UIL: Medaldo Runhare, Anne Darmer, Leila Brown-Assadi, Moussa Gadio, Kwaku Gyening Owusu, Sarah Marshall, Mihika Shah-Wundenberg, Mariana Simoes, Angelina Robitschko, Mariana Simoes, Ayda Hagh Talab, Thomas James Day, Mika Hama, Seara Moon, Stephanie M. Harvey, Michelle Viljoen, Laura Fox, Justin P. Jimenez, Rouven Adomat, Shao Lingwei, Ruth Zannis, and Julian Kosh

Edited by Ulrike Hanemann with support from Cassandra Scarpino

Graphic design by Jan Kairies

ISBN 978-92-820-1186-7



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## Foreword

In recent years, the need to empower women through literacy has been gaining recognition. In 2013, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) published a selection of literacy programmes with a particular focus on women as part of a contribution to related initiatives. Given the great interest that this publication raised – printed copies were soon out of stock – I decided to produce a second edition. It has been updated with new case studies and a modernized graphic design.

Gender equality is a key principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and one of UNESCO's strategic priorities. However, two-thirds of non-literate adults around the world are women, and this has not changed since 2000. Upon reviewing the Education for All (EFA) data published between 2000 and 2015, the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2015 identified this disparity as one of the persistent challenges in adult literacy and education. While there is much to do to redress existing gender disparities, we are also witnessing an array of inspiring literacy programmes that directly – or predominantly – target women in several countries.

In line with UNESCO's mandate to make information regarding effective literacy policies and programmes available worldwide, UIL has developed the Effective Literacy and Numeracy Practices database (LitBase), the source from which the literacy programmes documented in this publication originate. They were selected to showcase successful approaches that target non-literate young

and adult women, equipping them with relevant, high-quality learning opportunities and empowering them with the basic skills of literacy and numeracy.

The examples included in this compilation reflect how literacy learning can support the empowerment of women, families, communities, and ultimately entire societies. They further demonstrate how women can overcome barriers that they face when accessing learning opportunities through creative and mindful programme designs. Involving men and community leaders in successful change processes is a key requirement, as is the direct participation of women in the design, planning and evaluation of literacy learning. Experience indicates that programmes that are part of lifelong learning policies and supported financially over many years generate the greatest amount of interest.

I am confident that this publication will support the ongoing demand for best practice examples of literacy programmes that have been shown to reduce gender disparities with innovative approaches. It will hopefully contribute to a better understanding of the issues and challenges involved with making literacy programmes more attractive and accessible for women. Furthermore, I expect that it will provide literacy stakeholders, including policy-makers, programme providers and practitioners, with insights on how the transformative potential of literacy can be used to empower women, thereby paving the way towards gender equality.

Arne Carlsen, Director UIL

# Introduction

Access to basic education is a fundamental human right. Ensuring this right is a reality for girls and women has been an international commitment for several decades. It is enshrined, for example, in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995), the Dakar Education for All (EFA) Framework for Action (2000–2015, Goal 5), and the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs, 2000–2015, Goal 3/Target 1). EFA Goal 4 makes explicit that efforts to achieve ‘a 50% improvement in the levels of adult literacy by 2015’ should focus especially on women. However, progress towards these and other internationally agreed targets has been mixed. While many countries have taken steps to reduce gender disparities through literacy programmes that directly target women, it remains the case that two-thirds of non-literate adults globally are women; a statistic has not changed since 2000. This situation is likely to perpetuate the poverty of millions of women and thus impede human development in many parts of the world.

Real progress in realizing the right to education is impossible without specific strategies that focus on women and prioritize the challenge of low literacy levels and poor basic education. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015, outline a new and ambitious worldwide commitment to achieving gender equality in education, particularly through Goal 4: to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. Target 4.6 commits member states to ensuring that all young people and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy by 2030. While gender equality cuts across all the targets of Goal 4, one specific target (4.5) focuses specifically on the elimination of gender disparities in education.

## Mainstreaming gender into adult literacy

Women’s literacy is closely related to women’s empowerment, for decades a declared objective of adult literacy and education. The empowering impact of literacy is generally seen in terms of developmental benefits such as decreased maternal mortality and infant mortality rates, enhanced incomes and improved livelihoods. Women’s empowerment should, however, also be valued as a participatory process that is transformative in nature (Robinson-Pant, 2014). In contrast to notions of empowerment for more instrumental socio-economic purposes, feminist scholars have defined empowerment ‘as a process through which structures of power can be identified, negotiated and transformed’, and have recognized that ‘literacy

and education are critical means through which such processes can be unleashed’ (Ghose and Mullick, 2015: 350).

Mainstreaming gender into adult literacy and education involves taking into account the processes, outcomes and impacts of the whole cycle whereby learning activities are planned, designed, implemented, monitored and evaluated. It should be informed by an understanding of existing gender awareness, identities, roles and relationships, as well as the possibilities of transforming these in or as a result of such learning processes. Everybody should be engaged in this, not only girls and women but also boys and men, if not whole communities. It is about carefully screening every aspect of the learning process and prioritizing investment in quality learning provision for girls and women. It must involve taking the measures necessary to address structural challenges and rectify existing gender disparities, linking lifelong learning to the achievement of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals.

A number of lessons can be drawn from past experiences of mainstreaming gender into literacy and adult education, and of addressing the challenges that impede the integration of a gender perspective into literacy and adult learning policies and programmes. These lessons relate to critical issues such as accessibility, quality, the relevance of literacy and adult education policies and programmes, and the empowerment of disadvantaged and marginalized learners on the difficult journey towards gender equality.

There is, for example, evidence that women in multilingual and multi-ethnic contexts benefit more from mother-tongue instruction in non-formal settings. However, all too often, existing gender hierarchies determine who has access to which languages, and which languages are used in domains of political power. Decisions as to language policy, and, specifically, the language of instruction appropriate for literacy and adult education programmes, should therefore be based both on cultural and ethnic factors and on gender relationships and perspectives. One major challenge is to address a wide range of factors pertaining to exclusion and inequalities in ways that do justice to the complexity of identities and interests at stake, while, at the same time, further reducing gender inequities.

Individual education and training programmes for girls and women are often one-shot interventions that are not articulated within the (adult) education system. Such programmes tend to address only the most immediate practical needs at the lowest level of literacy and skills training, usually in traditionally female areas such as knitting and cooking. They of-



ten fail to tackle strategic gender needs in ways that would equip women to overcome their generally subordinate position within their families, communities and societies. They also fail to address structural challenges systematically or to involve men and society at large. An effective approach to gender equality and women's empowerment takes strategic gender needs on board and facilitates progression beyond community literacy learning. Only learning opportunities that allow for progression through recognized qualifications and are an integral part of articulated, flexible and permeable systems will support lifelong learning societies capable of promoting gender equality.

Recent reports and research studies make a clear case for the promotion and provision of literacy learning opportunities for women, based on evidence of how literacy and learning can support development and lead to empowerment (UNESCO, 2012; Eldred, 2013; Robinson-Pant, 2014). However, there are many challenges that must be addressed before women can access and make better use of such opportunities. These include socio-economic barriers to education, social norms, traditional beliefs and cultural expectations, which can be huge barriers to learning for women. Participation can also be hindered by distance (rural dwelling) and insecurity. Violence remains an important barrier to girls' and women's participation in education.

Opportunities to progress beyond basic-level community literacy learning and acquire recognized qualifications are often very limited. Furthermore, it can be difficult to involve men, who control and exercise power, in transformative processes that seek to empower women. It is not easy to implement empowerment programmes at grassroots level. One reason for this is that empowerment means different things for different women, depending on their situation. The challenge of influencing policy and funding decisions, at national, regional and local levels, is huge. In many countries, women are significantly under-represented in decision-making, management and governance within local communities, institutions and government. Their voices are simply not heard within families or communities or at any level of governance (ibid.).

### Learning from successful experiences

All the programmes featured in this publication focus on women and each faces some or most of the challenges listed above. Many of these challenges are intertwined and will require complex strategies to redress or overcome them. In short, unleashing the empowering potential of literacy for women will require creative and imaginative responses. The examples included here, all selected from the UNESCO's Effective Literacy and Numeracy Practices Database (LitBase), show how literacy programmes in different

regions of the world have developed solutions that address the challenges and potential barriers women face in accessing empowering literacy and learning opportunities.

These case studies provide lessons of potential importance to literacy stakeholders, including policymakers, programme managers and practitioners active in different contexts. They show that literacy development is not simply about creating opportunities to learn a set of skills required to read and write. Women's literacy is bound up with issues of equity, violence, health, girls' education, community involvement and governance. The examples show that literacy is a complex process which must be integrated with other development activities, including those focused on women's health, employment, active citizenship and family and community relationships. However, they also testify to how literacy learning can support the empowerment of women, their families and communities, and how this, in turn, can promote successful strategies to address identified challenges.

Most of the women's literacy programmes featured in this compilation take a functional approach, linking literacy learning with income-generating activities in ways that are directly responsive to local needs and potentials. The Integrated Women's Empowerment Programme in Ethiopia, for example, combines literacy education with non-formal vocational skills training and entrepreneurial or business training and support, which helps adult women in rural areas to improve their livelihoods. The Socio-Economic Empowerment and Integration for Women programme in Morocco also combines literacy learning with pre-vocational skills training leading to income-generating activities. Literacy, Training and Employment for Women, in Algeria, goes beyond providing women with literacy and vocational skills by also supporting them to set up their own small businesses. And while the Economic Empowerment for Adolescent Girls Literacy Strengthening Programme in Liberia focuses on the empowerment of young women to improve their living standards through access to basic education and livelihood opportunities, it also addresses 'soft skills', specifically the development of self-reliance and a culture of learning and peace.

Other programmes engage women in learning by focusing on their role as mothers of young children. One example of this is the Turkish Family Literacy Programme, and, in particular, its component programme, Mother-Child Education, an intergenerational, culturally-sensitive and home-based early childhood education (ECE) and adult education/literacy programme targeting socially disadvantaged children and their mothers, many of whom struggle with literacy. The Palestine Early Childhood, Family and Community Education Programme encourages parents, predominantly mothers, to take an active role in the education of their children. The intergenerational

and community-based approach of the programme aims to promote community empowerment through lifelong learning. The different sub-programmes reflect the programme's strong focus on women. These include the Mother to Mother Programme, the Learn to Play Programme, the Young Women Empowerment and Prevention of Early Marriage Programme, and the Combating Domestic Violence Programme. The emphasis on women is also reflected in the programme's home visitation component.

The United Kingdom's Prison Family Learning Programme is an integrated and intergenerational prison-based non-formal educational programme which primarily targets imprisoned mothers and their children, aiming to empower both. It seeks to enhance the literacy skills of both mother and child, and to promote positive communication and relationships, while strengthening family bonds. The Mother and Child Education Programme in Nigeria is another integrated and intergenerational education and literacy programme that covers a range of needs, including adult literacy and early childhood education (ECE), health, civic education, environmental management and conservation, income generation and the promotion of employment in rural areas. The integration of literacy, life skills and ECE learning opportunities has been critical both in ensuring the success of this rural project and in stimulating community participation.

The empowerment of women and adolescent girls is at the heart of the Tostan Community Empowerment Programme's activities in Senegal. The programme works with the whole community so that the women can actively participate in and lead community activities. Particular attention is paid to mobilizing people to promote positive social change, often resulting in the elimination of social norms and practices that harm women. One of the important lessons of the programme is that trying to force change through coercive action and condemnation can be counterproductive as it can cause people to become defensive and, thus, more likely to cling to their traditional beliefs. Tostan shows that a programme that is participatory and works from the bottom up can succeed when its design takes into consideration needs identified by the learners themselves.

Literacy in Local Language, a Springboard for Gender Equality, implemented by Associação Progresso in rural communities in Mozambique, is an integrated literacy-gender programme that provides literacy classes in local languages with a focus on awareness-raising and advocacy on domestic violence and human rights. The programme works simultaneously with two main target groups: women and men already enrolled in literacy classes in twenty-five rural communities; and local leaders, including village chiefs, leaders of male and female initiation rites, matrons and religious leaders. Working with community leadership is considered essential in achieving the

desired changes in the recognition of women's rights. One of the lessons learned was that community monitoring of the programme's gender component was a powerful instrument for involving and developing the sense of ownership of literacy teachers and students, as well as of a wider group of community members, particularly local leaders. Furthermore, establishing a direct link between teaching in the classroom and social mobilization activity with community leaders turned out to be a highly effective approach to bringing about inclusive and sustained change in gender relations, particularly in creating opportunities for women's and girls' participation in community development activities.

Many programmes aim to enhance learners' understanding of personal, family and community health and hygiene. The Gender Justice for Marginalized Women Programme, in Indonesia, is an integrated programme which offers opportunities for basic literacy and life skills training, including health education. Most importantly, it also offers training in reproductive health, childcare, psychological support and other care services to marginalized women in urban slums and rural communities. The Philippines' Supporting Maternal and Child Health Improvement and Building Literate Environments (SMILE) project provides literacy and health education to support families in the autonomous region of Muslim Mindanao. A special feature of this project is the Mothers' Organization, created by learners who attended the health education classes. This group prepares its own action plans for collective activities and civic engagement.

Similarly, the Adult Female Functional Literacy Programme, implemented by the Bunyad Foundation in Pakistan, links the improvement of literacy skills with the empowerment of women through the promotion of health awareness, particularly concerning reproductive health. The challenge of social resistance to young women's participation was addressed by organizing literacy classes close to learners' homes and teaching them to read the Urdu translation of the Qur'an. Another innovative programme implemented by Bunyad in Pakistan, the Mobile-based Post-Literacy Programme, faced similar challenges: male family members strongly disagreed with the idea of giving mobile phones to young women. However, in the end, the trust the community had in the Bunyad Foundation helped overcome such barriers.

In Latin America, a lack of literacy skills and basic education affects indigenous women more than it does other groups. The move to implement the Bilingual Literacy and Reproductive Health Project in Bolivia was supported by evidence of the strong correlation between a population's standards of reproductive health and its level of education and was driven by the need to address disparities that were particularly pronounced within the indigenous population. The programme takes a multicultural and

bilingual approach to empowering indigenous people. This involves integrating indigenous knowledge systems into the learning process and promoting the development of bilingual literacy skills. The open discussion of sensitive topics such as intra-familial violence against women and women's rights has led to increased awareness and participation of women in civic life. Likewise, the Mexican Bilingual Literacy for Life Programme aims to empower indigenous peoples through the creation of bilingual educational opportunities that value and respect the indigenous culture and identity. The use of learners' respective mother tongues in teaching basic literacy skills is benefitting particularly rural indigenous women who have less exposure and opportunity to learn the mainstream language (Spanish).

A creative approach to engaging women in literacy learning is used by the Literacy Through Poetry Programme in Yemen. It offers women with little or no education the opportunity to develop literacy skills, building on their cultural traditions and heritage, particularly through the use of local poetry, proverbs and stories. By starting with and building on learners' existing oral skills and knowledge, the approach values prior learning and eschews a deficit approach. It demonstrates that the motivation to acquire literacy skills is more durable when based on local knowledge systems and traditions valued by learners. The experience in Yemen, however, also highlights the challenges such projects can encounter, including male resistance to the programme, possibly because it empowered women. Similarly, the Mothers' School of the Purun Citizen Community in the Republic of Korea combines literacy learning with poetry, autobiography writing, artwork and theatrical performance. This approach not only supports creativity but also develops the self-esteem of the elderly women targeted by the programme.

Another remarkable programme is Khabar Lahariya (New Waves), in Nirantar, India, which links literacy with the production of a contextually relevant and gender-sensitive low-cost weekly rural newspaper. Participating women have learned skills in news gathering and production, creating a pool of community-based female journalists who produce and disseminate essential news about their communities. The achievements of this programme include an enhanced culture of reading within communities, increased civic awareness, gender empowerment and the generation of employment and income. Given the predominantly traditional context, this programme has also encountered severe challenges in engaging and retaining learners and in encouraging trained women to move around their communities collecting news and information. In order to address some of these context-related challenges, Nirantar set up Sahajani Shiksha Kendra – the Literacy and Education for Women's Empowerment Programme – focused on

rural women's and adolescent girls' empowerment through village-level and residential literacy camps. The programme's outreach activities target women from marginalized communities such as Dalits and Adivasis.

The examples in this compilation highlight the wide variety of approaches to mainstreaming gender into literacy programmes and promoting women's empowerment. While some of the programmes have no explicit focus on women and encourage – or at least do not exclude – the participation of men as well, others solely target women. This is the focus, for example, of the Functional Literacy and Women's Support Programme in Turkey, where 70% of non-literate adults are women. This programme aims to develop the literacy and numeracy skills of women. It has a unique women's support component of twenty-five topics designed to increase awareness of women's rights, health, hygiene, communication and child development. The Promoting Women's Literacy in Angola and Mozambique (FELITAMO) programme also aims to empower young and adult women, focusing in particular on those living in rural communities. India is home to most (in absolute numbers) of the non-literate adult women in the world, and the government there has launched the Saakshar Bharat Mission, a literacy campaign with a focus on women and adolescents. However, it is not exclusively aimed at women and does not explicitly aim to empower women.

## Conclusion

The literacy programmes featured here all support, either directly or indirectly, the empowerment of women and reflect a wide range of differing aims, approaches and experiences. Challenges and barriers to women's participation in learning are similar across many contexts, though the solutions different programme providers have adopted vary a great deal. Many programmes equate women's empowerment with addressing poverty (improvement of their economic situation) and social inequality (access to information on rights, reproductive health and civic participation). A number of programmes also include 'soft skills' such as critical thinking, awareness, self-esteem, and ethno-cultural and linguistic identities, aiming at the transformation of power relationships. Progress towards social transformation can be supported by both traditional and non-traditional approaches, and resistance to such changes can be successfully addressed by involving men, families and community leaders and by taking small steps and a bottom-up approach. Analysis of the programmes suggests that women's empowerment is a process rather than a short-term outcome.

Every one of the programmes featured in this publication has important experiences and lessons to

share. They can serve as a rich source of inspiration for literacy stakeholders around the world, including policymakers, programme providers and practitioners, on how to succeed in reducing gender disparities in and through adult literacy and basic education. More examples of innovative literacy programmes can be found on UNESCO's Effective Literacy and Numeracy database (LitBase), a continuously developing resource of promising adult literacy and learning programmes (<http://www.unesco.org/uil/litbase/>). UNESCO invites providers of successful programmes not yet featured in LitBase to send us information about their literacy programmes. Please visit the LitBase website for further details.

Ulrike Hanemann, Hamburg, 2015

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## ETHIOPIA

# Integrated Women's Empowerment Programme (IWEP)

### Implementing Organization

dvv International's Regional Office, East and Horn of Africa

### Language of Instruction

multilingual (e.g. Amharic; Tigrinya; Oromifa; Tigre)

### Funding

The Royal Netherlands Embassy (RNE)

### Programme Partners

Federal Government through the Ministry of Education (MoE) and other related Bureaus, Woreda and Kebele offices such as Women's Affairs, Agriculture, TVET and Trade and Industry; NGOs and Women's Associations.

### Date of Inception

mid-2006 (five-year pilot phase)

### Background and Context

Over the past few decades, Ethiopia has instituted various educational programmes including the Universal, Free and Compulsory Primary Education Programme (for children under 15 years); the Technical Vocational Education and Training Programme (TVETP, for out-of-school youth and adults), and the Integrated Functional Adult Education (or IFAE) programme focusing on adult literacy integrated with other sectors and wider livelihoods concerns. This collaboration has been part of a wider campaign to make education more accessible to all and thus to improve literacy levels, promote development, poverty reduction and social transformation. Yet in spite of these concerted efforts, the rate of adult illiteracy in the country remains alarmingly high, particularly among adult women. According to current government figures more than 20 million adults are illiterate. UNESCO further estimates that more than 60% and 75% of the total adult population and adult female population, respectively, are functionally illiterate and unskilled as of 2003–2007. The high rate of functional illiteracy among adult women is the result of a complex set of socio-economic and cultural factors which often prevent girls and women from accessing education. In addition many existing adult education programmes fail to address women's basic livelihood needs as they continually prioritize basic literacy over livelihood skills training and support. In light of these issues and

recognizing that a more holistic, livelihood-oriented approach to adult education is necessary to appeal to women and mothers with familial responsibilities. dvv international in partnership with the Ministry of Education, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and various other local NGOs and government sector offices at regional and local levels instituted the Integrated Women's Empowerment Programme (IWEP) in mid-2006. The programme acknowledged the fact that educating women has a strong potential to stimulate community development, combat poverty and improve familial living standards. Due to some challenges during the start-up, actual implementation commenced in June 2008 and the programme phased out and concluded in March 2013.

### The Integrated Women's Empowerment Programme (IWEP)

The IWEP was designed as an integrated programme to provide functional adult literacy, using three main components: livelihoods/non-formal vocational skills training; entrepreneurial support in the form of business skills training, access to start-up capital and business development, and a support service to poor, illiterate adult women in both rural and urban communities. The programme was implemented in six regional states of Ethiopia: Afar, Addis Ababa City Administration, Tigray, Oromia, Amhara, and the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region (SNNPR), reaching almost 30,000 women at the time of phase-out and conclusion. What made IWEP unique were not its components, but the way it was delivered in an integrated manner across all modalities of design and implementation.

### Aims and Objectives

IWEP had 7 Result Areas which contributed to the achievement of the overall project purpose and its ultimate goal: reducing the levels of poverty amongst women and their households in poor areas. The goal, purpose and results are depicted in the table below. Of key importance is the fact that IWEP was supposed to develop a model of women's empowerment which could be replicated by various stakeholders after the pilot phase. The focus was therefore not on reaching large numbers, but rather the development of methodologies, approaches and frameworks that can assist role-players to empower and improve women's livelihoods in an integrated manner. It was also expected that the capacity to plan, participate or undertake and manage integrated programmes across different administrative levels will be strengthened amongst IWEP's partners.

## Programme Implementation: Approaches and Methodologies

As noted above, the IWEP had three major components, namely functional adult literacy, skills training and entrepreneurship support (business skill training and access to finance through saving and loan schemes, small scale credit, grants). The programme required specific and innovative implementation approaches and modalities to bring about the integration required for its success and sustainability. IWEP also trained partner organizations in the different approaches and methodologies in order to enable them to cascade these at community level. Some of the manuals and materials developed by IWEP were used to conduct Training of Trainer workshops for partner organizations are listed below. They were published in different languages such as Amharic, Tigrigna, Oromi-fa and others:

- FAL Curriculum Framework;
- FAL Curriculum Guide;
- FAL Writers' Manual;
- FAL ToT Manual;
- FAL Facilitators' Guide;
- Reflect ToT Manual;
- Reflect Facilitators' Guide;
- Integrated FAL/Business Skill Facilitator Guide;
- Integrated Reflect / Business Skill Facilitator Guide;
- Business Development Support Service Manual;
- Guideline on Entrepreneurship Fund and Revolving Credit;
- Guideline on legalization of women groups; and
- IWEP Partners' Guideline giving a full overview of the programme implementation modality and approaches to be followed with necessary formats for reporting, etc.

The following key activities were undertaken by partner organisations during the institutionalization of the programme at the community level:

- Forming District (Woreda) Steering Committees and Technical Teams and signing Memorandums of Understanding;
- Establishment of Centre Management Committees;
- Selection of Women Group Facilitators;
- Training of Women Group Facilitators in Literacy (FAL/Reflect);
- Establish and equip learning centres for groups to meet;
- Conducting of a situation analysis, baseline study and learner assessments;
- Conducting of a market assessment and analysis of the results in order to plan for relevant skills training to be conducted;



- Contracting of service providers/technical partners to provide skills training for women groups;
- Training of facilitators and experts and provide business skills training with literacy in an integrated manner to women groups;
- Provision of Business Development Support Services (BDS) to women groups on regular basis to assess success of business, market linkages, etc.
- Based on IWEP's criteria, providing access to start-up capital through different mechanisms and approaches, e.g. Self-Help Group Approach, Cooperatives, Revolving Credit, Matching Fund, etc.

## Institutional Roles and Responsibilities

In order to make the 'Institutional Integration' practical, NGO and government partners across a range of different sectors and tiers of government had to be brought together in both coordination and implementation structures. In this regard IWEP designed a 'Partner Modality' to show who should form part of the structure and the type of role each stakeholder would be playing. The implementation structures were called 'technical teams' and were comprised of experts from relevant government sector offices and NGO partners at the local level.

These experts would cooperate as virtual teams to deliver training and services to the IWEP target group. At the same time, the heads of the government sector offices and NGO partners formed a structure called 'Steering Committees' who gave oversight and guidance to the programme's overall implementation. In





the case of Ethiopia, the steering committees were chaired by the District Administrator who was well-placed to bring all sector offices and development initiatives together. These structures were transformed within the Ethiopian government's IFAE programme and currently operate as 'IAAE' (Integrated Functional Adult Education) coordination structures in Ethiopia. The role of dvv international through its IWEP Central Programme Implementation Unit (CPIU) and regional coordination units (RCUs) was to provide technical and financial support to partners in the form of training of training workshops, programme implementation advice, material development, and monitoring and evaluation.

### Programme / Curriculum Design and Implementation

Most IWEP groups started with the literacy component on topics identified during local situation analysis exercises and using either the FAL or Reflect approach. Decisions were made at the programme planning stage to pilot both approaches in prior selected areas. District level experts from local NGO partners and government sector offices developed 'Facilitator Guides' with units on different topics. These Facilitator Guides were used by the community facilitators to facilitate the classes 2-3 times per week for approximately 2 hours at a time. Women started saving immediately after group formation so as to build up complimentary / matching capital for IWEP's

available Women Entrepreneurship Fund which could be utilized after the skills training.

Experts from government sector offices such as Trade and Industry, Agriculture, TVET and primary partners (NGOs and Women Affairs Offices) received training in IWEP's market assessment approach – a simplified version of value chain analysis. These experts worked together in teams and conducted market assessments for each operational woreda (district) of IWEP. The results of the market assessments then had to be shared with the women who usually had their own pre-determined ideas on the kind of business they want to engage in. The market assessment exercise and alignment with the women's interest therefore directly determined the kind of skills training that was conducted and the selection of the best role-player / partner to do so.

Once women had attended the skills training they were eager to take loans from their group and start their business. It was therefore important to incorporate topics on business skills training as early as possible into the literacy programme so that women gain this knowledge and can start their business having analysed their competitors, being aware of profit calculations, etc. IWEP has worked closely with partners to integrate the contents of its business skills training manual with the literacy programme and facilitators have been trained so that women receive this as integrated skill package where business concepts are linked to literacy and numeracy in a variety of local languages. Business Development Support Services (BDS) were rendered by technical partners who visited



the women groups on a monthly basis to follow-up on the success of their businesses and identify gaps and further training needs.

### Recruitment and Training of Programme Facilitators

To recruit community facilitators, IWEP partners would share the selection criteria with the wider community and local community leaders and structures, so as to identify and nominate potential candidates. The implementing partner organisation then interviewed the nominated facilitators before making a final selection for recruitment. Some of the selection criteria for IWEP's community facilitators included:

- They have to be from the community and well-respected.
- They must have grade 8 and higher education level and fluent in reading and writing the local language of the area.
- They must have a good approach in helping people.
- Preference is given to female facilitators, if they comply with the above-mentioned and other criteria, etc.

After being recruited, facilitators received 2 weeks initial training in adult education practices and approaches used in the IWEP, using either the FAL or Reflect approaches. In particular, facilitators received training in adult learning principles, class room/group management, participatory teaching-learning methodologies and time management, how to prepare

lesson plans, conducting regular learner assessments using the LAMP (Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Programme) and Numeracy scales, keeping administrative records, and report-writing. Once a year, facilitators would receive a 5-6 day refresher training on topics they found difficult or need additional support on. Further support was provided on a monthly basis to facilitators by the supervisors of the programme. As already mentioned, an integrated group of experts called the 'technical team' would visit each women's group and facilitator on monthly basis to provide support on all IWEP's key components of literacy, skills and business training, managing the entrepreneurship fund, etc. In addition all facilitators in a district would meet with the technical team for a day per month to share experiences, receive some training on the unit topic for the coming month, submit reports and deal with administrative matters. This required technical team members to work closely together, share their supervision reports and conduct these monthly meetings jointly to reinforce the integrated implementation modality.

### Programme Impact and Lessons Learnt

IWEP as part of the bilateral agreement with the Government of Ethiopia reached almost 30 000 women across Ethiopia with a three pronged approach combining literacy, skills training and entrepreneurship support in the form of access to start-up capital and business skills training and business development support services. The programme was implemented with a variety of local partners ranging from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to various government sectors offices. The implementation approach was designed to mirror coordination structures from micro (municipal and district) to meso (zones and regions) and macro (federal line ministries) levels. IWEP reached out to 6 of Ethiopia's 11 regions and more than 40 districts.

As per the programme's end evaluation and best practices report, presented during the final Lesson Bazaar event in March 2013, IWEP achieved some of the following immediate impact and achievements:

- The experience of the IWEP has been recognised and rewarded by different regional and district government structures in Ethiopia. Some regions have used the lessons learnt from IWEP and incorporated these into their wider IFAE implementation strategies and programmes. This includes the materials and approaches developed during IWEP's lifespan in different languages.
- IWEP managed to build the capacity of a wide range of experts from both government and NGO sectors in different approaches and methodologies. These experts became a resource for their organisations and the country at large.



- IWEP trained and qualified more than 1000 community facilitators. These facilitators continue to be part of the groups and some of them have been incorporated into the government's IFAE programme where they continue to contribute to adult education and livelihoods improvement.
- Women participants have indeed improved their literacy and numeracy skills and many examples exist of how they use it in their daily lives with their children, such as conducting their businesses and using technology.
- Women's livelihoods had improved and some started to start a second and third business after they achieved success in the first group business. Some are even recruiting family members and husbands to assist them. The additional income has assisted them to send children to school, build bigger houses, and improve their overall welfare.
- Women learned to save money and work with revolving credit amongst themselves as a group. Most groups have built up huge capital which they continue to revolve and lend to each other. This also became a cohesive factor in keeping the group together. The saving culture has spilled over to the households and many women report that their husbands also took up saving money.
- IWEP's partners' effort to legalise all women groups within the Ethiopia government's cooperative or SME system have assisted greatly to make the groups sustainable and reports from former partners confirm that most groups are still functioning especially with the livelihood component almost one year after the programme phased out.
- Women's lives have improved in terms of their awareness about health and hygiene, family planning, community involvement and many other spheres of life.
- Adult literacy takes time, especially when it is integrated with livelihoods related activities. All of these have to be balanced within the reality of women's daily lives and workload.
- So-called 'post-literacy' material should be developed earlier on in the programme. This is especially the case when the mother tongue language does not have a wide range of materials available for participants to practice their new-found literacy skills.

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### Challenges and Lessons Learned

When reflecting back on the programme and the challenges experienced, many lessons emerged:

- The involvement and commitment of all role-players was crucial to implement a programme of an integrated nature such as the IWEP.
- Programme sustainability starts from the first day of implementation and is linked to key decisions to create partner independence, building long-term capacity and implementing an affordable and replicable programme.
- Programme designs that fall within government's policies and strategies have a bigger chance to gain support, be sustainable and succeed.
- Sufficient start-up and preparation time should be allowed in order to select partners, conduct needs assessments, baseline studies, develop materials, etc.

## LIBERIA

# Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls Project

### Implementing Organization

National Adult Education Association of Liberia (NAEAL)

### Language of Instruction

English

### Programme Partners

Government of Liberia (through the Ministries of Gender, Development and Education), Nike Foundation, the Government of Denmark and the World Bank

### Date of Inception

March 2011

### Context and Background

Liberia has witnessed two successive civil wars in recent years (1989 to 1996 and 1999 to 2003) which caused extensive damage to its economic and educational infrastructure. According to the Ministry of Education (MoE), 80% of the 2,400 primary schools that were fully operational before the civil wars broke out were rendered dysfunctional during the course of the wars due to the prevailing high levels of insecurity in general and, in particular, the systematic targeting of schools as sources of child recruits by rival armed groups. Governmental funding for education was severely reduced since financial resources were diverted and committed to fighting the civil wars. In addition, most schools were extensively damaged and looted while millions of people (including learners and professional teachers) were displaced from their homes. Most perniciously, tens of thousands of children (estimated at more than 20,000) were forced to participate in the war as child soldiers. These developments further undermined Liberia's educational system and prevented hundreds of thousands of children from attending school.

The effects of the war-induced disruption of Liberia's educational system are still prevalent today, almost a decade after the end of the last devastating civil war in 2003 and in spite of the impressive progress that has been made in rebuilding the sector since the dawn of democratic governance in 2005. Noteworthy, Liberia's educational sector is still encumbered by the war-induced shortages of schools and educational resources, the lack of qualified teachers, inadequate funding and high poverty rates (about 85% of the population live below the poverty line, on

less than USD 1.25 a day). There are also great challenges in re-enrolling the youth (particularly former child soldiers and young women from poor families) whose schooling was interrupted by the war not least because a majority of them are still suffering from the psychosocial effects of participating in the war and therefore find it extremely difficult to re-adjust to the formal school system. Because of these challenges, the net primary school attendance and completion rates (see above) as well as the national youth and adult literacy rates (estimated at 75% and 58%, respectively, as of 2005 to 2010) are still alarmingly low and are among the lowest in the sub-region. Similarly, the quality of education in Liberia continues to be remarkably low due, in part, to the acute shortages of qualified teachers and resources.

The prevailing depressed state of Liberia's educational system grossly undermines the country's development as well as young people's life opportunities and social status, all of which endangers national security and peace. Thus, in an effort to support the State in promoting universal access to basic education and gender empowerment as well as in fostering effective post-conflict reconstruction, peace and development, the National Adult Education Association of Liberia (NAEAL) initiated the Economic Empowerment for Adolescent Girls (EPAG) Literacy Strengthening Programme in 2011.

### The EPAG Literacy Strengthening Programme

The EPAG literacy-strengthening programme is an integrated non-formal educational (literacy and life skills training) programme which is currently being implemented on a three-year pilot basis (2011 to 2013) in Montserrado and Margibi counties. The EPAG programme – which is part of the World Bank's broader Global Adolescent Girls Initiative (GAGI) – primarily targets about 2,500 young women (aged 16 to 27 years) from disadvantaged and poor communities which were also disproportionately affected by the civil wars. As such, a significant majority of the targeted beneficiaries are either illiterate or semi-literate primarily because the civil wars severely interrupted their education. Furthermore, most of the targeted beneficiaries also failed to re-enrol in the formal school system after the end of the civil wars due to poverty and the related challenges of providing for their families while attending school and without the necessary literacy and livelihood skills. It is against this background that the EPAG literacy-strengthening programme endeavours to equip the beneficiaries with effective literacy and livelihood skills in order to enable them to improve their overall living standards.

## Aims and Objectives

In addition to the above-mentioned primary goal, the ELP also aims to:

- Support governmental efforts to universalise the provision of basic education in the country,
- Equip illiterate and semi-literate young women with effective literacy skills,
- Empower young women (gender empowerment) to improve their living standards as well as to actively participate in national developmental activities,
- Promote self-reliance among young women,
- Address gender inequalities with regards to access to basic education and livelihood opportunities,
- Nurture a culture of learning among socio-economically disadvantaged women, and
- Support governmental socio-economic reconstruction and peacebuilding efforts.

Essentially therefore, the EPAG literacy strengthening programme endeavours to empower young women in order to enhance the potential to improve socio-economic well-being as well as to actively and sustainably participate in national developmental activities.

## Programme Implementation: Approaches and Methodologies

The National Adult Education Association of Liberia (NAEAL) has devised various integrated strategies and methodologies in an effort to ensure the effective and sustainable implementation of the EPAG. Key among these includes the establishment of functional partnerships with the Government of Liberia, local communities and international developmental institutions; establishment of community-based study circles, development of a standardised programme monitoring and evaluation instrument and training of community-based programme facilitators.

### Establishment of Institutional Partnerships

The acute shortage of human and financial resources, the dearth of professional practitioners and the lack of effective coordination between various stakeholders often curtail the success and indeed sustainability of community-based non-formal educational programmes in post-conflict societies such as Liberia. In order to circumvent these challenges within Liberia, NAEAL has established functional partnerships with various governmental and non-governmental institutions including UNESCO, the Government of Liberia (through the Ministries of Gender, Development and Education), Nike Foundation, the Government of Denmark and the World Bank. These institutions provide NAEAL with critical financial and technical support necessary for the efficient implementation of the programme. In particular, the institutions strongly assist NAEAL in developing and producing learning materi-

als and in the training of programme facilitators. The EPAG project has also received critical support from President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf and, by extension, her government, as part of national efforts to promote gender empowerment and equality within Liberia. In addition, local leaders also assist NAEAL in coordinating the establishment of study circles within their communities and in undertaking public awareness campaigns that aim to encourage people to support the EPAG project. They also assist NAEAL in identifying and selecting disadvantaged young women to be enrolled into the EPAG project. The active participation of these stakeholders has therefore been central to the efficient implementation of the EPAG project since its establishment in 2011.

### Recruitment and Training of Facilitators

In addition, NAEAL has also recruited and trained 15 programme facilitators, all whom are university graduates with a first degree. The facilitators are therefore highly qualified. Nonetheless, they all lack the skills and experience needed to function effectively as literacy facilitators or educators. Accordingly, NAEAL provides all facilitators with professional induction and on-going in-service training and mentoring in a wide range of non-formal education subjects including:

- Non-formal education teaching-learning methods or approaches, particularly REFLECT and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methodologies;
- Design and development of appropriate teaching-learning materials
- Appropriate study-circle management practices;
- Community mobilisation skills; and
- Programme assessment/monitoring, evaluation and reporting methods.

Upon successful completion of the induction-training programme, each facilitator is assigned to train a study circle (class) of between 5 and 25 learners for within their communities. Apart from providing training services, the facilitators are also required to assist NAEAL in recruiting learners, mobilising communities to support the EPAG project, developing learning materials as well as in monitoring and evaluating the learning outcomes. Essentially therefore, facilitators are ultimately responsible for the day-to-day implementation of the programme and are paid USD 425 per month.

### Development of Teaching-Learning Materials

In order to facilitate the efficient and sustainable implementation of the EPAG, NAEAL has developed a variety of illustrative instructional materials such as study manuals, learner's workbooks, worksheets and visual aids for use by programme facilitators and learners. The study manuals are used by programme facilitators to enable them to systematically execute

their training duties. Therefore, the manuals contain critical instructions on, for example, teaching-learning methods, session topic and learning objectives. On the other hand, the learner's workbook has exercises for individual and/or group learning. Thus, apart from being used as the principal learning resource, the workbook also enables facilitators to monitor and assess the learning progress or outcomes of each learner on a daily basis.

### Recruitment and Retention of Learners

As noted above, EPAG programme facilitators, with support from community members, NAEAL's field technical teams and other stakeholders, are primarily responsible for mobilising young women to participate in the EPAG programme. To achieve this, the facilitators employ a variety of community-based outreach activities such as education awareness and advocacy campaigns. These campaigns are intended to encourage young women to enrol into the EPAG programme. Once identified, potential beneficiaries are subjected to a pre-enrolment assessment exercise, which aim to establish their literacy skills competencies, needs and future goals. The information derived from this exercise is used to group learners into appropriate study circles as well as to tailor the study programme to suit their needs and goals.

While the task of mobilising and enrolling young women into EPAG programme is relatively easy, motivating them to continue participating in the project has been a huge challenge primarily because most learners have family responsibilities. Accordingly, NAEAL has devised a number of strategies to circumvent this challenge. First, once formally enrolled into the programme, all learners are required to sign a Commitment Memorandum of Understanding (CMoU) with NAEAL. The CMoU is a social contract between NAEAL and the learner through which the latter formally declare his/her commitment to participate in the EPAG programme until graduation. NAEAL also employs community-based outreach and recreation activities as well as the provision of a daily transport stipend of one USD, food and child-care services to motivate learners to continue participating in the EPAG programme. These strategies have enabled NAEAL to maintain a 90% programme attendance rate.

### Teaching-Learning Approaches and Methods

NAEAL employs REFLECT and PRA methods as its main EPAG programme teaching-learning strategies or approaches. REFLECT and PRA are structured, participatory and experiential teaching-learning methodologies, which have their origins in Paulo Freire's pioneering work on educational pedagogy. The methods adapt and build on the learners' knowledge, opin-

ions and experiences to promote effective learning. Thus, rather than making learners passive recipients of knowledge and information (i.e. rote learning), REFLECT and PRA approaches actively involves learners in the learning process by empowering them to critically examine their own problems, formulate solutions and evaluate their achievements or failures. Essentially therefore, REFLECT and PRA methods combines a structured and activity-based approach to teaching and learning which allows learners to assume a central and active role in the process while the facilitator acts as a guide.

In line with the basic principles of REFLECT and PRA methodologies and in order to facilitate the effective implementation the EPAG programme, NAEAL has grouped learners into community-based learning groups or study circles. The 'study circles', with assistance and guidance from a facilitator, meet twice a week for one and the half hours over a period of 8 to 9 months. During the actual learning process, study circles employ a wide range of participatory activities such as group discussions, games, songs, role-plays or simulations, story-telling and question and answer sessions. They also extensively use an array of visual learning or instructional aids such as pictures, diagrams, worksheets or cards to complement the aforesaid activities.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

The monitoring and evaluation of the EPAG programme is conducted on an ongoing basis by facilitators and senior NAEAL officers. As noted above, facilitators assess, evaluate and record their study circles' learning progress on a daily using various strategies such as observations and focus group discussions. They also conduct qualitative assessments of individual learners' progress and achievements by assessing their workbook-based daily exercises. In addition, senior NAEAL officers also visit the study circles twice a month to assess the overall implementation of the programme. During such visits, the senior officers employ a variety of programme evaluation strategies including on-site observations of the teaching-learning processes, focus group discussions with learners, interviews with community members and meetings with facilitators.

### Programme Impact

The results of the programme evaluation processes have revealed that the EPAG is currently playing a critical role in improving the well-being of hitherto disadvantaged young women. Most importantly, the programme has enabled young women to gain access to basic education and life skills training. This has improved their literacy skills and livelihood opportunities, which in turn, has improved their living



standards and the developmental prospects of their communities. The programme has also increased young women's self-esteem and confidence not least they are now better equipped to be self-reliant.

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## MOZAMBIQUE

### Women's Literacy in Angola and Mozambique

#### Programme Title

Women's Literacy in Angola and Mozambique (Alfabetizacao Feminina em Angola e Moçambique, FELITAMO)

#### Implementing Organization

DVV International, Associação Progresso, Movement for Educational for All (MEPT), African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), and in Angola the Angolan Association for Adult Education (AAEA)

#### Language of Instruction

Portuguese and local languages

#### Funding

European Union and DVV International

#### Date of Inception

2010

#### Preliminary remark

NB: In 2010, the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association (DVV International) in association with several other partners launched a literacy programme especially designed to target women. Women's Literacy in Angola and Mozambique (Alfabetização Feminina em Angola e Moçambique, FELITAMO), was designed with the primary aim to empower youth and adult women through a greater participation in educational services, both as learners and literacy trainers. Although the programme has been equitably implemented in Angola and Mozambique, due to practical reasons this case study will focus on FELITAMO Mozambique.

#### Background and Context

Mozambique is marked by a great number of long-lasting challenges. As a colony of Portugal for 470 years, this Sub-Saharan Africa country experienced a civil war (1975–1992) which started right after its independence and resulted in large-scale emigration to neighbouring nations and a great economic dependence on South Africa. Although there has been a substantive increase in the household income, financial asset-holding and the access to and quality of public services since the first free elections in 1994, the current (2011) unemployment rate is 21% and over two-thirds of the population still live below the poverty line. In this low-income country, with an

economy based on agriculture, forestry and fisheries, approximately 60% of the population still resides in rural areas. The HIV/AIDS adult prevalence rate is 11.5% (2009, estimated), which places Mozambique among the countries with the eighth highest rates in the world with approximately 1.4 million people facing this health condition.

Education constitutes another great challenge as it is characterised by significant gender and income inequalities. In 2009, net enrolment rate for boys stood at 93% whereas for girls it equals 87%. Also, there are about 30,400 more male than female new entrants to Grade 1 (2009). Gender disparities are due to a number of reasons, such as family values that do not place enough importance on their girls' education and the great number of non-girl-friendly schools (e.g. public institutions which do not have separate toilets for girls). Adult literacy rates among men are almost twice as high than among women (70% and 40%, respectively, 2005–2008). Out of the total 5,759,000 adults who are illiterate, 69% are women. For persons aged 15 to 24 years, the gender difference is 18% favouring males. Inequalities in literacy rates are also found according to geographical location: there are 30.3% of urban illiterates as opposed to 65.7% of illiterates in rural areas; 15.1% of the adult population of the southern province of Maputo does not master reading and writing, whereas 68.4% residents of the northern province of Cabo Delgado face the same challenge (2004).

The current high illiteracy rates in Mozambique are not, however, only a result of poor early schooling. They are also a consequence of a lack of federal investments, since the importance of adult education was only recognised in 1975 after the country's independence from Portugal. It was only then that nationwide adult literacy and educational campaigns were launched as well as education and training programmes, which resulted in a substantial increase in literate youths and adults – from 3% to 28% (1974–1982). Most recently, the federal government has given increasing attention to improving educational services for this target population through several initiatives, such as the 2001–2005 Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty which has defined literacy and adult education as primary objectives among education programmes; and the National Strategy for Adult Literacy and Education and for Non-Formal Education (AEA/ENF) which was mainly designed to increase literacy rates in the country.

In the midst of these social and educational challenges FELITAMO is an innovative way to contribute to the government's recent efforts of increasing the number of opportunities for providing and improving programmes for the development and enhancement of Mozambique's human resources. This programme's main course of action is not, however, direct implementation of educational opportunities. Rather, it is

designed to enhance the delivery of services through the establishment of collaborative work among various organisations, provision of trainings and materials as well as the advocacy on the importance of education for women.

## FELITAMO

The FELITAMO programme is a pioneer in its field as it has combined strong and across-sector partnerships among five non-governmental, regional and international stakeholders. Besides DVV International, whose main role has been to coordinate and lead the programme's implementation, there are four other partners:

- Associação Progresso, a recipient of the 2005 UNESCO Literacy Prize aiming to reduce illiteracy rates at the village level in the Cabo Delgado province by providing a programme with a special focus on the use and instruction of local languages and by publishing materials for literacy classes in several local languages;
- the Movement for Education for All (MEPT, 1999), an advocacy movement initiated in 2008 in order to, among other objectives, increase awareness of the importance of educating women and providing them with literacy skills;
- the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET), a non-profit organisation based in Kenya that promotes educational services throughout Africa; finally
- the Angolan Association for Adult Education (AAEA), which was established in 1998 with the primary objective of increasing educational provision to youths and adults in Angola through the use and expansion of an adapted version of the REFLECT methodology (Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques).

This initiative also partners with local organisations that add expertise in specific areas, such as women's associations which provide deep understanding about gender issues. In addition to the establishment of multiple partnerships, FELITAMO is marked by other great innovative characteristics. For instance, it promotes community involvement through the Community Literacy Forums aiming to empower members to take charge of the literacy classes and ownership of its implementation through managing and planning; and monitoring the process. Furthermore, this initiative has strongly recognised the importance of increasing the provision of educational opportunities for women and advocated for this, having identified the scarcity of rural women with sufficient schooling levels to become educators (only 30% of the teaching workforce in primary schools is female, 2005) as well as there being a great gender gap in the access to education and mastering basic literacy and numeracy skills.

## Aims and Objectives

FELITAMO aims primarily to empower women in order to give this long-standing marginalised group an opportunity to rise out of poverty, improve their living conditions (i.e. health, education, housing and security), develop skills which will lead to the development of active citizenship and promote gender equality in society. Several specific objectives have been targeted in order to enable the organisation to reach this outcome. They are:

- to engage civic society in effective interventions to provide basic reading, writing and numeracy skills to female learners and professional development to female educators;
- to develop, implement and advocate for adult education models that are broad and innovative;
- to strengthen the capacity of civil society organisations to be better equipped to provide services on literacy as well as partnering with the government in order to maximise its resources;
- to strengthen partnerships among organisations that provide literacy classes across regions and countries;
- to enrich the materials for literacy classes in terms of quality, variety of languages and availability; and
- to improve the sharing and dissemination of best practices in the fields of literacy and adult education at regional, national and pan-African levels.

## Programme Implementation

FELITAMO has been implemented in Mozambique in two provinces: Cabo Delgado, the northernmost province of the country, in the districts of Mueda, Nangade and Muidumbe, and in the southern province of Nampula in the districts of Ilha de Moçambique and Nacaroa.

It also has a sister project in Angola, which has been implemented in the province of Kwanza Sul. The locations in both countries were selected according to the marked illiteracy rates among women: 83% in Cabo Delgado, 81.4% in Nampula and 77% in Kwanza Sul. The activities promoted by this programme may differ in each region, but are mostly focused on:

- rolling out the provision of literacy classes;
- training and coaching literacy teachers and supervisors;
- organising literacy events (e.g. a reading contest among trainers);
- developing learning materials in Portuguese and local languages;
- providing professional development for trainers on gender mainstreaming;
- organising advocacy events (e.g. a 60-people event to exchange experiences about advocacy, gender and literacy);

- enabling experience exchanges between stakeholders from Angola and Mozambique; and
- developing and disseminating best practices (e.g. by way of a newsletter in the DVV International website).

## Target Population

The population targeted by FELITAMO uses a multilevel approach which includes not only the individuals who benefit from education services, but also those who are involved in the provision of such services. FELITAMO has reached the following groups:

- providers of adult education from non-governmental and non-profit organisations;
- decision- and policy-makers who are invited to participate in at least one activity aimed at strengthening collaboration, communication and information sharing such as panels, exchange visits and conferences;
- literacy educators and stakeholders in school governance who are selected to learn about gender perspectives in their work, to understand how to establish an appropriate environment for adult learning and to receive adequate training in adult education; and
- non-literate and semi-literate rural youths and adults 80% of whom are females.

The participation of learners and literacy trainers varies in each region according to the organisation that heads the programme implementation. In Nampula, the first step is to identify where there are high rates of illiteracy among women so potential learners can be mobilised through community forums and by literacy trainers who invite their family members to join classes. They employ intergenerational learning in which trainers are school-age children who are recruited by school principals and community members in order to teach their own family members. Children are selected according to their high performance in school and the number of illiterate people in their families. In Cabo Delgado, recruitment of learners also take place in communities with high levels of illiteracy among women, but the recruitment is done through home visits and distribution of flyers that contain relevant information about the programme. Recruitment of trainers is made via the district offices of education, and it requires a trainer to have completed at least Grade 7.

## Teaching / Learning Approaches and Methodologies

The programme implemented by FELITAMO does not provide a framework to guide the teaching methodology to be used in the literacy classes with learners,

but it does give support to the partner organisations to continue and/or improve their approach. It also promotes the exchange of knowledge among the different organisations in order to enable partners to exchange best practices and lessons learned. Some common features across partners include the use of participatory approaches that empower participants to be active learners and the flexibility of classes in which organisations consult with the communities about their preferences in terms of location and timetables.

Some locations implement specific methodologies, such as the Programme for Families without Illiteracy and HIV / AIDS, an intergeneration learning model being carried out in Nampula, where the literacy trainers are sixth and seventh graders. Another example is the Programme of Eradication of Illiteracy at Village-Level which focuses on improving literacy rates on specific villages that have high demand of literacy classes in the province of Cabo Delgado. Its greatest innovative feature is the use of local languages during teaching and learning activities in order to increase participation of students during classes.

### Funding Support

The total cost for this 3-year initiative equals EUR 1.100.000. Ninety per cent of this amount has been provided by the European Union under the programme named Investing in People-Gender Equality in Mozambique and Angola. The remaining ten per cent was financed by DVV International.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

FELITAMO has set specific goals to be accomplished by the end of the three-year plan, which are focused on (a) developing literacy skills in 6,000 youths and adults, 4,800 of whom will be women, (b) training 300 literacy facilitators (50% of whom will be women), and (c) providing technical support to 30 trainers who will oversee the literacy facilitators (50% of whom will be women). A mid-term monitoring assessment has recently (November 2011) been carried out and showed that 80% of the planned intervention has already taken place. So far, the most outstanding activities have been the recruitment of trainers and the training of these facilitators. Also, the community forums have proven to be a great resource for community organising, empowering and producing a sense of ownership for participants becoming actively engaged in the implementation of literacy classes. The production and distribution of materials, in Portuguese as well as local languages, another key goal of this initiative, has been successfully achieved as both learners and trainers have received the necessary resources, albeit in limited quantities due to budgetary restrictions. Data collection for ongoing monitoring includes

monthly logs kept by trainers and supervisors, community forums and programme visits done twice per year by coordinators.

To date, though no formal external evaluation has been carried out in order to assess the impact of the programme, many benefits have been observed and reported in three core domains since the programme's inception. First, the social benefits refer to an improved equity of rights, especially with regard to gender issues. As FELITAMO's work focuses on educational services which mainly target women, this initiative has provided this group with an opportunity to have access to life-changing experiences as they learn basic literacy and numeracy skills aimed at effecting a direct impact on their lives.

This initiative has greatly contributed to changing the predominant male perception on female roles as mostly restricted to the performance of domestic chores and agricultural work in the communities where literacy classes are being provided. Second, considering that 20% of households are headed by single mothers, economic benefits are a direct result of women acquiring literacy and numeracy skills since it enables them to buy and sell goods instead of being victims of extortion; they become able to negotiate prices and improve their employability. Finally, learners have also greatly benefited at the personal level. For instance, they can now read medicine prescriptions and feel a greater sense of empowerment in their social relationships within their families and communities as well as having more confidence and respect in dealing with men.

### Challenges and Lessons Learned

Women are part of a social group that has been markedly marginalised in Mozambican society. This has led to a great number of women who experience many personal, social and economic struggles throughout their lives. Teen pregnancy, for instance, has been a major issue. The national rate of adolescent fertility, i.e. births per 1,000 women aged 15–19 years, equals 139 while the rate in its neighbouring country South Africa is 56 (2009). Also, the percentage of young women aged 15–24 with HIV (8.6%, 2009) is almost three times higher than the rate among young men (3.1%, 2009).

The core idea behind FELITAMO's initiative is to tackle these gender-related challenges by empowering women and increasing awareness of the major role women play in order to promote a sustainable development in society. Yet this issue also remains the biggest challenge the programme has had to face since its inception because many women have been prevented from attending classes on a regular basis in order to fulfil their very restricted female roles, such as doing domestic chores. This phenomenon has led to high drop-out rates among female learners. Fur-

thermore, since women have been historically left out of fully participating in the educational system, there are currently not enough female teachers in order to meet the programme's goals with regard to offering professional development to this target group. Lastly, the male predominant mentality of excluding women from being active participants in society has greatly affected decision-makers in being more gender sensitive and issuing policies focusing on empowering women. Therefore, FELITAMO has made great efforts to advance in this matter by trying to increase the awareness of political leaders of the great positive impact resulting from capacitating female citizens.

The key lesson learned so far since the beginning of this initiative is about the importance of enabling community members to take ownership at various levels of the programme's implementation as an effective way of building sustainable interventions. This has largely been carried out through the Community Literacy Forums where learners and members come together to discuss the design, development and specificities of the implementation of literacy classes in their midst. They also discuss ways of solving related problems, such as the lack of infrastructure for building a space for classes, finding solutions that do not solely rely on public funding but also count on the human and financial resources derived from their community.

### Sustainability

FELITAMO has shown great levels of sustainability mainly through the fact the programme has been implemented in two different countries by a combination of regional and international cross-sector partnerships. Because of the remaining high gender inequalities experienced by many African countries, the need for such initiatives remains pressing. Thus, this three-year programme has set a great example for future actions aimed at empowering women with basic educational services. This is hopefully only a starting point for upcoming funding and actions to be carried out in the region.

### Sources

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## MOZAMBIQUE

# Literacy in Local Language, a Springboard for Gender Equality

### Programme Title

Literacy in Local Language, a Springboard for Gender Equality

### Implementing Organization

Associação Progresso

### Language of Instruction

Portuguese and local languages (Yao, Nyanja, Makua, Makonde and Kimwani)

### Funding

The European Union, the Irish Embassy in Maputo

### Programme Partners

Local community leaders, Direcção Nacional de Alfabetização e Educação de Adultos (Ministry of Education and Human Development); Serviços Distritais de Educação of Sanga, Muembe, Chimbunila and Lago districts, Niassa province; Direcção Provincial de Educação e Cultura (Provincial Direction of Education and Culture) of Niassa province; Serviços Distritais de Saúde, Mulher e Acção Social (Districtual Services for Health, Women, and Social Action) of Sanga, Muembe, Chimbunila and Lago districts, Niassa province; Direcção Provincial de Mulher e Acção Social (Provincial Direction of the Woman and Social Action) of Niassa province, FórumMulher (Mozambican network of organizations working on gender issues); ORERA – Raparigas em Acção (Girls organization), Niassa province; Community Radios in Lichinga, Lago and Sanga; MEPT – Education for all Movement; GMD – Mozambican Debt Group

### Annual Programme Costs

2,444,008.00 Meticaís (approximately USD 63,360.27) over 18 months for Alfabetização, Esteira para Igualdade de Género. 6,429,679.00 Meticaís annually (approximately USD 166,687.74) over 12 months for “Teaching to Read to Learn”, for 2014.

### Annual Programme Cost per Learner

788.39 Meticaís (approximately USD 20.40) over 18 months for Alfabetização, Esteira para Igualdade de Género. 2,449 Meticaís (approximately USD 63.49) for “Teaching to Read to Learn”.

### Date of Inception

2012

## Country Context

Mozambique has experienced sustained growth in its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) over the past few decades. In spite of this development, the country continues to struggle as the upward trend in GDP has not been translated into significant reductions in poverty, or improvements in life quality for most of the population. Mozambique was ranked 178th out of 187 countries in the 2014 Human Development Index, and 21st out of 28 participating sub-Saharan African countries in the 2010 Education For All development index.

In education, the country has worked towards expanding school access and guaranteeing equal gender participation. The net enrolment rate for children in primary school has increased from approximately 70% in 2004 to 87.4% in 2013, and for girls from 66.08% to 85%. But despite the government’s efforts, Mozambique continues to face low school retention and transition rates, as well as poor learning outcomes. Gender disparities still favour men over women in education, as reflected in the disparities in literacy rates found in data disaggregated according to sex (67.35% for men and 36.45% for women in 2009). Such disparities are also found in health, access to public services, and employment.

Although Mozambique is a multilingual country and the majority of the population does not speak Portuguese, bilingual education remains, for the most part, in the planning and piloting stage. During the first trimester of 2015, the Ministry of Education and Human Development (MINEDH) announced that, from 2017, all primary school children will be able to study in one of sixteen Mozambique languages in addition to receiving education in Portuguese later on. In spite of this encouraging development, for most adult learners bilingual education is not yet a reality. Although the ministry is preparing a plan to introduce adult literacy in local languages across the whole country, the current curriculum for adult literacy continues to be available only in the official language.

The educational challenges facing the country are exacerbated in the central and northern parts of the country where most people in moderate to extreme poverty live. Niassa, the country’s largest province, is located at the northern end of Mozambique. The sparsely populated nature of the province makes the provision of public services difficult. In addition to difficulties with the provision of education, large parts of the population also lack access to health services and clean water. The province of Niassa also ranks among the Mozambican provinces with the highest adult illiteracy rates. According to the national population survey, 60% of people have low or non-existent literacy skills, including 75% of women. However, reading and writing tests conducted in 2012 by Associação Progresso found that literacy rates among adult men



and women were no higher than 6% and 10% respectively. The difference in rates can, in part, be attributed to the difference in transition rates from primary to secondary school between girls and boys. While, in recent years, girls' access to the first cycle of primary school has increased compared to boys, there is still a noticeable drop in the participation of girls from the fourth class of primary school (first cycle) onwards.

Niassa also has the highest rate of child marriage in the country. Twenty-four per cent of women aged between twenty and twenty-four married before the age of fifteen. Tradition and local culture contribute to the continuation of some practices that prejudice women's development, including the negative treatment of widows, domestic violence, early marriage and early pregnancy, and forced school drop-out for girls.

Although Mozambican laws recognize the right of women to protection against any form of discrimination, gender differences in terms of access to opportunities continue to be an issue, even more so in rural areas such as Niassa. Associação Progresso has identified two main reasons: people's lack of awareness of the regulations, and the lack of development and financial opportunities that results from poor literacy among women.

### Programme Overview

Established in 1991, Associação Progresso is a Mozambican non-governmental organization with a mission to support rural communities in improving their living conditions and management capacity, with special attention paid to the most vulnerable: women and children. With gender equality a central theme in the organization's programmes, Progresso has implemented several literacy and reading initiatives since its inception. Since the national primary school curriculum reform of 2003, Progresso's initiatives have included the provision of bilingual education (in Portuguese and local languages). In 2009 the organization signed a partnership agreement with the German Adult Education Association (DVV-International) for the implementation of FELITAMO, an adult literacy programme in the Makonde language. In following up this programme, Progresso has expanded its work on adult literacy, with a special focus on women.

### Teaching to Read to Learn and Literacy, a Springboard for Gender Equality

In 2011, with financial support from the European Union, the Teaching to Read to Learn (TRL) project was created and has now been implemented in nine districts (four in Cabo Delgado, five in Niassa). This project has focused on literacy teaching and learning in local languages for adults, with women and young people the priority target groups. It is projected to

end in November 2016. In 2012 the organization began a new programme, Alfabetização, Esteira para Igualdade de Género (or Literacy, a Springboard for Gender Equality), with financial support from the Provincial Fund for Civil Society of the Irish Embassy in Maputo. The two programmes have since then been implemented simultaneously, creating the 18-month project, Literacy in Local Language – A Springboard for Gender Equality (hereafter referred to as 'the integrated literacy-gender programme'), which aims to provide literacy classes in local languages with attention to awareness-raising and advocacy on domestic violence and human rights.

### Target Groups

The integrated literacy-gender programme has so far been implemented in 64 classes in rural communities. Communities were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

- Existence of good community-school relations.
- Presence of functioning literacy classes in local language for at least a year.
- Interest and willingness from local leadership in discussing gender issues.
- Proximity of the communities to one another.

The programme works simultaneously with two main target groups:

1. Women and men already enrolled in literacy classes in twenty-five rural communities in the districts of Muembe, Sanga, Chimbunila and Lago, in Niassa province.
2. Local leaders, including village chiefs, leaders of male and female initiation rites, matrons and religious leaders. Working with community leadership is considered essential to achieve the desired changes in the recognition of women's rights.

The first target group included approximately 3,200 women and 64 literacy classes in local languages. Under the leadership of trained literacy teachers, participants learned the basics of legislation on women's rights and discussed how some cultural practices can prevent or hinder the achievement of these rights. Students could read about women's rights using materials specially prepared for early readers. They were also shown how to apply community monitoring instruments focused on gender-based discrimination, and encouraged to participate in advocacy campaigns against violence and in support of gender equality.

The second target group was the local leadership of the 25 target communities – a total of 250 community leaders (10 per community), including village chiefs, leaders of male and female initiation rites (to adulthood), matrons and religious leaders. These leaders were trained in gender issues and legislation, and encouraged to reflect upon, debate and revise cultural practices that hinder women's and girls' school par-

ticipation (i.e. enrolment, attendance and completion) and development.

To promote the enrolment of people with disabilities in their literacy classes, Progresso translated some of the local-language literacy texts into Braille and provided training to literacy teachers in how to teach blind people.

Progresso sees working with teachers and students to promote literacy as the engine of change. It works with local leadership in order to ensure the sustainability of results.

### Number of Participants

The literacy in local language component, Teaching to Read to Learn, reaches between 5,000 and 5,500 (young) adults annually. Over 70% of them are women. Since its inception, it has engaged approximately 21,000 young adults (70% women) and collaborated with around 300 literacy teachers, supervisors and technical education staff. Since 2012, 4,629 students have graduated from literacy classes in four districts in Niassa. The discrepancy between the numbers of people participating in the programme and the number graduating is due to the fact that not all learners completed the school year, while others might have attended but did not participate in the final exam.

Literacy, a Springboard for Gender Equality has so far reached a total of 3,100 students, 70 literacy teachers, supervisors and technical education staff at district and provincial level, and 250 community leaders.

### Aims and Objectives

Progresso's strategy is to promote gender equality through the opportunities provided by literacy classes. The literacy classes in local languages provide the perfect space for dialogue and the introduction of the basic concepts of gender theory. Progresso sees this as an opportunity to disseminate the laws concerning women's rights, and organize community monitoring of gender-based violence practices, particularly traditional cultural practices that hinder the achievement of women's and children's human rights.

The overall objective of TRL was to 'contribute to the eradication of illiteracy among young people and adults in eight districts, giving priority to women and people with disabilities in order to increase opportunities for their social development'. The Literacy, a Springboard for Gender Equality project aims to promote gender equality and women's participation in twenty-five communities in four districts in Niassa province. The provision of literacy classes in local languages is a starting point to involve community leaders in raising awareness and action.

## Programme Implementation

### Structure and Organization

The literacy courses are organized according to Ministry of Education guidelines. Lessons follow the national programme and curriculum within which literacy and numeracy are the main subjects, with life skills integrated into both. Classes are offered in the afternoon and last between two and three hours. Students and teacher are allowed to negotiate which days and hours would work best for the class, with the proviso that the total number of teaching hours is at least 300 per academic year (10 months).

Progresso's evaluations have found that one academic year is often not enough time to complete the prescribed content. This is due to the poor conditions in which adult literacy classes take place. Classes frequently take place outside, under a tree, or in improvised spaces, for example a participant's yard or the local church. In addition, adult learners – and women, in particular – do not have much time for classes during the day and attending for two or three hours each day can be difficult. However, the biggest factor driving participants' failure to complete the course is poor teaching quality. There is also high turn-over among teachers, which contributes to quality issues in teaching. Given the above mentioned limitations, Progresso's courses generally take between eighteen and twenty months for the completion of teaching and testing/evaluation, including literacy, numeracy, life skills and transition to a course taught in Portuguese. Adult learners who pass the initial reading and writing exam can continue their studies on courses where they can learn Portuguese, allowing them to go further through the mainstream adult education system. This is important since Portuguese is the official language used in district and state offices and newspapers.

### Teaching and Learning: Approaches, Methodologies and Course Structure

In line with guidelines from the Ministry of Education and Human Development, Progresso is using the analytic/synthetic method for literacy teaching: beginning with a word, or a sentence, focusing on everyday life contexts. Words are introduced using pictures in the literacy textbook. The word helps to introduce a new syllable, then a new family of syllables, until students complete a syllable table. With the support of these tables of syllables, learners build their own words that are discussed by the whole class. Each lesson also includes sentence exercises and the reading of a short text. The text is read by learners, so they can practise reading from the very beginning, and discover the meaning of the text as they discuss its content in relation with their own lives. Each revision lesson



combines a different global method with the oral development of a story (a text) by the group. The story is written down by the literacy teacher. Throughout the literacy course, the students do most of the reading, and are not asked simply to imitate their teachers.

For local language adult literacy teaching, the method was further developed in collaboration with provincial education staff and experts, all of them native speakers of a specific local language. The methodology applied is the analytic/synthetic method, which was adjusted for its practical application in local languages. These experts were also very much involved in the development of textbook content and teaching manuals.

Classes generally comprise twenty-five students per teacher, in line with the minimum requirement, established by MINEDH, for payment of a subsidy (around USD 20 per month). Drop-out, however, is high and many classes finish the year with only half the required number of students. That said, evaluation of Literacy, a Springboard for Gender Equality found increased retention rates in the classes that participated in the project.

### Programme Content and Teaching Material

Although MINEDH has developed a general curriculum for adult literacy teaching, there has not been a specific curriculum for literacy teaching in local languages. To address this gap, Progresso has prepared textbooks for literacy and numeracy in five local languages. These languages are predominantly spoken in the northern provinces of the country: Yao, Nyanja, Makua, Makonde and Kimwani. Following the national curriculum, efforts were made to ensure the

necessary adjustments were in line with the linguistic logic of the local language of instruction and were culturally appropriate. Since a written form of these languages had not been developed before, intensive work was needed to test textbooks with native speakers within the communities, including teachers and trainers. This was done to ensure that the language used was linguistically correct and comprehensible to speakers with diverse dialects of the same language. Once the orthography of the languages was agreed, reading and life skills materials could be developed and/or translated into different languages.

The production of material follows the process described below:

1. Material is developed by community workers.
2. Material is tested in community groups and associations.
3. Material is translated into the local language by expert linguists in collaboration with literacy teachers.
4. Illustration and editing is done by Progresso's publishing section (which specializes in local language publishing).
5. Published material is shared with MINEDH and the provincial and district education authorities.
6. Material arrives in classrooms.

As non-state adult literacy providers are free to introduce life skills contents and develop specific materials according to their own priorities, Progresso has developed a wide range of reading and other material on life skills, covering issues such as:

- Nutrition
- Mother and child health
- HIV/AIDS
- Preventable diseases including malaria
- Clean water and sanitation



- Themes relevant to income generation, such as livestock, planting and caring of indigenous trees, and financial education
- Civic education and human rights, including land law, family law, and the law against domestic violence
- Natural resources management

With regard to the gender component of the integrated literacy-gender programme, Progresso has produced and delivered two booklets on gender-based violence and a set of posters that explain the law against domestic violence.

### Recruitment and Training of Facilitators

Monitoring conducted by Progresso in 2014 characterized the facilitators and teachers of its adult literacy classes as follows:

- Seventy per cent of the teaching body is male.
- More than 50% are younger than 25.
- Facilitators live in the community in which they teach.
- Facilitators have completed at least full primary education (Grade 7), with some educated to Grade 8 or Grade 9.
- Facilitators do not have formal professional teacher training.

These characteristics are shared by the majority of literacy teachers and facilitators in the country. People volunteer to become literacy teachers. The government pays them a small amount of money (equivalent to USD 20 per month) as an incentive. MINEDH offers them a contract for the 10-month duration of the school year. The contract can be renewed in subsequent years and does not depend on student retention. Teachers retain their jobs even if large numbers of students leave their class before completing the course.

The make-up of the country's education system helps explain why facilitators for adult learners do not typically have formal preparation. Mozambique has five institutes for the training of adult educators, at which people with a 10th grade general education receive one year's professional training. Graduates find employment in provincial or district education directorates as technical staff providing support to literacy teachers. The institutes do not prepare educators to work directly with adult learners, but to oversee and support those who do. Some of the institutes' graduates are part of the training team set up by Progresso to provide initial training to literacy teachers.

Although literacy teachers are hired and paid by the state, their training is generally delivered by implementing agencies, such as churches and civil society. Progresso offers two seven-day workshops during the first year of a facilitator's recruitment, as part of the initial teacher training for its literacy programmes.

The main components of the first workshop are:

- basic concepts of andragogy;
- reading and writing in the local language; and
- methodologies for initial reading and writing in the local language.

The second workshop focuses on numeracy and life skills teaching. In both workshops extensive time is dedicated to practising teaching in simulated and real classroom situations. This is followed by discussion of performance with a view to overcoming challenges and improving various aspects of teaching.

In the context of Literacy, a Springboard for Gender Equality, a seven-day seminar was offered to literacy teachers involved in the project. The seminar provided basic information about gender theory and Mozambican legislation on women's rights, and shared methodologies on how to teach life skills subjects in literacy classes. Seminars also discuss objectives, action plans, indicators and instruments proposed for the community monitoring system.

Provincial and district training teams are selected for the training of literacy teachers. For the literacy training seminar, trainers were selected from the provincial teacher training institute and from provincial and district technical education staff. The criteria for selection concerned the technical skills involved in teaching initial reading and writing, experience of teaching adults, skills and experience in teaching in a local language, attitudes and commitment. For the numeracy classes, trainers from the provincial teacher training institute were included in the team. For the gender project, trainers were selected from technical staff at the District Directorate of Education and staff from the District Directorate for Health, Women and Social Action.

For this project, Progresso has trained twelve trainers, three per district. Trainers have provided capacity development training to 64 literacy teachers and 250 community leaders, 113 of them women, in 25 rural communities.

### Enrolment, Establishing Learning Needs and Assessment of Learning

Local campaigns are organized at the start of each school year to encourage young adults who do not know how to read and write to enrol in literacy classes. The campaigns use radio messages and involve local leaders, public education and Progresso staff. Once candidates are registered and classes are formed, literacy facilitators administer an oral test to assess the reading and writing skills of learners. This helps them adjust lessons to the existing knowledge of the class. The literacy facilitator also discusses with learners what subjects they would be interested in exploring in the context of life skills learning. She or he informs students about the education material already available and takes notes on what new material

might need to be produced in response to students' expressed needs.

At the end of a course, students take a final written test set by district education staff and approved by provincial education authorities. Final tests entail: reading simple words, image reading (students should be able to write the appropriate word next to an image), linking images and written words, grammar exercise, constructing words with a syllabic frame, writing a composition of between three and five lines, and a simple numeracy test. Students receive a certificate of participation, signed by the Provincial Directorate of Education and Progresso after successfully completing the 300-hour literacy and numeracy programme. Although recognized nationwide, certificates may hold little practical use if learners do not follow the transition to a Portuguese taught course and acquire reading and writing skills in the official language.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

The quality of teaching is assured by means of a short initial training course followed by regular supervision and one-day upgrading sessions organized by supervisors (some of whom are graduates of the training institute for adult educators) delivered monthly. Monitoring of the programme is conducted at different levels and in different places:

- At community level, the impact of the gender programme is assessed through community monitoring. Literacy teachers and students collect data on a form with indicators relevant to: women's and girls' participation in education, gender-based violence, traditional practices that prejudice women and girls, and women's participation in community-based organizations and local government. The indicators were first conceived by provincial education and Progresso staff, and later discussed with community leaders and adjusted according to their contributions. Collected data is disaggregated at class and village level and later collated for presentation to community leaders and district authorities.
- The performance of literacy classes is monitored by supervisors. Each supervisor works with ten literacy teachers, assisting classes at least twice a month and organizing one-day training sessions once a month. Supervisors report to technical district staff, who write quarterly reports to the provincial education directorate and to Progresso's provincial office.
- Progresso provincial staff visit at least one district each month. Provincial education staff and Progresso staff arrange quarterly joint supervision visits to literacy centres, where they assist classes, discuss performance with literacy teachers and provide in-service training.

- Progresso staff from headquarters visit provincial sites twice a year for monitoring.
- Donor representatives visit project implementation sites once a year.

Progresso provides annual narrative and financial reports to donors, the European Union and the Irish Embassy in Maputo. Financial reporting includes yearly external audits carried out by an international audit organization. Programme outcomes are evaluated against previously defined indicators (described in the following section). The Teaching to Read to Learn project is internally evaluated each year with provincial and district education staff and Progresso project managers. The European Union produced a results-oriented monitoring report in 2013 in Niassa province to assess performance and outputs.

### Complementary Programme Components

An important part of the gender component of the integrated literacy-gender programme is raising awareness among community members. Progresso promotes it through an activity called community monitoring, carried out by literacy students and their teachers. In addition to its awareness-raising function, community monitoring also has a clear instructional effect: as students work with survey forms and systematized data, they apply and improve their reading, writing and numeracy skills through hands-on activity. The application of recently acquired reading and writing skills is encouraged through the collection of data and the production of reports with aggregated data. Narrative reports have so far been written primarily by the literacy teacher under the supervision of the district technical staff, while students are encouraged to write sentences to add to the final reports. These reports have been presented to local leadership as well as public institutions and civil society organizations at district and provincial level. Indicators included in the community monitoring survey forms concern school/literacy class attendance and drop-out, participation in initiation rites, early and forced marriage, teenage pregnancy, domestic violence, treatment of widows, and women's participation in local governing bodies. A practical exercise on community monitoring is conducted in a neighbouring community followed by an evaluation by seminar participants.

In 2013 Progresso devised a strategy with the organization of community libraries. Instead of having libraries in a fixed location, such as classrooms, the organization built wooden boxes to be used as mobile libraries in all literacy centres of the project. Some 171 wooden boxes were produced in order to provide a space in which to maintain the reading material. This material can be used in the classrooms for collective reading and discussions. Some communities have allowed students to borrow books to read at home.



A moment from the campaign against domestic violence lead by Progresso learners

The portable libraries are managed by the literacy facilitator with the support of his/her supervisor.

### Impact and Achievements

In 2012 Progresso set two main targets for the Teaching to Read to Learn project, to be met by the end 2015:

1. Provide 48,750 young people and adults (70% of them women, including 5,850 with disabilities) with literacy, numeracy and life skills sufficient to improve the quality of their life. In 2014, after a mid-term evaluation, project targets were revised, leading to an increase in districts to be covered (from eight to nine) and a decrease in the number of students to be enrolled in the two provinces (from 48,750 to 22,500).
2. Contribute to the creation of human and institutional capacity to achieve the structural changes necessary for the effective eradication of youth and adult illiteracy, especially among women and people with disabilities, based on the use of native languages in literacy and life skills teaching.

For the Literacy, a Springboard for Gender Equality project, as a key aspect of the integrated literacy-gender programme, Progresso set the following specific targets:

- Raise the awareness of adult students in sixty-four literacy classes in twenty-five communities and train them so that they can promote change in traditional practices that are harmful to women and girls (such as initiation rites for children under 16, early marriage, early pregnancy, violence against women and children, and inhumane treatment of widows).
- Increase the knowledge of 3,200 (1,625 in year one) women and men of the laws that govern gender equality and women's rights and increase their ability to relate the content of such laws to traditional and cultural practices that limit development opportunities for women.
- Support the empowerment of 250 local, traditional and administrative leaders at community level so that they have the knowledge and skills to act according to the law in addressing issues concerning women's human rights.
- Increase participation of women in local governing bodies, consultative councils and community-based formal and informal institutions in the four districts covered by the project (Lago, Sanga, Muembe and Chimbunila).

The Teaching to Read to Learn project has created real momentum for literacy in local languages in Niasa province. While local language teaching for adults



was limited to two districts and five classes up until 2012, between 2012 and 2015 Progresso supported the delivery of more than 800 literacy classes in local languages, in collaboration with community leaders as well as education authorities at provincial and district level. The project gave an important boost to local language teaching, not only in Niassa (and Cabo Delgado) province, but across the whole country.

While Progresso provided textbooks and additional reading and education materials in five local languages and delivered training in literacy in local language to trainers and teachers, the government assumed responsibility for the payment of incentives to more than 200 teachers and supervisors each year. By doing so, the government raised the social status of local languages in general and of those who teach or learn to read and write in their mother tongue, in particular. In this context, an important result of the project is the prominent place MINEDH gives to adult literacy teaching in local languages in its new strategic plan for adult education (under preparation).

The Teaching to Read to Learn component of the integrated literacy-gender programme will end in November 2016. Although an impact evaluation is expected to take place in October and November of the same year, a preliminary evaluation of the gender component found increased retention rates in the literacy classes that participated in the integrated project. The external evaluation of the project (provided by a monitoring and evaluation specialist contracted by Progresso), conducted in June 2014, concluded that it was an innovative project with the active involvement of communities and a strong connection to community-based organizations. It stressed that the link between literacy and community discussions on gender contributed to changes in behaviour and attitudes within the target group. The interaction and participation of strategic partners, both public and private, was also considered an important positive point.

Advocacy and lobbying activities, carried out as part of the project, were important from an awareness-raising perspective. Changes in awareness have led to visible changes in attitudes and actions towards women and girls. For example, men and women increasingly share daily chores, and parents avoid practices that lead to school drop-out, particularly among girls. An important decision was also taken by community leaders with regard to the timing of initiation rites. Instead of being in the middle of the school year, leaders decided to conduct these traditional practices during the school holidays. They further agreed to regulate the age of children participating in initiation rites, avoiding the participation of very young children. The evaluation concluded that the project achieved most of the expected results. The evaluator recommended that Progresso should double its efforts to replicate and continue the programme. An

external evaluation indicated that, as more women in literacy courses continued studying until the end of the course, the project has also helped to reduce the drop-out of girls from primary school.

At the general end-of-project meeting, held June 2014, all project participants (community leaders, literacy teachers, supervisors and technical district and provincial staff from the district directorates of Education and Women and Social Action, donor representatives and civil society) expressed their positive appreciation of the programme, because of the changes it had brought about in the perception of gender relations and their connection with day-to-day gender practice. The open and frank discussions during the sessions on women's rights, gender and culture greatly helped leaders, teachers and students to gain a different perspective on gender relations. According to a community leader in Messumba village (Lago district), 'The debates were like a flashlight!'

Lastly, by selecting communities located in close proximity to one another, the organization increased the possibility of achieving a change in traditional practices throughout the community network. As a result of Progresso's work, one leader decided to move the initiation rite from the middle of the school year, which used to cause a significant drop-out among girls, to the summer holiday at the end of the school year. His decision was followed by neighbouring communities.

### Testimonies

*I gave up studying ... in 2001, when I lost my parents. At that time I had not yet learned to read and write. I decided to continue in 2012 in a literacy class. To facilitate my learning I chose to attend the literacy course in my mother tongue ... The same year I married Alabia Aly, and we now have two children. We're both attending literacy classes. To give time to my wife and respect her rights, we divide household activities. This week it's my turn to fetch water and bathe our children. I don't mind if my neighbors talk, my wife is not my machine, but she is a human and deserves rest, just like me.*

– Imede Abasse, a student from the integrated literacy-gender project

*[The] advisory board in [my community] consisted of three women against seventeen men. During the sessions women never contributed on a particular subject. When they were asked to speak, they would answer: 'We agree. It's just like the men said'. In 2014 the advisory board was revitalized. Currently, nine of the twenty members of the new advisory board are women and they are very active in the board and in the community. I think it's because of their active participation that women in my neighbourhood have changed a lot lately. When we have meetings to discuss development issues, they give their opinions. Thanks to*



*the women we now have a water tap with clean water in (the community).*

- Traditional leader of a Progresso community

### Lessons Learned

- Making use of literacy groups to reflect on common problems and discuss possible solutions is a widely accepted concept in literacy teaching. But combining this approach with the teaching of reading and writing has often been problematic as it requires a high level of pedagogic and didactic skills on the side of the teacher. The gender project enriched the reflective approach with active teaching of reading, writing and numeracy. Specific lessons were prepared and activities undertaken to effectively link life skills teaching with the teaching of reading and writing.
- The community monitoring component of the gender component of the integrated programme turned out to be a powerful instrument for the involvement and sense of ownership of literacy teachers and students, as well as of a wider group of community members, particularly local leaders. For Progresso, systematic community monitoring represented a new way of working with commu-

nities. For education staff, community monitoring provided insight into how to make literacy teaching interesting and useful for learners.

- Establishing a direct link between teaching in the classroom and social mobilization work with community leaders turned out to be a highly effective approach to bringing about inclusive and sustained change in gender relations, particularly in creating opportunities for women's and girls' participation in community development activities.
- A particular aspect of local culture is its oral nature. Rural communities are generally small, communication is easily maintained in person, and, for the most part, there are no written words in the village: no street names, no signs, and few advertisements. Hence, the need to read is limited. Therefore, any literacy programme has to include provision of educational and reading materials so that adults can experience the benefits of being able to read.
- Installing portable libraries in literacy centres helped to keep books in good condition.

### Challenges

- Tradition and patriarchal culture are dominant in rural communities, determining every aspect



of life. Following tradition, women do not decide autonomously on issues that concern their health, their money or their marriage. Likewise, women often need their husband's permission to participate in literacy classes. Social mobilization is important in changing this and other aspects of tradition that prejudice women.

- Most literacy teachers have very few academic qualifications and little professional training. Additionally, their volunteer status and low pay can lead to low motivation and high staff turn-over. Professionalizing literacy teaching for adult learners is a huge challenge for the Mozambican government.
- Poor infrastructure. Classes are often held outdoors or on someone's property.
- Students have difficulty reconciling learning with their work and family responsibilities. This is particularly true for women.

### Sustainability

An important facet of the integrated literacy-gender programme lies in the organisers' aim of guaranteeing its sustainability beyond the 18-month implementation. This has been pursued through different strategies: a strong partnership with the Ministry of Education and Human Development and its local branches, capacity building among local providers, the creation of relevant learning material, and the establishment of complementary projects for the maintenance of said material, even after the end of the project.

The cost of facilitators is covered by MINEDH. Additionally, some of Progresso's own facilitator trainers graduated from one or other of the institutes for the training of adult educators.

The Teaching to Learn to Read project invested in human resources, particularly trainers of literacy teachers for local language teaching, literacy teachers and supervisors. The gender project followed the same strategy to sustain its activities: training of a team of gender trainers in each district, and training of literacy teachers and supervisors on the technical aspects of gender questions, and also on how to integrate gender concepts into their everyday teaching. District gender trainers were trained to lead discussions with community leaders on sensitive issues. Leaders experienced the positive effects of organized dialogue and felt inspired to continue dialogue sessions on social problems in the community. Progresso expects that knowledge transfer and awareness-raising will continue in the years to come thanks to literacy teachers and their acquired gender knowledge, and the presence of educational and reading materials on gender subjects which will remain in the literacy centre libraries.

Since education authorities assumed payment of the subsidy for literacy teachers, no interruption is expected to occur when the project terminates. Pro-

gresso will advocate for regular recycling of trained teachers in order to maintain quality standards.

The project provided study and reading materials in local languages that can be used beyond the project life cycle. Additionally, both facilitators and learners will be able to continue to use the material, accessing it through portable libraries in literacy centres. The portable libraries were conceived in order to keep books in good condition.

Proposals are being prepared to raise funds to replicate the project in Cabo Delgado province. Possible donors are being contacted for another project which seeks to broaden and deepen the Literacy, a Springboard for Gender Equality project in Niassa province. The lessons learned with the implementation of the integrated projects will be essential for the development of integrated approaches, as foreseen in the new strategic plan for adult education for the period from 2015 to 2019 presently being elaborated by MINEDH.

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## NIGERIA

# Mother and Child Education Programme (MCEP)

### Implementing Organisation

The Ecumenical Foundation for Africa (EFA)

### Type of Organisation

International NGO

### Partners

River State Government (through the Federal Ministry of Education), UNESCO, private sector (patrons, friends, relatives) and public sector (e.g. the River State Universal Basic Education Board, the River State Adult and Non-Formal Education Agency and the World Bank Fadama III Project)

### Language of Instruction

Both English and various African languages of the local area, such as the Ogoni language

### Project Duration

2005 to 2013

### Context and Background

Since gaining independence in 1960, Nigeria has made strong efforts to make education more accessible to all citizens. In order to do this, successive national governments have launched various educational and literacy programmes, including compulsory, free Universal Primary Education (UPE, 1976), the National Teachers Institute (NTI, a distance teacher training programme), a ten-year-long mass literacy campaign (from 1982-1992), and the Universal Basic Education programme (UBE, 1999; 2004). The primary goal of these programmes was to promote access to education for all, and they had significant impacts on educational development in the country. For instance, by 2004, access to primary education (i.e. Total Net Intake Rate – NIR) had risen to 72% and, as a result, literacy rates for youth and adults rose to 84% and 69%, respectively, between 1995 and 2004, even though there are variations of literacy rates across Nigeria's different zones. For instance, the Niger Delta Zone and Northern Nigeria have a higher rate of illiteracy than the southwest region, where free education was introduced by the regional government back in 1962, immediately after independence.

However, a major and indeed persistent weakness of governmental education and literacy programmes has been their failure to provide Early Childhood Education (ECE) and family and community learning

opportunities, as well as to make education more accessible to women, particularly those living in socio-economically disadvantaged rural communities. Given that family life is the first literacy environment for every child, the failure to institute broad-based, integrated and intergenerational educational programmes has had a negative impact on the learning performance of Nigerian children. This is not least because most parents (especially mothers) in rural areas find it extremely difficult to be actively involved in their children's education, due to high illiteracy and poverty rates that are compounded with problems of poor business and a lack of entrepreneurial skills. Furthermore, the lack of family-based education and literacy programmes has also hindered community and family development, and has led to increased migration of young women (ages 18 – 30) to urban areas, most of whom are single mothers leaving behind their young children with relatives or grandparents. Children in rural areas suffer greatly from the deprivation of basic education. Statistics indicate that most children (0 – 6 years) in rural areas have no form of organised learning before primary school, are oftentimes malnourished and are vulnerable to easily transmittable diseases. The situation has improved since the Universal Basic Education Act of 2004, which was enacted to ensure the provision of basic Early Childhood Education, as well as primary and secondary education, across Nigeria. However, there is still a huge gap in access to quality education in rural areas. This is especially true when issues of information and empowerment are taken into consideration.

Cultural and traditional practices greatly affect the quality of life in some parts of rural Nigeria. For instance, in Ogoni land, which is made up of six local government areas in Rivers State, cultural practice dictates that a family's first daughter is not allowed to marry even though she is allowed to have children in her parents' home. Children that grow up in families such as these often face formidable challenges affecting their well-being.

It was against this background that a group of professionals from tertiary institutions established the Ecumenical Foundation for Africa (EFA) in 1999. In 2005, the EFA, with financial support from patrons and friends and technical support from UNESCO, created the Mother and Child Education Programme (MCEP) in Nigeria. The MCEP, a constituent programme within the much broader and holistic Kwawa-Ogoni-UNESCO Educational Development Project (KWUEDP), primarily seeks to make education more accessible to women (mothers) and children and, by extension, to promote women's empowerment, appropriate child rearing and rural development. The programme therefore compliments existing governmental education and literacy programmes, such as the UBE. It is also a means of assisting the government in fulfilling its

international educational and developmental obligations as outlined in, for example, the Bamako Call of Action (2007), the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) goals, the Education For All (EFA) goals and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). To date, the programme is being implemented at about 100 Community Learning Centres (CLCs) across Nigeria's 23 Local Government Agencies (LGAs) of Rivers State (primarily in Khana, Tai, Gokhana and Degema LGS), Edo and Bayelsa. In total, 5000 women and 300 000 children from across Nigeria have benefitted from the programme since its inception in 2005. The MCEP has been adapted by NGOs and the wives of state government workers, and has developed into a solid best practice example of literacy and life skills programmes in Nigeria.

### The Mother and Child Education Programme (MCEP)

The MCEP is an integrated and intergenerational (family-based) educational and literacy programme, sometimes referred to as the 'civic approach' to mother and child education. It is 'civic' because it is a people-oriented programme, based on the development of a 'power base' and 'voice' for participants. The programme seeks to make education more accessible to all, but particularly to the vulnerable, poor majority living in disadvantaged and marginalised rural communities. Although the MCEP is an inclusive family and community-based educational programme, it particularly targets mothers and children (ages 0-8 years) who, as noted above, have been marginalised from existing educational and literacy programmes. Therefore, the provision of basic adult literacy and life skills training to women and early childhood education is central to the MCEP.

In order to effectively address the diverse learning needs of women and children from different socio-linguistic backgrounds, the MCEP employs an integrated and bilingual (English and mother tongue) approach to literacy and life skills training. The programme therefore places greater emphasis on subjects and activities that are central to the learners' socio-economic context and everyday experiences and needs, such as the following:

- Adult literacy and ECE, including mother-to-child education
- Health (e.g. HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention, nutrition and sanitation)
- Civic education (e.g. human rights, conflict resolution and management, peace building, child rearing, leadership, gender and inter-religious relations)
- Environmental management and conservation
- Income generation or livelihood development

- Reading and Democracy: Promotion of reading culture and democratic principles through book and library development
- Rural employment promotion with direct links between mothers and government and International development partners' projects, such as the World Bank Fadama III project and credit and loan schemes for their small businesses.

### Early Childhood Education

The programme's ECE component first began as an incentive for mothers to participate in the literacy component. Mothers have often had difficulty finding somewhere for their children to go when they are working at farms or small businesses during the day. This means that children are often left in hazardous environments and, even if they accompany their mothers to the farms, they are often left unattended. The ECE component of the programme provides a space for children to go and also requires the participation of the child's mother in the literacy programme. Even though the literacy programme is compulsory for mothers, however, they are eager to participate, as they are then exposed to skills' acquisition, loan and credit schemes or, alternatively, to other government and international development partners projects. The exact amount of empowerment given to mothers through the programme depends on their interests, as well as the available opportunities in the area. The literacy programme is not an end in itself, but serves as the fulcrum for all available opportunities for women to empower themselves.

### Programme Objectives

The programme aims to:

- Promote intergenerational (family-based) and bilingual (English and mother tongue) learning
- Provide parents with appropriate child rearing skills, including the supporting role of fathers
- Empower women to participate actively in their children's education by providing links between home and the literacy centres/schools.
- Equip women groups with the functional or livelihood skills necessary for improving their families' living standards and access to markets.
- Promote the spirit of volunteerism and self-reliance
- Foster ecumenical principles of equity, justice, peace and social control
- Provide capacity building and training for volunteer teachers, literacy facilitators and women leaders from various projects and members of community development committees for self-reliance of mothers, and an effective local management structure as an exit strategy for the NGO.



## The Role of the Community

The implementation of community-based educational and literacy programmes is often encumbered by a lack of financial and material resources, human resources (professional and/or semi-professional instructors) and, most importantly, community involvement and support. In order to circumvent these challenges and to ensure the success and sustainability of the MCEP, the EFA has prioritised the active involvement of local communities in the development, planning and implementation of the programme. In order to do this, the EFA has organised programme participants into community-based learning groups. Local leaders, primarily chiefs and chairmen of community development committees, have also been lobbied to lend their support to the programme, thus encouraging their people to participate. Traditional leaders, community development committees, and leaders of the learning groups also assist the EFA in developing and designing the programme curriculum, which is often verified by established educational institutions. The curriculum not only addresses the specific existential needs of the local communities, but is also relevant to their cultural systems and traditions. Similarly, the community is also actively involved in the development of teaching-learning materials, which are often made locally. The learning groups are also responsible for establishing and managing Community Learning Centres (CLCs), including ECE centres.

In order to cut programme costs, EFA has also recruited a volunteer cohort of community-based, professional ECE, adult literacy and life skills teachers who are responsible for teaching the programme in their local communities. These professionals are often assisted by semi-professionals, usually young secondary school graduates.

### Recruitment and Training of Instructors / Facilitators

As noted above, the implementation of the MCEP is dependent on USD 50 honorarium payments for a cohort of professional and semi-professional volunteers. However, in order to enable them to carry out their teaching duties effectively and efficiently, EFA provides volunteers with further training and mentoring in the following:

- Adult and child-appropriate teaching-learning methods
- Classroom and mother and child centre management
- Development and production of teaching-learning materials
- Assessment of learning processes and outcomes
- Family mini-library management of resources and books
- Cultural and human rights

- ICT-based ECE and family literacy

The further training provided for instructors and women group leaders is not only intended to ensure the effective implementation of the programme, but also to motivate personnel to participate (i.e. volunteer their services and time) in the programme. Currently, each instructor is allocated about 100 learners, but plans are underway to recruit and train more facilitators in order to bring the instructor-learner ratio down to 1:40. Each instructor or facilitator is paid a monthly stipend of USD 50.00, which is below the usual amount of USD 100.00

### Recruitment of Learners

Learners are selected according to the community they live in and, due to the acute lack of resources in rural areas, each participating community must have already established a primary school. The community school ensures the availability of classrooms and volunteer teachers for the original implementation of the programme. With the full support of the community, three volunteer teachers is enough to kick-start the literacy part of the programme and, as the centre gradually grows and more volunteer teachers are recruited, other aspects of the programme are established. Families with children (0-6 years) are registered and the initial focus is put on the most vulnerable group in the family: mothers and young children.

### Teaching-Learning Approaches and Methods

Training in the MCEP is conducted by volunteer instructors, either at the CLCs (for groups of learners) or through home visits (for face-to-face, mother-to-child training and mentoring). Adult literacy and ECE instructors use participatory teaching-learning methods, including the Participatory Learning and Innovative Approach (PLI) that was adapted from the Centre for Family Literacy at the University of Tennessee, USA, and developed within the framework of a UNESCO module for strengthening capacity through training and technical assistance for volunteer teachers. Typically, adult learners are supposed to complete the MCEP's core curriculum within one year. However, this period is often extended until learners attain the advanced levels of functional literacy that are necessary for everyday life. This is particularly important for mothers, as they are expected to assist in their children's educational development – socially, psychologically and financially. Additionally, the period of instruction is often extended to allow participants to balance their learning and livelihood endeavours.

The core curriculum is based on the Federal Ministry of Education New Primary School Curriculum Modules (1 – 6) that were prepared under the aus-

pices of the National Implementation Committee on National Policy on Education, with the assistance of UNESCO. The modules are adapted by the EFA for the MCEP and have also been used by the University of Ibadan Adult Literacy Programme. Modules 1 – 3 are used in the centres since, at the beginning of the programme, most participants have not experienced any form of education and have never had exposure to life outside their communities. Even if they have recently dropped out of school, they are barely able to read and write. A standardised certificate is issued at the end of the programme. In phase II of the programme (2016 – 2020), more advanced literacy modules (4 – 6) will be introduced.

The core curriculum has also been adapted for the MCEP to include additional practical approaches. The level and module for teaching practical approaches depends on whether the class one for volunteer teachers or rather an interactive discussion class for mothers. Approaches are also chosen according local contexts and are designed according to the educational level, interests and cultural background of particular mothers. Literacy classes are taught three days a week (Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2 – 6 pm) and home visits, one-on-one mentoring, dialogues, feedback and consultative meetings are additional aspects that enhance classroom teaching and learning.

The MCEP does not only want to use the core curriculum as a foundation to produce so-called ‘literate people’ who can do nothing more than read and write, which is why they have included a practical aspect. The programme also seeks to have participants exercise creativity and to use their literacy skills to become global citizens.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Programme monitoring and evaluation are central activities in the implementation of the MCEP. Typically, monitoring of the programme and, more specifically, evaluation of the learners’ performance and learning outcomes is undertaken on an on-going basis by both internal (i.e. by EFA staff) and external professionals.

The impact of a programme such as the MCEP is highly dependent on the nature and level of participation. Although the benefits of education are widely recognised, many rural communities in Nigeria have cultural and structural norms that prevent the participation of mothers in the programme. Proper monitoring and evaluation of the programme requires an awareness of factors that promote or hinder participation.

The EFA has two forms of monitoring and evaluation, namely the short-term process for specified activities and the long-term process for overall plans. In the short-term process, the emphasis is on outcome and impact assessment, whereas in the long-term process, the emphasis is on records and assessments,

feedback and consultations. Mentorship and local social media are key components of these processes. Local teaching and management personnel carry out assessments, which take place first on a weekly basis, and then later on a monthly basis. The local management structure (which includes M&E tasks) is made up of volunteer teachers, a representative of the chiefs’ council and the chairman of the Community Development Committee (CDC).

The short-term process is technically referred to as ‘Equity-based Monitoring and Evaluation’. In addition to measuring quality, equity and inclusiveness are also considered. Instead of the usual emphasis on the extent of achievements at the project level, the process includes topics such as how well resources were used, whether activities are carried out within the time frame, what the limitations to effective implementation were, lessons learnt, ways forward and next steps, other issues of ethical standards on the characteristics of beneficiaries. These characteristics include gender, human rights, the nature and availability of tools, environmental factors, mind-sets, levels of vulnerability, feedback, dialogue, consultations and one-on-one mentoring.

Indicators in the assessment are dependent on varying local contexts, making it a bottom-up approach to monitoring and evaluation. Key assessment indicators include the nature and extent of participation. For example, the EFA believes that if only 10% of vulnerable persons in the community are involved in the programme, then in terms of equity and justice, the project cannot be considered very successful.

Despite the investment in education, global reports from UNESCO, UNICEF, UNDP and the World Bank still indicate that the African continent has not had very much success in ensuring equity in education programmes. Equity-based Monitoring and Evaluation is a unique approach that looks explicitly at issues of equality that are perhaps not covered by usual monitoring and evaluation techniques and criteria.

## Impact

The MCEP has had a significant impact on overall educational development in rural areas:

- The EFA (with the support of UNESCO and UNICEF) lobbied nursery education (or ECE) to be incorporated into the UBE programme law of 2004. These efforts were successful and ECE, as well as parent education, are now key components of the UBE law of 2004.
- The EFA has supported the River State Universal Basic Education Board in establishing 747 ECE centres in the state’s rural-based community primary schools. This has benefitted about 79,000 children in River State alone. However, the cumulative number of child beneficiaries is significantly higher since the campaign to establish an ECE centre at

every rural primary school has been and is still being replicated in all of Nigeria's 36 states (including the Federal Capital Territory).

- Most importantly, the programme has also led to an improvement in the school attendance of children, performance and learning outcomes, not least because mothers have been empowered to participate more actively in their children's education.
- The provision of literacy and life skills training and the resulting socio-economic empowerment of women has helped to decrease the rate of rural-to-urban migration, a phenomenon that has previously led to inappropriate child rearing practices, as children were often left in the care of grandparents. Furthermore, the empowerment of women through training and support to establish income generating projects has led to sustainable self-reliance and improvements in the living standards of rural families. Women have also been empowered to lead more independent lives, as they no longer rely on others to assist them in activities such as writing letters or opening bank accounts.
- The creation of ECE centres, where children spend the day, also offers the opportunity for mothers to engage in other crucial livelihood activities without disturbance or distraction from their children.
- The MCEP has created invaluable opportunities for community youth to train as literacy facilitators and to earn an income. This has helped to prevent them from engaging in anti-social behaviour out of economic necessity. Others, after working for some time as teaching assistants, have been motivated to pursue further education and training.

### Challenges

Although the EFA receives support by various partners, the full and effective implementation of the MCEP is still being hindered by a critical shortage of financial, material and human resources. Initially (2005 – 2008), the programme had full support from the Rivers State Universal Basic Education Board, who provided materials to work with, and local government councils, who paid the volunteer teachers.

Unfortunately, in 2008, the board was dissolved by the current government and the new board does not have the same enthusiasm. Since 2008, apart from technical support and materials provided by UNESCO and partners, the EFA has been under tremendous stress to keep up their originally quick-paced tempo. For instance, because the EFA is only able to pay volunteer facilitators stipends that are far below the poverty line, the programme has struggled to attract more volunteers. Furthermore, financial limitations have also prevented the EFA from providing adequate training to volunteers or establishing more centres across different states. With enough resources and materials

from partners, the EFA would be able to cover all viable communities in Rivers, Edo and Bayelsa by 2015, but the challenge lies in finding available resources.

### Lessons Learned

There were some significant lessons learnt from the implementation of the programme:

- It is almost impossible to succeed with any projects in rural Africa without a complete understanding of the social, political, economic, environmental, cultural and spiritual (SPEECS) aspects of rural life. It may take years to acquire indigenous knowledge, but only then can technical expertise and international standards be applied. Once one attains this indigenous knowledge and becomes part of the community life, everything falls into place like jig saw puzzle. The local people will take the project more seriously and become effective partners.
- The MCEP was officially launched in 2005, but the EFA has been in these rural communities since 1999 conducting baseline surveys, providing scholarships for skills acquisition for female youth to get placements in local businesses, attending local functions and providing community orientation to the meaning and need for elections and politics. Communities then gradually built confidence and started to believe that they are sincere and are a part of their rural life.
- The EFA sometimes carried laptops and made PowerPoint presentations as a way of introducing urban educational life, letting participants know that they themselves can use technology and be part of the academia if they wish. Each programme activity up until 2005 was self-sponsored and sacrifices were made by professional volunteers in order to have communities believe in the project and to see it as something different from existing programmes or their experiences in the past.
- Strong community participation and cooperation is necessary in order to effectively harness local resources. At the beginning of the project, what is most important is the will and power of the people. They must identify with the programme and realise its importance in addressing illiteracy and, subsequently, poverty.
- The project design and planning must be developed in a participatory way, emphasising education and innovation led by target groups, a notion of learning by doing and capacity building at all levels. It is important to pay attention to the interrelatedness of education and economics, which can provide solutions to problems.
- Peace in rural communities and quick conflict resolution is paramount for project success.
- Literacy programmes must have personnel that are adaptive and flexible and that have a lifelong learning perspective.

- The integration of literacy, life skills and ECE learning opportunities is critical for the success of rural-based educational programmes.
- Working alliances with both local and international institutions is critical for the success of any project in rural areas.
- The need to conserve financial resources must be balanced with the need of volunteers to earn an income. Otherwise, professionals and/or semi-professionals will not be motivated to volunteer their time to the programme.

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## Sustainability

Although the need for strong external support is essential for community-based educational programmes, the sustainability of the MCEP is largely a product of strong and active community participation and ownership. From the beginning, the EFA enlisted the support and participation of entire communities, based on a principle of self-reliance. As such, community members made financial contributions that amounted to the initial necessary capital for the implementation of the programme. Similarly, and despite receiving just a small monthly stipend, community members have also supported the programme as volunteer teachers. Thus, the determination of community members to actively participate in the development activities of their communities and children is the principal driving force of the MCEP. The EFA hopes that all MCEP centres will evolve as community-based organisations in themselves, either at the local or state level, depending on their strengths and capacities. They will teach other and evolve for years to come.

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## SENEGAL

# The Tostan Community Empowerment Programme

### Implementing Organization

Tostan

### Languages of Instruction

22 African languages

### Funding

UNICEF, UNFPA, Sida, USAID, NORAD, the Spanish Government and a number of foundations such as Nike Foundation, Greenbaum Foundation, and Skoll Foundation

### Overview

Tostan, an NGO established in 1991 and headquartered in Dakar, Senegal, works to empower rural and remote African communities to bring about positive social transformation and sustainable development through a holistic nonformal education programme based on human rights. The origins of Tostan date back to 1982 when its founder and executive director, Molly Melching, initiated nonformal education programmes in Senegal which built on participants' existing cultural practices and local knowledge. The three-year participatory education programme, facilitated by local staff and offered to adults and adolescents in their own language, includes modules on human rights and democracy, problem solving, hygiene, health, literacy and project management. Since 1991, Tostan programmes have been implemented in 22 national languages in 10 countries and have had a positive impact on the lives of hundreds of thousands of people. The Tostan approach inspires positive social change in five impact areas: governance, education, health, environment and economic growth; as well as addresses the cross-cutting issues of child protection, early childhood development, female genital cutting, child/forced marriage and the empowerment of women and girls.

### Context and Background

When Tostan's founder, Molly Melching, arrived in Senegal in 1974, she noticed that the lack of education in African languages acted as a barrier to basic education and thereby inhibited development. As a result, and in collaboration with Senegalese villagers, she designed educational materials using African

traditions and learning methods. Based on participation and feedback from participants in a small village near the city of Thiès, a six-module basic education programme was conceived in 1982. Beginning in 1988, with support from UNICEF Senegal, Molly and her team trained local facilitators to implement a three-year nonformal education programme, called the Community Empowerment Program (CEP), in the regions of Thiès and Kolda.

In Wolof, the most widely spoken language in Senegal, Tostan means "breakthrough," as well as "spreading and sharing." This word was suggested to Molly Melching, Tostan's founder and executive director, by renowned African scholar Cheikh Anta Diop. He believed that to foster democracy, development must be educational for all involved, always rooted in and growing out of existing cultural practices and local knowledge. Influenced by his philosophy, Tostan honors the local context of participants. Classes are offered in African languages, and led by culturally competent and knowledgeable local staff. Sessions are led in a participatory manner and include dialogue and consensus building, highly valued skills in African societies. Participants create songs, dances, plays and poetry inspired from traditional culture to reinforce new knowledge. Tostan believes that when participants start with what they already know, they can expand and "break through" to new understandings and practices and easily share with others what they have learned.

Tostan uncovers local knowledge, values and beliefs and uses a holistic educational approach that encourages program participants to reflect on their own experiences across a wide range of subjects. Working from what they already know and what they hope for their future, they can better define and solve community problems. In Tostan classes, community members design, undertake, evaluate and sustain new actions that they believe will help them reach personal and community goals.

In addition to the nonformal education classes, Tostan establishes a Community Management Committee (CMC) and provides training for this committee throughout the program. The role of the CMC is to ensure coordination, management and sustainability for all development activities.

Tostan is mindful to include those who already hold influence and power in the community and those who have traditionally been marginalized. In this way, women and men, adolescents and adults, religious and traditional leaders, people of different social and economic backgrounds and locally elected officials come together to find solutions that benefit everyone.

### The Community Empowerment Program (CEP)

The CEP originally focussed on women and girls but has since evolved to include both men and women,

boys and girls. The original literacy and problem-based nonformal education curriculum was revised in 1995 to include modules on democracy and human rights, with particular focus on women's health, as women showed keen interest in learning about their specific health issues.

Participants of the CEP belong to different ethnic groups and socio-economic levels within their villages, and have either never attended formal school or have dropped out at an early age.

The CEP begins by initiating dialogue with community members who are asked to envision their individual and collective futures. Their hopes and aspirations serve as the reference point for the educational programme and the curriculum is designed/adapted accordingly. Evidence of building on participants' existing strengths and cultural knowledge is visible through the use of traditional learning methods such as song, dance, poetry, theatre and storytelling.

The CEP has two phases, and each phase contains modules, units of sequenced information organized around a theme. The first phase is called the Kobi, a Mandinka word meaning "to prepare the field for planting." The information contained in over 100, two-hour long Kobi sessions is shared orally since most participants beginning the program cannot read or write. The Kobi sessions take place over a one-year period, with facilitators drawing on oral traditions to spark debate and dialogue on issues related to the community's wellbeing. The revised CEP is currently being implemented in eight sub-Saharan African countries (Djibouti, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal, Somalia and The Gambia).

The second phase is called the Aawde, a Fulani word meaning "to plant the seed." Devoted to economic empowerment, this phase is composed of literacy lessons and project management training. In the Aawde, participants learn to read and write in their own language and study basic math. They write letters and compose simple project proposals, reports, autobiographies, stories, poems and songs. They also learn to read and write SMS text messages on mobile phones to practice their literacy skills. Participants study management skills and learn how to assess the feasibility of income-generating projects and then select, implement and manage good projects. Interactive workbooks help them review the initial modules of the Kobi and practice their reading and writing skills.

Some of the key features that have enabled the CEP to succeed include:

- Community members' visions – participants identify goals for the future that are then reviewed, discussed, debated, revised and incorporated into the programme.

- Learner-centred participatory pedagogy – teaches participants the knowledge and practical skills necessary to become self-sufficient and productive.
- Responsiveness – use of feedback from participants to update and revise the programme.
- Sustainability – creation of Community Management Committees (CMCs), which are 17-member democratically selected committees (with at least 9 members being women) which are set up at the start of the program and continue development efforts long after the CEP comes to an end.
- Community-led outreach through organised diffusion – participants adopt learning partners and share programme topics, later full communities adopt neighbouring communities.
- Inclusiveness – involving key stakeholders such as traditional/religious leaders, government officials, other NGOs (Freedom From Hunger, the Barefoot College, Rural Energy Foundation, Yarum Jen), outside evaluators, UN agencies (UNICEF, UNFPA) and other donors.

## Aims and Objectives

The CEP aims to:

- Enable participants to understand democracy, human rights and responsibilities and apply them in daily life
- Enable participants to identify problems relevant to their communities and engage in analytical problem-solving
- Enhance understanding of personal and community health and hygiene
- Empower women and adolescent girls to actively participate in and lead community activities
- Facilitate the collective abandonment of harmful social norms such as FGC and child/forced marriage
- Provide literacy and maths skills, including mobile-phone literacy
- Engage participants in project management for income generation
- Foster social mobilisation movements for positive change.

## Implementation: Approaches and Methodologies

### Start-Up

Villages learn about Tostan's program in a variety of ways, most often by word of mouth. When a community has requested Tostan's Community Empowerment Program and funding is available, the community is informed about what Tostan provides and what it must contribute. Community members understand that they will receive a systematic curriculum for the classes, a chance to interact and discuss what they are learning and a trained facilitator whose stipend is

paid by Tostan. The community must provide a meeting place for the classes and feed and house the facilitator, who lives in the community and teaches two classes of 25 to 30 participants three times a week. Each village has a class for adolescents and one for adults, so a minimum of 50 to 60 community members participate.

Tostan regional coordinators select CEP facilitators taking into consideration past experience, educational level, availability during the programme, and willingness to work in isolated rural areas. All facilitators (approximately 80% are women and often previous participants) undergo training courses at the Tostan training centre (CCDD) in Thiès, Senegal, before joining a community of their own language and ethnic group. Tostan's facilitators have social security benefits and their stipends are higher than those of most other literacy teachers in the country since they teach longer hours and are considered full-time community development agents.

### Social Empowerment Element – The Kobi

This phase of the CEP includes 97 sessions of approximately two to three hours each and promotes dialogue and exchange as participants at this stage do not learn to read and write. The Kobi includes sessions on:

- a) Democracy and Human Rights and Responsibilities (for example the fundamental elements of democracy, basic human rights and responsibilities summarised from seven major human rights instruments)
- b) Problem-solving (for example, how to achieve goals for the community through collective analysis of the situation, choosing appropriate solutions to problems, planning and evaluation skills)
- c) Hygiene (precautions and prevention of germ transmission)
- d) Health (understanding the body and systems of the body, common illnesses, nutritional information and reproductive health)

### Literacy and Economic Empowerment Element – The Aawde

The Aawde comprises the latter half of the CEP and introduces literacy and project management-related elements of the programme. It is composed of modules related to:

- a) Pre-literacy and Literacy skills (use of the mobile phone and SMS texting to reinforce literacy skills);
- b) Math (basic mathematical operations, use of the calculator);
- c) Project Management (how to do a feasibility study and budget, implementing and monitoring small projects and business ventures); and

- d) Workbook Review (three interactive Knowledge to Action workbooks to reinforce learning related to democracy and human rights, health and hygiene, small-scale project implementation and management).

### The Community Management Committees (CMC) and the Empowered Communities Network (ECN)

Community Management Committees (CMCs) are established in each participating community at the start of the CEP. Composed of 17 members, these committees are a mechanism for community action and institutionalizing democratic community leadership. The training curriculum for the CMCs provides the knowledge, skills and experience necessary to identify, prioritize and address human rights issues, using the same participatory and reflective methods that are modeled throughout the CEP. CMCs propose and manage development projects identified during class sessions and CMC meetings. Image

They also organize social mobilization activities and spur meaningful action in areas including health care, the environment and child protection, among others. CMCs provide sustainability for the Tostan program as responsibility for development is placed in the hands of the community itself. Many CMCs register as official Community-Based Organisations and often form federations allowing them to work together. In 2006, Tostan created the Empowered Communities Network (ECN) to help communities partner with other organizations on development initiatives to help realize their community vision.

### The Child Protection Module

In the countries where Tostan works, there are numerous threats to a child's healthy development, the greatest of which arise from lack of access to education, child trafficking, child labour, child/forced marriage, and female genital cutting (FGC). The child protection module helps communities address the deeply entrenched social norms and practices that are at the source of these issues. In 2010, Tostan developed the Child Protection Module as an addition to the CEP. The module helps build consensus around human rights and children's rights while building awareness of the various moral, social, and legal norms that affect children. It emphasises the importance of education and introduces ideas for how communities can work together to protect their children. This work begins within the Community Management Committees (CMCs). They create commissions for child protection in their communities. The CMCs of all participating communities now receive the Child Protection Module.

## Community Development Grants

Community Development Grants are small grants provided to CMCs to help fund community development projects as well as to establish CMC-run microcredit funds. Tostan provides the CMC with a small grant—usually between USD 300 and USD 1,000. The CMCs often use this grant to establish a rotating microcredit fund, which enables community members, especially women, to start small projects to improve their quality of life by putting into practice the literacy, math and management skills learnt during the CEP. The grants are managed by the CMCs and the profits from microcredit activities are invested in projects to reinforce community health, education and well-being, for example adding primary school classrooms, installing water pumps or launching agricultural cooperatives.

## The Mobile Phones for Literacy and Development Module

The Mobile Phones for Literacy and Development Module was added to the CEP's Aawde phase in 2009. Though mobile phones are commonplace in some of the most remote rural areas of sub-Saharan Africa, they are used primarily by locals to make and receive calls, which is much more expensive than text messaging. The Mobile Phones for Literacy and Development Module harnesses the value of mobile phones to reinforce literacy, organisation and management skills, as well as serve as social mobilisation tools, to help build consensus around local development initiatives. Participants learn how to use the mobile phone and how to navigate its menu, focusing on practical applications such as sending and receiving messages in local languages, using the calculator, and storing and retrieving contacts.

## The Peace and Security Project

The Peace and Security Project works to strengthen and support Tostan's proven grassroots strategy of community-led development to improve peace and security in the West African region. It focuses first on strengthening peace-building at the community level by reinforcing the prevention of violence skills learned in the CEP. These skills include improved communication and problem-solving skills as well as the peaceful resolution of community and familial conflicts. The project is developing strategies for fostering peace and security across social networks through research and collaboration. It also works to connect grassroots communities and their social networks with regional and international institutions. With this increased collaboration, regions and nations as a whole can work together to identify barriers to the peace and security of their area and create solutions that will overcome those barriers.

## The Prison Project

The Prison Project aims to help detainees reintegrate into society upon their release by providing them with a modified version of the Tostan CEP while they are in prison, in addition to mediation sessions between inmates and their families. Participants are also given access to microcredit loans for the establishment of small businesses upon their release. The programme is operational in men's and women's correctional facilities in Dakar, Thiès and Rufisque, Senegal.

## The Reinforcement of Parental Practices Module

The Reinforcement of Parental Practices (RPP) Module was launched in March 2013. The module aims to reinforce parental and community practices which create a healthy environment for children's early development. Research has shown that certain social norms and traditional practices in Senegal can hinder the brain development of infants. For example, the belief that to protect infants from dangerous spirits, parents must avoid eye contact, interaction and verbal communication. During the RPP Module, facilitators share with community members simple techniques that enrich parent-child interactions and are all linked to respecting the human rights of children to education and health. These techniques include directly speaking to young children, using a rich and complex vocabulary, asking them questions and helping them to respond, playfully copying their children, describing objects in detail, and storytelling. As a result, the module will help improve children's early development and learning, allowing them to perform better and stay in school.

## Solar Power! Project

Many rural communities with which Tostan partners are not connected to their country's electrical infrastructure. Without access to electricity, community members' productivity is limited to the hours of daylight. Through the Solar Power! Project, Tostan sponsors women from rural Africa to attend the Barefoot College in India, where they complete a six-month training program in solar engineering. The comprehensive training provides participants with the knowledge and skills to install, maintain, and repair solar panels. Back in their home villages, each solar engineer installs one solar unit in at least 50 homes, providing each family with a fixed lamp, a bright solar lantern, an LED flashlight, and a plug for charging mobile phones. Each participant also trains women and men from neighbouring rural communities in solar engineering, spreading the impact of the program and providing each engineer with an income.



## Monitoring and Evaluation

In keeping with Tostan's participatory philosophy, the CEP is evaluated, revised and improved continuously based on participant feedback. In addition, Tostan supervisors visit seven to ten community centres at least twice a month, providing support, in addition to collecting programme data, working with CMCs, and reporting to regional coordinators. They also share best practices among communities and help organise inter-village meetings and regional events. Tostan has also been extensively evaluated by external agencies whose recommendations are considered and acted upon. Examples include the Knowledge to Action workbooks which were introduced based on the Population Council's recommendations for activities designed to reinforce learning; CMC training modules were improved as it was found that the skill sets of CMCs needed to be strengthened in order to ensure sustainability. Furthermore, Tostan has identified specific indicators, measured during the three-year programme, with a view to standardising data collection and analyses. In 2007, Tostan formalised the Department of Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning (MERL) to coordinate evaluation of projects across sub-Saharan Africa.

## Achievements

Some of Tostan's major impacts and achievements are as follows:

- A 2006 publication of the Population Reference Bureau compared five community-based programmes deemed effective for improving health care. Tostan was one of the five programmes given the highest overall score for community participation because of its efforts to work on health goals identified by the community.
- A 2008 study by UNICEF showed that among Tostan communities that had publicly declared their abandonment of FGC eight to ten years earlier, 77% had indeed stopped the practice.
- The 2008 report 'Girls Count: A Global Investment & Action Agenda', issued by the Center for Global Development cited Tostan as a best practice for its work on community development and FGC abandonment.
- Tostan's three programme components – an empowering education programme, organised diffusion and public declaration for collective abandonment of FGC – have been endorsed by 10 UN agencies and a variety of other donors through an inter-agency statement published in 2008.
- In 2010, the Government of Senegal and their partners decided to adopt Tostan's human rights model as the centrepiece of their National Action Plan to end FGC, based on the results of a study conducted by the Senegalese Government's Ministry of Family

Affairs, National Solidarity and Women's Enterprise and Microcredit, which believed that FGC could be totally abandoned by 2015 in light of such a concentrated effort.

- 2010 Evaluation of the Jokko Initiative by UNICEF and the Center of Evaluation for Global Action (CEGA) at the University of California, Berkeley, found a statistically significant increase in the percentage of people scoring a medium to high literacy rate in the villages receiving mobile phone-based literacy training as opposed to control villages that did not participate in the Jokko Initiative.
- The authors of a 2009 article from the UNICEF Innocenti Research Center looked the factors that perpetuate harmful social practices, such as female genital cutting, and how these factors interact with processes of social change are critical to understanding why and how communities abandon such practices, citing Tostan as a best practice.
- In 2013, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Working Group for Adolescent Girls and Young Women in Development issued a report entitled "Adolescentes, jeunes femmes et développement" in which Tostan's Community Empowerment Program was cited as best practice for promoting gender equality and the empowerment of girls.
- Other achievements include: opening new lines of communication between men and women, youth and adults, husbands and wives, parents and children and different socio-economic groups; increased mediation and conflict resolution; increased involvement of women in economic activities and community leadership; establishment of small community-operated health centres; increased community-managed micro-credit operations; increased birth registrations, marriage certificates, national identity cards and school registrations; increased school retention rates, especially among girls; improved literacy and maths skills, including phone literacy; improved child and maternal health, fewer incidences of infant malnutrition and a higher number of attended births; improved behaviours for the reduction of malaria and HIV/AIDS; organisation of peaceful marches against forced/child marriage and violence against women.

## Challenges and Lessons Learned

Tostan participants have sometimes faced challenges when working to achieve their visions for the future as social action is often constrained within broader systems of political and social power relations. For example, when 30 women in 1997 decided to abandon FGC it was realised that unless people in neighbouring intra-marrying communities also abandoned FGC, sustainability would not be possible. Enhanced efforts by a local visionary and Tostan's ensuing organ-

ised diffusion strategy have thereafter resulted in the abandonment of FGC by thousands of communities – as of 2013, more than 6,700 communities across the countries where Tostan is active have participated in public declarations to this effect. Tostan also faced considerable resistance in the conservative northern region of Senegal, which was to some extent relieved when strong partnerships were formed with local religious leaders in terms of implementation.

Tostan tried to implement a shorter version of the CEP without the literacy component. The shorter version, however, was not well received by participants, who found it frustrating to engage in just the Kobi phase without the literacy elements of the Aawde. As a result, Tostan and its most long-term partner, UNICEF, made a firm commitment to delivering the full three-year programme in every community.

Some men became resentful of Tostan's initial focus on women, especially the CEP module on women's rights and health. After several classes were shut down because of distrust on the part of men, the module on women's and children's rights were rewritten to include men's rights as well. This new inclusive approach, introducing an emphasis on human rights, led the men to become fully engaged in the programme.

### Sustainability

Tostan has highly successful inbuilt strategies to facilitate knowledge and skill sharing, such as through organised diffusion. Additionally, awareness-raising activities in the form of inter-village meetings are organised, which in turn provide a platform for representatives of different communities, linked by common underlying social structures, to share experiences and discuss potential collective solutions to problems. Tostan also airs radio programmes which discuss topics related to health, human rights and democracy, which subsequently generates further discussion among participants and leads to social mobilisation initiatives. Tostan has also helped and supported villages in making public declarations if they decide to abandon harmful social norms (such as FGC) and in organising marches around topics like child protection, human rights and environmental issues. Most of all, Tostan's CMCs serve as a focal point of community-led activities. Establishing well-functioning CMCs is an essential part of Tostan's responsible exit strategy to sustain programme outcomes after the CEP has been completed and Tostan's immediate presence in the community has ceased. The Empowered Community Network aids CMCs to form partnerships with external actors including other NGOs.

### Conclusion

Trying to force change through coercive action and condemnation alienates people and can be coun-

terproductive, as it causes individuals to become defensive and cling to their traditional beliefs. Tostan has shown that a programme that works from the bottom up can succeed when its design takes into consideration the needs of communities, as identified by their people. Tostan's participatory philosophy has resulted in remarkable social changes, including the large-scale abandonment of FGC. Continuous evaluation and revision in light of feedback, as practiced by Tostan, are crucial to the programme's enhancement and future success. Tostan is preparing to launch a training centre with the aim of sharing its philosophy and model with others.

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## ALGERIA

# Literacy, Training and Employment for Women

### Implementing Organization

IQRAA (Algerian literacy association)

### Language of Instruction

Arabic

### Funding

Commission Nationale des Droits de l'Homme; Conseil National de la Langue Arabe; UN agencies: UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO; Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID); The Japanese embassy in Algeria; Contributions from members and foreign donors; Algerian government, including the ministry of vocational training; Private-sector companies: Sonatrach, Arcofino and Nedjma; Mayor's office, El Khroub

### Programme Partners

The Algerian government and town councils; The ministries of education, vocational training, social welfare and culture; Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID); National and private-sector companies: Sonatrach, Nedjma, Saidal, and Arcofino

### Annual Programme Costs

USD 144,000 for the Attatba centre

### Date of Inception

2005

### Context

In 1962, when Algeria became independent, it set up a huge literacy programme. More than 85% of the population was illiterate, and despite considerable investment and progress in education, low levels of literacy remain a challenge today. According to the last census in 2008, 22% of the country's 39 million population could not read.

As part of the Millennium Development Objectives and the United Nations Literacy Decade, and having already made major educational reforms, the government established a national strategy aimed at halving illiteracy. This defines the role of NGOs in the processes of consultation, increasing awareness of the issue, and training teachers in the public and private sectors. As a part of the strategy IQRAA, the Algerian Literacy Association, launched a major programme known as AFIF: Alhabétisation, Formation et Insertion des Femmes, or Literacy, Training and Employment for Women.

### The organisation

IQRAA is a national NGO, established in 1990 to promote support for education in general, and adult education in particular. It covers all forty-eight of Algeria's wilaya, or departments, and 952 of its 1,541 local authorities. The organisation also employs a large number of volunteers.

Since its creation, IQRAA has set itself two major objectives: to assist in implementing the Millennium Development Goals and United Nations Literacy Decade, and to promote human development through social solidarity, respect for learners, gender equality, combating illiteracy and ensuring that all children receive an education.

The organisation's responsibilities include literacy, education, vocational training, employment programmes, and improving conditions for people in isolated rural areas. It has invested in numerous literacy projects, mainly targeted at women, and gained wide-ranging experience in this area. IQRAA's dedication has earned it numerous national and international awards, including the International Council for Adult Education's J. Roby Kidd Award in 1994, the Arab Education, Culture and Science Organisation's Arab Literacy Prize in 1998, UNESCO's Noma International Literacy Award in 1997, the Arab Literacy Prize in 2002, and the UNESCO Literacy Awards in 2014.

The AFIF program, initiated by IQRAA, gives people the opportunity to obtain professional qualifications in such areas as dressmaking and hairdressing, and then go on to make a living from these occupations. The government also provides help in the form of microcredit and office jobs. The programme is particularly aimed at women over fifteen and at girls who do not attend school, and has been highly successful in combining literacy with social development and improving the lives of families and communities.

### Main objectives

- To encourage women and girls to acquire literacy skills and professional qualifications, and thus to achieve rapid social and economic integration
- To set up employment agencies to help them find jobs, and lending facilities for those seeking to set up their own businesses
- To combat illiteracy, exclusion, poverty, and opposition to education

The programme teaches women and girls to read and write, acquire the professional skills they need to earn a living, and make a greater contribution to the community. It aims to help those who have not received a proper education, and to enable poor people in isolated rural areas to achieve greater social integration, financial wellbeing, and independence.

IQRAA also operates a programme for women who have been excluded and marginalised because they lack the skills required to access education in the first place. This is called “Alphabétisation, Qualification”, and seeks to help women overcome hardship by developing everyday life skills, playing a greater part in the local community, becoming more independent, acquiring professional qualifications, turning their plans into reality, finding paid jobs and participating in local development. It also gives them greater responsibility in the form of collaborative management, and provides them with the resources they need to achieve the project’s objectives.

### Realisation of the programme

A number of players are working together to ensure that this project is a success:

1. Local authorities, which provide either land on which to build literacy centres, or existing premises which are then restored and equipped by IQRAA
2. Corporate sponsors that provide practical support and equipment for the centres
3. Activists who recruit potential learners and assess their suitability
4. Teachers, who are themselves taught training skills
5. An education committee, which draws up, monitors and evaluates the curriculum, and has also published textbooks as part of the “Apprendre Utile” programme
6. Project expertise

AFIF centres are managed by staff paid by local authorities as part of their youth employment strategies, and report to IQRAA, which has its own set of internal rules to ensure that they function effectively.

### Training the facilitators

Training sessions are led by facilitators, who have varying degrees of qualifications and experience when they are recruited. Some have undergone three years of secondary education, others have a baccalaureate, and others still are graduates. Each facilitator teaches 15 to 20 students, depending on the location, and IQRAA provides them with initial and continuous training once they have passed an interview. They work fulltime and are paid the equivalent of USD 153 a month, which is funded by the education ministry.

Facilitators are recruited by the National Literacy and Education Office, and their training is governed by national standards. Each year for the duration of their employment, IQRAA provides them with onsite training refresher training sessions, held in September under the aegis of its education committee. Teaching is ultimately supervised by inspectors appointed by the department.

### Student teaching

This project is aimed at illiterate women aged 16 to 35, who are chosen on the basis of background studies in areas where there is sufficient demand, so the number of students varies from one centre to another. Each receives an average of 18 months’ teaching, though it may take as little as three to six months to obtain qualifications depending on the skills required and the student’s existing knowledge. The average number of students per group varies between 15 and 20. Courses may begin at any time of year, depending on students’ availability, and are free of charge.

IQRAA holds training sessions in a variety of locations, including its own purpose-built and equipped teaching centres in various locations around the country, and schools that are not used during holiday periods.

The teaching methodology begins with a study by the AFIF of participants’ needs, which are then used to determine the nature of the programmes. The study assesses potential students’ social, economic and geographical backgrounds, and they are then interviewed by volunteers to gain an understanding of their objectives and reasons for wishing to take part.

Students are taught using both traditional and more participatory methods. The course content is determined in partnership with the government, since the association is responsible for managing the national literacy campaign instigated by the government in 2007. The content was drawn up collaboratively with the AFIF education committee, consisting of teachers, psychologists and advocates, which is responsible for developing educational tools in accordance with national and international guidelines.

The courses are provided in Arabic. They cover a variety of subjects, such as gender studies, citizenship, the environment, peace and tolerance, human rights, preventive health, the fight against AIDS, Algeria’s family code, the universal declaration of human rights, and social justice.

#### 1. Literacy

The AFIF project regards literacy as an essential way of reinforcing women’s skills. IQRAA literacy courses teach them to read and write and thus become informed citizens who play an active part in their communities. The association has produced a series of booklets on related subjects, such as family planning, citizenship, peace, human rights and the environment. As well as helping women to develop reading and writing skills, literacy teaching allows them to become more informed about issues relating to their everyday lives.



## 2. Training

The centres provide a series of courses on specific themes, using teaching methods which have enjoyed proven success around the country because they offer immediate benefits, such as the ability to earn income from activities like dressmaking, embroidery, and silk painting.

Most parts of the country have a long tradition of embroidery and weaving, using popular traditional motifs that vary from one region to another. Embroidered pieces are widely used in everyday life: for example shawls are particularly popular in Ouargla, while Sidi Hammed is known for its painted silk cushions.

Trainers in these skills are recruited locally by the association and paid by local authorities. Many are women who have themselves acquired high-level literacy skills from the association.

## 3. Earning a living

Students then put their newly acquired theoretical knowledge into practice by setting up small businesses. They receive loans to acquire sewing machines and other equipment, and the association uses the interest from these to help other women become more independent. This scheme was first carried out on an experimental basis in the city of Batna, using equipment acquired by the social security ministry.

The project was instigated in 1995, in collaboration with UNICEF, which provided the association with thirty sewing machines. Since then, more than 28,000 women have benefited from it, and IQRAA has nine full-time centres providing training to over 1,500 women a year.

### Innovations

The main innovation is the link between literacy, education and development. Literacy teaching is followed by training in specific subjects which aims to make participants more entrepreneurial and independent within their communities. Literacy is a tool that enables them to get more out of the subject training and become independent by earning a living.

The programme is based on the principle of equal access to education and training, and designed in collaboration with the public sector, creating a synergy between public- and private-sector resources.

### Programme Monitoring and Evaluation

Students are monitored every three months and evaluated at the end of the year, receiving literacy and training certificates if they pass. Evaluations are the responsibility of the National Literacy Office.

IQRAA has carried out impact studies at a number of centres to measure the progress achieved as a result of the project. One of these took place at the Tipaza centre in May 2004, and another in July of the same year. An evaluation of the programmes has shown that they have had a significant impact, particularly in terms of building local training centres in rural areas. Some of these serve as relevant indicators of the project's progress, and it has expanded so fast that the ministry of vocational training has set up its own scheme, known as the *mécanisme d'alphabétisation-qualification*, or literacy and skills mechanism. IQRAA's experience has demonstrated the effectiveness of providing women with training in their own local areas. The specialist who carried out the impact study at the Attabla centre made it very clear that they had acquired greater visibility, played a more participatory and responsible role in the community, and changed their patterns of behaviour compared to those of surrounding villages.

These effects should be seen not in isolation, but as a product of mechanisms set up by the government to create opportunities for social integration in rural areas. There is strong demand for literacy education from women of all ages, thanks in no small part to the flexibility and convenience of the project and the future prospects it offers.

### Results of the programme

The programme has made a significant contribution to combating illiteracy and improving the socio-economic status of women and girls in Algeria. Each year, more than 130,000 students receive literacy teaching, and 2,500 women aged 16 to 35 receive specific skills training as part of the AFIF scheme, including dressmaking, embroidery, weaving, silk painting, hairdressing, and information technology.

As well as using schools outside formal opening hours, the AFIF project has enabled the construction and equipping of nine rural literacy centres with the help of significant contributions from local authorities, international bodies, and Algerian companies such as Sonatrach, Saidal, Nedjma and Sonelgaz. IQRAA also uses over fifty buildings in specific departments of the country which are owned by local authorities but surplus to requirements.

The non-literacy education places a particular emphasis on social issues, and this is reflected in the significant literature that has been produced as a result of the project. This includes a series of educational brochures and audiovisual productions on subjects such as family planning, HIV-AIDS prevention, conflict resolution, citizenship, the environment, and the family code. Most recently, the organisation has published a manual on prisoners' rights and responsibilities.

The AFIF project has allowed women in the regions concerned to set up profitable businesses, with a sys-

tem of loans enabling them to buy the equipment they need. The repayments allow other women to obtain loans and buy equipment.

These achievements have earned IQRAA numerous national and international awards, and it has shown an ability to mobilise human and financial resources and engage in national and international lobbying. The education ministry has provided a grant of USD 5.6 million to step up the adult literacy and training programmes, with a view to teaching 3.2 million people to read and write by 2015.

### Challenges and lessons learned

The programme has also encountered a number of challenges. The two most important are the belief in some circles that women in this age group are too old to acquire literacy skills, and bureaucratic delays in granting access to schools.

But the biggest challenge facing the association is that of reducing illiteracy, which currently stands at 22.1%. It has experienced widespread public inertia, and is therefore considering a communication strategy involving the media and businesses. IQRAA has also organised public activities to increase awareness of its aims, including literacy roadshows in villages and isolated areas, and is considering the construction of a mobile school in southern Algeria for nomads and others who have not benefited from the availability of funds.

The AFIF project has also created an awareness of the real problems faced by women in rural areas, such as travelling long distances to school, a lack of transport, and the absence of boarding facilities and canteens. It is one of a number of responses to public needs and expectations.

The project has been evaluated by an expert as part of an study of its impact on its beneficiaries. This was carried out by the Centre National d'Étude et d'Analyse de la Population, and concluded: "Opening local centres has made women more visible and given them a greater sense of participation and responsibility." The association believes that such descriptions amply justify the project and the need to continue working in the same direction, particularly in view of the courage and determination shown by women who have achieved independence despite a large number of obstacles.

A number of lessons can be drawn from this innovative experiment:

- It is essential to have an understanding of the social fabric and the problem of illiteracy in Algeria.
- Overcoming bureaucracy requires a great deal of patience.
- The project is very flexible and easy to implement.
- It offers women the prospect of social integration, giving them a greater role in their families and communities, and helping them to increase their

incomes by acquiring vocational skills in literacy centres.

- The project also broadens its students' horizons by enabling them to acquire professional qualifications or carry out business projects of their own.

### The project's long-term future

The project has become self-sustaining. Since it was founded, IQRAA has helped to provide literacy teaching for more than 1,552,000 individuals, mainly women, and enabled more than 23,000 women aged 18 to 35 to acquire vocational skills in a variety of areas.

Each year, 140,000 people (again, mainly women) take part in the literacy programme with the help of 4,649 paid teachers and trainers, as part of the national literacy strategy adopted by the government in 2007.

IQRAA is a member of several international networks and councils, and has observer status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council. These local and global connections help to ensure the long-term future of the project, whose outcomes are reviewed in June of each year by the ministry of education.

Since 1995, AFIF has achieved proven results and continued to attract illiterate and poorly educated women. Its viability has been confirmed by their success in gaining employment, becoming more independent, changing their family relationships, and benefiting from microcredit for students in rural areas. The project's financial viability is ensured by the support of local and national government.

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## MOROCCO

# Means of Socio-economic Empowerment and Integration for Women

### Programme Title

Innovative literacy and post-literacy project: means of socio-economic empowerment and integration for women in Morocco

### Implementing Organization

Department for the Prevention of Illiteracy (Ministry of National Education, Higher Education, Staff Training and Scientific Research)

### Language of Instruction

Arabic

### Programme Partners

Moroccan government, UNESCO, Moroccan associations, and NGOs

### Date of Inception

2006

### Background

Despite the progress that has been made, the illiteracy rate in Morocco remains alarming. It is estimated at 32% of the population aged 10 and over according to the Moroccan Ministry of Education. In 2006, a national illiteracy survey in Morocco put the rate at 38.5%, with a rate of 46.8% for women, 31.4% for men, 27.2% in urban areas and 54.4% in rural areas. Illiteracy thus affects rural areas and women most of all.

To address this problem, the Moroccan government has made the fight against illiteracy one of its top priorities. This commitment has yielded notable results. Since 2002, the number of beneficiaries of literacy programmes has risen every year. It increased from 286,000 in 2002/03 to 656,000 in 2008/09. The total number of beneficiaries over the last six years (2003 to 2009) was almost 4 million. This is double the number of beneficiaries over the previous 20 years (from 1982 to 2002).

It is now acknowledged that the low literacy rates witnessed in Morocco, and among women in particular, are a major barrier to the process of national socio-economic development. In 2007 the Department for the Prevention of Illiteracy (DPI) launched a new initiative that aims to promote innovative activities within the literacy and post-literacy sector through experiments and pilot projects implemented in partnership with local actors, especially associations and NGOs. The specific objective of this initiative is to diversify literacy and post-literacy programmes in terms of intervention approach, teaching methods,

educational aids, sustainability of learning outcomes and the integration of literacy into the process of sustainable development, the prevention of poverty, and the socio-economic integration of beneficiaries. The involved associations and NGOs developed innovative projects to better cater to the needs expressed by the target population.

As part of the National Literacy Strategy, whose activities focus particularly on women, the DPI implemented a pilot programme with UNESCO support through the LIFE initiative and financial support from the UNESCO Capacity Development for Education for All programme (Cap-EFA Morocco 2006-2008). The aim of this programme was to create a model that would make it possible to forge a link between literacy and the socio-economic integration of neo-literate women by way of a post-literacy training programme to consolidate the literacy skills acquired and prepare them to run micro-projects.

### Programme

The programme covered the region of Souss Massa Daa, one of Morocco's 16 regions. It concerned two of the country's 82 provinces, namely Zagora and Ouarzazate.

### Main objectives

The activities comprised by this programme had the following objectives:

- the adoption of innovative approaches focused on the testing of new adult education methods;
- the use of participatory approaches to the creation and implementation of literacy projects based on the expressed needs of beneficiaries rather than on operator's scope of services;
- the implementation of effective post-literacy projects tied in with local development;
- the development of new teaching materials adapted to the target populations;
- the coordination of literacy with poverty reduction and the socio-economic integration of beneficiaries (especially women) by way of support for the creation of income-generating activities;
- the development of new approaches to the training of groups with special needs, such as disabled people and nomads;
- reinforcement of basic skills, namely reading, writing and arithmetic, acquired during the literacy phases through the implementation of programmes with themes as diverse as health, law, credit and banking, democratic institutions, the social economy and home economics, and citizenship;
- the setting-up of community education centres as tools for community mobilisation to aid the creation of a favourable environment for lifelong learning;

- capacity-building of local actors (civil society) to promote and support community development activities intended to improve women's socio-economic status.

## Implementation

This programme was implemented from 2007 to 2009 by the DPI in partnership with various local actors. Community organisations played an important role in running the training activities and initiating the income-generating activities. Other forms of community participation were developed to ensure ownership of the implementation process by community members. Community management mechanisms were therefore initiated.

Two studies were conducted as a prelude to implementation of the programme:

- **Survey on the reference situation in Ouarzazate and Zagora:** the goal of this study was to highlight the education and socio-economic situation of the target women at the beginning of the project. Two analysis methods were adopted: quantitative (survey of a representative sample) and qualitative (focus group involving the women and civil-society associations).
- **Economic opportunities for women in Ouarzazate and Zagora:** this study made it possible to determine the strengths and weaknesses of previous experiences in the domain of income-generating activities and led to a number of proposals that served as a basis for the selection of projects alongside the beneficiaries.

## Training of Facilitators

The training provided for facilitators focused on adult education, teaching techniques in post-literacy programmes, community mobilisation and community centre management.

## Training Modules for Local NGOs

These were intended to build the capacities of male and female members of local development associations and coordinators of community education centres in the areas of post-literacy, community development project management, income-generating activities and the promotion of gender equality.

## Training of Beneficiaries

The preparation and running of the training sessions for the beneficiaries was a key stage of the project. Literacy reinforcement sessions and sessions on the themes of the post-literacy phase were held four times a week, with each session lasting two hours. This comprised a total of 8 hours per week over a period of 9 months in one year. The average learner group size was 25.

The initial sessions focused on exercises intended to refresh and reinforce the reading, writing and arithmetic skills acquired during the initial literacy training. The aim was to maintain the women's neo-literate status, and these sessions served as a transitional phase leading to the post-literacy training sessions.

The post-literacy phase comprised pre-vocational training sessions relating to the professions desired by the participants and according to the economic opportunities available in each region (agriculture, livestock-rearing, bee-keeping, tapestry-making, etc.). Following this phase, those beneficiaries who wished to do so and were selected to pursue income-generating activities, as well as their helpers, received in-depth technical training and personalised support throughout the project.

## Local Support for Beneficiaries

Community capacity-building and ongoing support for the women led to the creation of community education centres (CECs). These centres, which were created and are run by the communities themselves, are involved in the transfer of skills and empowerment of communities as part of local capacity-building efforts and support the creation and development of economic opportunities for vulnerable groups.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

A participatory process led to the development and implementation of a programme monitoring and evaluation system. This culminated in the establishment of a piloting committee responsible for monitoring and evaluating the programme activities. This committee was empowered to make any relevant proposals relating to the smooth running of the programme. The development of the monitoring and evaluation framework led to the selection of monitoring and performance indicators to enable an objective assessment of how the programme's various stages were implemented.

A mechanism for evaluation of the training sessions was put in place. Initially, evaluation activities took place at the end of the sessions to gauge how well the skills had been acquired and to facilitate the interventions necessary to rectify the failings. This task was performed by the facilitators as part of their training duties. The participants then engaged in self-assessment activities within their groups with regard to the learning activities, with support and guidance from the facilitators.

The other practical stage of the monitoring and evaluation process involved field visits to the areas of intervention of the programme. These field visits enabled the various actors to assess the level of development of the activities, identify weaknesses and discuss ways of remedying them. With a view to documenting the activities, periodic reports were drawn



up by the partner organisations for the members of the piloting committee.

### Outcomes

Between 2007 and 2009 this programme made it possible to reinforce the literacy and vocational skills of more than 11,700 beneficiaries, more than 95% of whom were women. The training for facilitators and beneficiaries covered themes that linked learner needs with the opportunities available in the catchment areas through the creation of income-generating activities. Participatory studies were carried out on the key activities, and this led to the implementation of income-generating activities that helped the beneficiaries to find work. Within this framework, 30 income-generating activity projects were initiated for 300 women in the domains of livestock-rearing, the use of natural resources, and agriculture.

Capacity-building for local organisations with the involvement and training of local associations Association staff were involved in the whole of the consultation process relating to the programme, which included the selection of female beneficiaries, the identification and recruitment of facilitators, the development of training modules, the creation of community education centres (CECs), and assistance with the reference study and the study concerning opportunities for income-generating activities.

Boosting community participation through the creation of community education centres (CECs) Four CECs were set up for this purpose and provided with equipment. These centres are run by the communities themselves. Centre managers were selected and trained. Piloting committees were established to guarantee greater community autonomy and involvement in the running of the CECs.

Notable achievements were observed in terms of documentation and capitalisation. Post-literacy textbooks and subject-specific booklets were developed. Various other capitalisation aids were produced at different levels, including a study intended to build on good practices by the DPI.

### Challenges

A number of challenges were encountered during implementation of the programme:

- Difficulties relating to beneficiary availability due to the harvest season, which frequently interrupted the activities and caused problems when they were resumed. Other interruptions due to agricultural work hampered the implementation of some programme activities.
- High facilitator turnover at some locations due to various reasons. Facilitators had to be replaced several times at certain locations, hence the dif-

ficulties witnessed in terms of the regularity and continuity of the training activities.

- Difficulties in the assimilation by some facilitators of the innovative methodology adopted.
- The insufficient number of CECs set up.
- The manifestly inadequate number of women who were able to take up IGA training (10% on average), which encouraged the creation of group projects.
- Difficulties in terms of outlets for the sale of the products resulting from the income-generating activities.
- Difficulties in the raising of additional funds by associations to make the programme sustainable.

### Innovative Aspects

Community education centres (CECs) were created for the first time in Morocco. These CECs offer lifelong learning opportunities to all members of the community, and to women in particular. They are usually set up and run by members of the community, and can be involved in all stages of activity implementation. CECs are accommodated by associations or networks of associations. Each centre has its own activity programmes based on community needs, with consideration given to the special circumstances of women, the disabled and nomads.

In addition to the classic vertical approach in terms of participation and the creation of projects that address immediate practical needs (literacy/post-literacy and income-generating activities), this programme also features a cross-cutting approach intended to ensure that the main local actors are involved and to instil into daily development practices an awareness, followed by acceptance, of the strategic importance of women, a group often marginalised in decision-making and local development.

A wide range of training aids was produced: vocational training textbooks on dairy cattle rearing, bee-keeping and a textbook about health and citizenship, audiovisual pieces on sustainable development, and folk tales intended for use in the post-literacy phase.

### Lessons Learned

The main findings arising from the implementation of this project are as follows:

- Strengths
  - Stimulation/creation of a local-level impetus for literacy, involving associations, organisers, beneficiaries and the public;
  - Women are highly motivated by the new methodology, especially the case study that enables them to have a say in the choice of topic, talk about their concerns and thus become liberated and express themselves;

- A change in the behaviour of some women, who sent their out-of-school daughters back to school; others provided their children with educational support;
- Greater openness towards public institutions;
- Beneficiaries become convinced of the importance of post-literacy training; non-beneficiaries are encouraged to become literate;
- Beneficiaries become more confident.
- Weaknesses
  - Insufficient number of CECs to meet the needs of the entire population in the areas concerned;
  - Low level of male involvement in the programme.

### Sustainability

To contribute to the viability and sustainability of these activities, provision has been made for a CEC reinforcement and support programme that has already been formulated as part of other cooperation projects scheduled to run between 2009 and 2011. The support to be given to these CECs will come from the budget allocated as part of the provincial plans devised in both of the programme's locations and also the current capacity of civil society to manage innovative projects in this field.

Between 2009 and 2010, the programme will be expanded to cover other regions of Morocco: support for neo-literate women in the Taza-El Hoceima-Taounate, Oriental and Tangier-Tetouan regions through post-literacy training will enable them to develop their skills and knowledge, and to pursue income-generating activities. In addition, CECs will be set up in the Taza-El Hoceima-Taounate, Oriental and Tangier-Tetouan regions as new vehicles for socio-economic integration.

The DPI has already selected 9 associations to run similar projects (post-literacy combined with socio-economic integration programmes aimed at women) that will be launched in the next few months.

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## PALESTINE

### The Early Childhood, Family and Community Education Programme

#### Implementing Organization

The Trust of Programmes for Early Childhood, Family and Community Education

#### Language of Instruction

Arabic

#### Programme Partners

The German Ministry of Cooperation (BMZ), Caritas (Germany), Misereor, Stichting Kinderpostzegels Nederland, The Suisse Friends of Kiriath Yearim, The Harris Foundation (USA), The Stella and Charles Guttman Foundation (USA)

#### Context and Background

The economy of Palestine has been severely damaged by the long-standing and ongoing conflict with Israel. Apart from the physical damage, production has virtually stopped, with some reports suggesting that about 85% of industries have been closed or are operating at less than 20% capacity. Consequently, the employment rates stands at less than 50% and the economy is virtually sustained by international aid. The combined effects of the ongoing war and economic collapse have forced two thirds of Palestinians to live below the poverty line, with limited access to basic social services such as healthcare, education and secure livelihoods.

In an effort to promote access to education and general socio-economic development, a group of Palestinian educators and social workers established The Trust of Programme for Early Childhood, Family and Community Education Programme (The Trust) in 1984 as a non-profit NGO. The Trust primarily endeavours to: (1) develop and maintain the Palestinian identity; (2) improve the quality of life for the Palestinian people; and (3) promote social responsibility, community empowerment and development among Palestinians in Israel and the Palestinian territories through holistic, intergenerational and community/family-based educational and leadership training programmes. Currently, the Trust is operating various but integrated programmes related to early childhood education (ECE), health and civic education (e.g. parenting, human rights and non-violent conflict resolution), vocational skills training and leadership training for professionals and para-professionals such as teachers

and community leaders, respectively. More specifically, the Trust is currently implementing the following programmes:

**The Mother-to-Mother Programme:** the programme supports and strengthens the parenting skills of mothers (and fathers), empowering parents, individually and collectively, to be effective members of society at both family and community levels. The programme thus covers a variety of themes including: early childhood development, childcare, health, nutrition, pre-school education and social commitment and responsibility. To enhance its effectiveness and efficiency, the programme is tailored to the specific cultural context, and para-professionals are trained to provide ongoing training assistance to other community members through a Home Visitation Programme. The programme has proved to be the cornerstone of other programmes being implemented by the Trust and, most importantly, it has also been adopted by the RAA in Essen (Germany) to promote the integration of Arab emigrants into the city.

**The Learn-by-Play Programme:** this is the cornerstone of the integrated community-based programmes being operated by the Trust and is constituted to promote lifelong learning. The programme aims to promote literacy skills development as well as to enhance academic performance among young people by reducing school drop-out rates and by ameliorating learning difficulties arising from the challenging situation under which Palestinian children live. Under the programme, young volunteers are trained to be mentors of children with learning difficulties.

**The Young Women Empowerment and Prevention of Early Marriage Programme:** the programme endeavours to use education as an instrument to foster the development of positive personalities, self-awareness and self-confidence among schoolgirls and young women as well as to reverse the trend of early marriages by raising family and community awareness about the (negative) consequences of such social practices. The programme also gives young women who dropped out of school an opportunity to resume and continue with their education. In tandem with the Mother-to-Mother Programme, this programme has encouraged parents to consent to having their daughters go out of the house to learn, work and get enrolled in other programme activities being implemented by the Trust.

**The Women Empowerment Programme:** supports women to be qualified, constructive and proactive partners in community development activities. To this end, the programme provides women with relevant skills necessary to initiate programmes and services in their communities. The programme first started as a module within the Mother-to-Mother Programme but has been a stand-alone programme since 1996.

**The Combating Domestic Violence Programme:** the programme emerged out of the increasing incidences of domestic violence against women and children.

Recently a family counselling centre was established in Biddo, the first of its kind, which seeks to combat domestic violence by equipping couples with necessary skills, values and technical know-how to face the challenges of family violence as well as to resolve conflicts peacefully. In addition, it also seeks to raise public awareness on the rights of women and children and the social dangers of domestic violence.

**The Teachers Training Programme:** trains pre-school teachers and supports them in their work with children, parents and the community. This is intended to enhance the professional competencies of pre-school teachers as well as to increase parental involvement in the education of their children.

**International Palestinian Child Initiative (IPCI):** The Trust and Icdi in Holland have established the International Palestinian Child Initiative (IPCI) to empower local communities to create supportive environments for children's well-being and development by marshaling forces, resources, expertise and commitment both within the Palestinian NGOs and the international human development community.

These programmes emerged out of and are therefore tailored to address the diverse and practical needs of Palestinian communities living in a context of ongoing conflict. Although the programmes are intended to benefit entire families, women and children are particularly targeted because they are more vulnerable to the ongoing violence as well as to the patriarchal social systems under perpetual stress and poverty. In addition, as in most societies, women and children are also principal agents of community development and social change.

In order to enhance effective community empowerment as well as the sustainability of its programmes, the Trust works closely with community-based organisations (CBOs) and municipalities. Typically, The Trust provides initial training and funding for project development. Thereafter, the communities are encouraged to be actively involved and to take primary responsibility in programme implementation with support and assistance from professional staff provided by the Trust.

This report analyses the **Learn-by-Play Programme** in greater detail.

### The Learn-by-Play Programme

The Learn-by-Play Programme was first launched in Jerusalem in 1996 in response to some schools' request for a literacy programme for its students, many of whom had literacy problems. Preliminary studies before the launch of the programme had revealed that 85% of students with literacy problems were from extremely poor communities, where school drop-out rates and the functional illiteracy rate among those who managed to reach high school were very high. In addition, literacy problems were also due to low levels of parental support and involvement in the education of their children as well as the lack of ad-



equate resources and high student-to-teacher ratios in most community schools. As a result, while parents lacked the literacy capacity to support their children's education, the schools were neither well-prepared for nor responsive to the children's needs, which caused feelings of alienation among those children. Therefore, the Trust decided to work with children from elementary school level, mainly in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th grades, in order to build bridges between the school and community environment as well as to develop children's literacy skills in a non-formal environment.

The programme is currently being implemented in most rural areas and poor urban communities across Palestine including the Bedouin areas, the West Bank, Jerusalem and the Negev area. A number of community stakeholders – primarily schools, children and families – are involved in programme implementation.

### Aims and Objectives

The programme endeavours to:

- reduce illiteracy rates among students,
- improve the levels of literacy and educational achievement among students from grades 2, 3 and 4 by providing stimulating learning conditions and adequate learning resources as well as by bridging between the school and the community,
- train young women and college students (volunteers) to be professional educational mentors and tutors of younger students,
- to promote community empowerment through lifelong learning,
- prevent elementary schoolchildren from dropping out of the educational system due to lack of resources, overcrowded classrooms, lack of parental involvement /support and shortage of professional manpower,
- encourage parents to be actively involved in the education their children,
- network with local organisations in order to pool resources for the promotion of child education,
- enrol teachers involved in the programme in ongoing study workshops in order to enhance their professionalism,
- offer students a chance to utilise their idle time and gain proper understanding of community issues as well as help them in their studies.

### Programme Implementation: Approaches and Methodologies

The programme is based on holistic and intergenerational or integrative principles to educational training and thus targets parents (mostly mothers), teachers, young volunteers and children (learners). To enhance effectiveness as well as to maintain its relevance within the broader educational system, the Learn-by-Play programme is based on simplified and easy-to-understand modules or work papers which are adapted



from the official school curriculum. In addition, the programme is also integrated into other programmes, particularly the Mother-to-Mother and the Teachers Training programmes.

### Parental Involvement

Parental involvement in the programme is premised on the fact that a child deserves to live in a healthy family environment in order to benefit from parental educational support so as to realise his or her full intellectual potential. The programme therefore works in close partnership with students' parents and other community members in order to encourage them to actively participate in the education of their children. Close teacher-parent partnership is also critical in bridging the school and community environments which, in turn, enables teachers and parents to support children's educational process. To this end, parent-teacher progress meetings are held on a monthly basis to assess children's progress. In addition, the families take part in programme planning and monitoring and as such, they are not only recipients of information but are also full partners in the implementation of the programme.

### Recruitment and Training of Trainers

The implementation of the programme is facilitated by volunteer facilitators and tutors who act as educational mentors ('big sisters') to children in elementary classes within their communities. On average, the programme recruits and trains a total of 50 young



women tutors per year but ‘older’ trained facilitators are allowed to continue with the programme if they are still interested. Facilitators are recruited from within their communities and should have at least a high school education and be self-motivated. Increasingly, college students are volunteering to train and work as facilitators.

Following an intensive five-day (22-hour) training course, the facilitators are obliged to attend bi-weekly in-house training workshops in order to enrich their knowledge and expertise in a variety of subjects such as communications and interview skills as well as to share and learn from others’ in-the-field experiences. Overall, facilitators receive training in basic school curriculum, the child-centred methodologies and principles of the Learn-by-Play programme, child development, childrens’ rights and learning difficulties.

After training, the tutors work with groups of 7 or 8 students, facilitating three-hour-long lessons two days a week.

### Teaching Methods

The children are chosen to participate in the programme through a needs assessment process undertaken by schoolteachers and according to their school achievement. As implied by the programme title, learning is facilitated mainly through play. Accordingly, the programme emphasises teaching methodologies that stimulate the playful but educative creativeness of children such as didactic games, drama, debates and song and dance. The use of these child-centred methodologies replaces rigid teacher-centred learning approaches and offers students opportunities to express themselves freely and creatively in a friendly environment that fosters easy comprehension of the subject concepts. In addition, the strategies are also critical in motivating students to continue attending school and the Learn-by-Play programme. They are also important in building functional social relationships between (1) the students themselves; (2) the students and their tutors; and (3) the students, tutors and the entire community.

Games are also complemented by simplified curriculum-based study materials / manuals and illustrative study aides such as audio-visuals, newsletters and magazines as well as formal training and counselling workshops and community meetings.

### Evaluation

Programme evaluation is undertaken on an ongoing basis through periodic reports and meetings (usually after every three months) between programme coordinators, tutors, teachers and parents. In addition, facilitators also compile weekly students’ progress reports which, together with the parent-teacher meetings, are used to assess the overall student pro-

gress and impact and challenges of the programme. The Home Visitation programme component enables programme coordinators and tutors to get direct feedback from parents as well as to assess the role of parents in the education of their children. Finally, schools also provide essential feedback on the performance of programme students.

### Impact / Achievement

The programme has had a great influence on the educational system in Palestine primarily because it specifically addresses the children’s learning needs through the involvement of the entire community. Many schools have also requested The Trust to involve their students in the programme. For example, during 2008, two new community schools in the Negev and two new groups in Jerusalem became involved in the programme. As a result, more than 544 Palestinian students have been directly trained since the inception of the programme while about 400 others have benefited ‘indirectly’ through their family networks with programme students.

The programme has led to noticeable improvements in the literacy skills (reading, writing, numeracy and language skills) of 75% of programme participants. In this context, one parent said, “I thought that my son has limited abilities and started to accept that, but today nothing brings more joy than seeing the school’s grades report.” Improved literacy abilities have enabled participants to gain self-esteem and confidence.

The programme has also reduced school drop-outs rates among children. In addition, given that the programme is implemented during non-school times, it has also acted to combat deviant behaviour among some children (for example taking children off the streets).

The programme has promoted close partnerships between parents and schoolteachers and this has served to enhance parental interest in and support of their children’s educational needs.

The programme’s Home Visitation component and community meetings have promoted social networking for community development.

The programme gave the tutors and volunteers a sense of belonging to their communities as productive and valued members. It also enhanced their professional skills which they could build up in pursuit of formal employment. One tutor said, “I am now more aware on how to deal with my pupils and how to identify their needs.”

### Challenges

Despite the huge demand for the programme from new areas and new schools as well as from old participating schools wishing to enrol more students,

programme expansion is hindered by lack of adequate funding and trained professionals. The Trust is currently attempting to attract new professionals to join the programme and to recruit more tutors to support programme implementation.

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## YEMEN

### Literacy Through Poetry (LTP)

#### Language of Instruction

Arabic

#### Funding

World Bank, The Social Fund for Development (SFD)  
– Yemen

#### Date of Inception

2002

#### Overview

Despite often being overlooked as an instrument of literacy training and development, learning through cultural heritage (oral tradition) is a critical and vibrant means of helping learners to acquire reading and writing skills and one which simultaneously promotes culturally grounded lifelong learning and, by extension, preserves cultural heritage itself. The Literacy Through Poetry Project (LTPP), piloted in Yemen in 2002-2003, assisted women in acquiring reading and writing skills using their own stories, poetry and proverbs.

#### Background and Context

Although Yemen has laws that guarantee universal, compulsory and free education for all children aged 6 to 15 years, not everyone has benefited. Access to education is particularly restricted for girls and young women due to a number of socio-cultural factors that include: 1) the practice of early marriages which leads both to limited access to school and high school drop-out rates; 2) the tradition of family honour in relation to the chastity of girls that discourages some parents from enrolling their girls in mixed schools or allowing them to venture outside the home; 3) the general negative attitudes towards educating girls; and 4) a shortage of female teachers that prohibits the 'unrestricted' interaction of females with unrelated males. As a result, there is a huge disparity between male and female literacy rates. For example, the literacy rates for youth (15-24 years) between 1995 and 2004 were 91% and 59% for males and females, respectively. A similar disparity was observed for adults during the same period, with a male literacy rate of 73% compared to 35% for women.

The Yemeni government has been implementing adult literacy programmes in an attempt to combat illiteracy among youth and adults. However, govern-

mental adult literacy programmes are less attractive to learners because 1) although the programme condenses six years of elementary school curriculum into two years, this is still too long for most adult learners given their familial responsibilities; 2) teaching is based on methodologies which are unattractive to adult learners, such as the use of heavily illustrated textbooks and rote learning; 3) most adults are not interested in pursuing the full range of the subject-based school curriculum, indicating in interviews that their reason for attending classes is primarily to acquire basic reading, writing and numeracy skills; and 4) examinations alienate a large proportion of adult learners.

Overall, state adult literacy programmes proved to be very unattractive even to young school drop-outs who wished to resume and complete their elementary studies. As a result, withdrawal rates from state adult literacy programmes were extremely high, estimated at 80–90%, while the ability of graduates to read unfamiliar texts, even after two years of instruction, remained very low. The innovative Literacy Through Poetry Project (LTPP) was initiated to address these challenges and thus to promote literacy skills training through an adult-friendly form of pedagogy based on the story-telling and poetic creativeness of the Yemenis.

### The Literacy Through Poetry Project (LTPP)

LTPP was piloted in two phases between 2002 and 2003 with funding from the World Bank and the Social Fund for Development (SFD, Yemen). The project primarily targets young and adult rural and urban-based migrant women. After consultations with the Ministry of Education, Phase 1 of the project was piloted in four rural and farming communities of the Sanaa Governorate and one urban literacy centre in Sanaa that caters to recent rural migrants to the capital, two of the areas with the greatest concentration of illiterate women. During Phase 2 of the project, the SFD added four urban classes, two of which were held in literacy centres in Sanaa and two in the town of Manakha. Only students with no previous formal schooling were accepted in Phase 2 classes. The total initial enrolment was 79 students with a 73% completion rate.

### Aims and Objectives

LTPP was designed in response to the high illiteracy rate (78.2%) among rural women and the progressive loss of women's voice in the past 30 years. The project therefore offers women who have had limited (or no) access to education the opportunity to gain basic literacy skills (reading and writing) based on their cultural heritage, particularly through the use of local poetry, stories and proverbs. The project aims to:

- combat illiteracy through literacy skills development among women;
- empower women with basic literacy skills in order to enable them to perform basic tasks independently, such as taking medication, applying pesticides safely, using a cell phone, navigating urban environments, reading letters from migrant kin, and reading and understanding newspapers and/or the Qur'an.; and
- enable women to make positive and meaningful contributions towards the development of their communities.

### Project Implementation: Approaches and Methodologies

In addition to working closely with the World Bank and the government of Yemen, the project also established strong partnerships with local community/village leaders, school principals and education directors. Local partners played a critical role in the recruitment of learners as well as in combating social resistance to the programme.

### Recruitment and Training of Teachers

Teachers of rural classes are often secondary school graduates, most of them in their twenties, who live in the communities in which the project is being implemented. In Phase 1, the urban class was taught by the then Director of Illiteracy Eradication and Adult Education for Sanaa. She was the only one of the teachers with a university degree and formal training in pedagogy. As well as teaching programme participants, she played an important role in mentoring teachers and helping them resolve problems. In Phase 2, she trained and mentored the teachers but did not teach any of the classes.

Teachers in Phase 1 participated in a five-day intensive training workshop and three one-day follow-up workshops. Teachers in Phase 2 were trained intensively for just four days, after which they attended three follow-up workshops.

### Recruitment of Learners

Classes ranged in size from 20 to 32 learners aged between 15 and 70 years, with the majority belonging to the 18-30 age group. While the urban class only accepted students with no previous literacy experience, approximately 25% of the students in the rural classes had some experience of schooling, ranging from a few weeks to a year. The intergenerational composition of classes constituted one of the project's strengths, as it enabled older learners to learn from younger students, a majority of whom had basic literacy skills, while at the same time enabling older learners to

transmit the story-telling and poetic traditions of their communities to the younger students.

### Teaching Approaches and Methodologies

The project teaching methods combine content drawn from local culture with the Freirean emphasis on learning through dialogue. Community literature is used for the development of student stories. In other words, the project is based on learner-centred, participatory and activity-based teaching methodologies with the learners' cultural heritage as the basic teaching resource.

Learners are encouraged to create their own texts through their stories, poems and rhyming proverbs. Alternatively, lessons can begin with a discussion of a photograph of a scene familiar to the students or a topic of their choice. Students are then encouraged to insert poetry and proverbs into their discussion, as is their custom when discussing issues of importance to them. With the teacher's help, the class develops short stories based on the discussion. These stories, along with the poems and proverbs generated during the discussion, are written on a large piece of paper using, initially, the local dialect spoken in the community. The written text is taped on to the wall and is used as the principal teaching aid through which students learn to recognise and read letters of the alphabet, words, phrases and sentences. In order to reinforce letter and word recognition, texts often centre on specific letters, words or syllables.

Since standard Arabic is used in most published materials and media texts, the rules of standard written Arabic are gradually introduced as the students' literacy skills develop. Each text is then typed, photocopied and returned to the students so that they can learn to read their stories and poems in print as well as in handwritten form. Finally, the typed texts of each class are collected and bound. At the end of the 6 to 9-month training period (comprising 220 to 272 contact hours), each student who completes the course is given a book that she participated in writing, thus giving her a powerful sense of achievement and an increased interest in learning.

### Justification of Teaching Methods

The literacy teaching approach sought to respond to the following fundamental question:

- Why are students encouraged to include poetry in their discussions and stories?

As in many other Arabic speaking countries, the vast majority of rural Yemenis above the age of 35 can compose or improvise short poems of two to four lines which they sing while they work in the fields, at home, on construction projects or while carrying out a number of other tasks. These poems express their innermost feelings about their family situation as well as

local and international issues. It is common for short poems and proverbs to be inserted into conversation to make a point, and poetry competitions are integral to Yemen's heritage. Poetry is used regularly in conflict mediation to persuade the two sides to compromise. However, women's oral traditions have been threatened by socio-economic changes, new media such as television, and imported conservative interpretations of Islam that denounce women's oral traditions as un-Islamic. While some genres of men's poetry have been enhanced through the use of audio cassettes, it is now rare to hear poems sung by women.

- Would incorporating local poetry into literacy classes attract rural students and sustain their interest in acquiring reading and writing skills, and would this participatory approach enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning?

The pilot project was designed to address these two questions. It was also hoped that recognising and affirming women's poetry – their traditional form of public expression – would empower them and encourage younger women to revive and continue their mothers' poetic traditions.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

The project was evaluated on several levels. Following guidelines for participatory monitoring and evaluation, teaching methods were continuously adjusted in response to comments made by supervisors, teachers and students. Supervisors visited classes regularly, mentored teachers and tested students' skills acquisition. Teachers evaluated students informally throughout the project and administered formal examinations. In some cases, these exams were more demanding than those given to students in government-sponsored literacy classes. The students' skills acquisition was evaluated on the basis of these examinations, which was not the project's original intention but developed as a response to teachers' and supervisors' demands for a formal means of comparing the skills acquisition of students in this project with those in other literacy classes. One consequence of this practice was that several of the older students refused to attend class when supervisors visited or when the teachers scheduled an examination. This had a negative and distorting impact on the rates of completion and skills acquisition.

### Impact

Given that most participants had little or no formal literacy training prior to joining the project and the fact that the literacy course is so short, the literacy acquisition rates surpassed expectations. After three months of instruction, most learners could recognise letters of the alphabet, sound out words and take dictation in commonly used words. By the end of the



course (after 6-9 months), 36% of the students tested could read and write new texts fluently. Another 38% could read and write slowly, and 12% could read but not write new sentences. In Phase 2, more than 62.5% of students could read new texts fluently. In other words, between 62% and 74% met the basic goal of the project (i.e. acquired fundamental literacy skills) and another 12% could sound out new words. This compared to just 25% of students in the government programme who were adept in recognising letters of the alphabet and 20% who could read unfamiliar texts after two years of literacy instruction.

Student interest in the project has remained high, as demonstrated by retention and completion rates between 74 and 81%.

The project empowered both teachers and learners. The teachers appreciated the opportunity to learn and practice new teaching methods and noted an improvement in their students' ability to ask and respond to questions, and to express their opinions on topics discussed in class and events in their lives. Learners reported being accorded more respect within their families and showed a greater interest in their children's schoolwork. Students voted in national elections and initiated health interventions in two of the pilot villages. They also participated actively in national events by presenting their poems. Furthermore, the creativity inherent in poetry has helped students to adapt to their changing environments.

The project has also helped to promote lifelong learning as almost all older students asked for another year of classroom instruction, while many younger graduates have proceeded to enrol in government literacy programmes.

A notable and valuable outcome of the project has been the change in public perceptions with regards to educating women. A number of community members who had initially assumed that adult women could not learn to read and write were impressed at the skills that students acquired. As a result, the demand for adult women's education increased.

The project is now "owned" by Yemeni nationals. The Social Fund for Development financed and implemented Phase 2 of the project with no help from outside consultants.

### Challenges and Solutions

The project has encountered some problems, the most significant of which are:

- social resistance: despite wide consultation with community leaders before the launch of the project, some males were openly opposed to the programme, possibly because it empowered women. In one village, for example, young men raided the classroom, destroying learning materials and overturning chairs. It took the intervention of the

school principal and community leaders to halt the attack.

- scepticism regarding the teaching method: initially, some community members were doubtful whether "real learning" could occur through poetry and without textbooks. Learners' complaints about the lack of textbooks forced some teachers to supply written materials, such as calendars and newspapers, although the primary intention of the class was to enable learners to gain literacy skills using their oral poetic traditions.
- the perception that cultural traditions are outdated and unsophisticated or the fear that modernity and urban lifestyles would have a corrosive influence, which led some young learners in rural settings to pretend not to know any poetry or proverbs. Women from well-off families displayed initial resistance for similar reasons. To overcome this, one urban teacher invited rural students to attend her class. Upon arrival, they were greeted with traditional welcoming verses and had no choice but to respond with verses that were even more creative than those of their hosts, thus enhancing their social standing and dispensing with the fiction that oral poetry was alien to them. The fact that urban women were seen to improvise poems furthermore helped to dispense with the "rural" and "low status" stigma of oral poetry.

### Lessons Learned

- Local heritage is a critical facet of development, including literacy training. It not only provides identity and a voice to even the most impoverished of populations; it also facilitates social change.
- Participatory approaches to adult literacy increase the rates of skills acquisition among learners. They are also critical in ensuring the effectiveness of the project and the sustainability of acquired literacy skills.
- Literacy skills acquisition is more durable when based on local knowledge systems. Similarly, literacy training is easier when it builds on local knowledge, skills and traditions valued by learners.
- The interest generated by stories and poems renders words and content easy to learn and remember, enhances critical thinking skills and maintains enthusiasm for learning.
- Learning based on students' oral skills makes student feel valued by their teachers, both as students and as artists.

### Sustainability

Despite continued demand from learners, adequate project funding, and official recognition as an innovative example of a "best practice in women's empowerment" from the World Bank, UNESCO and the Centre

of Arab Women for Training and Research (CAWTAR), the Yemeni Ministry of Education has not authorised the continuation of classes using this method. However, while the sustainability of the project in Yemen is currently in doubt, the project can be adapted to other countries.

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## INDIA

### Khabar Lahariya (News Waves)

#### Implementing Organization

NIRANTAR: Centre for Gender and Education

#### Date of Inception

2006

#### Context and Background

In recent decades, India has instituted a number of progressive educational programmes such as the National Literacy Mission, the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and the Saakshar Bharat Mission for Female Literacy, in an effort to combat illiteracy in the country. As a result of these programmes, the rate of literacy increased from a low of about 18% in the 1950s to about 52% in 1991 and then to about 65% as of 2000–2006. However, in spite of this notable achievement, one-third of India's population is currently functionally illiterate and about 50% of the entire adult female population (aged 15 years and above) cannot read or write. The rate of illiteracy is particularly high in rural areas, especially among socially marginalised minorities, women and people from lower castes. For instance, according to the 2001 national census, the urban and rural literacy rates in the state of Uttar Pradesh (north India) was 70% and 52% respectively. Similarly, the discrepancy between male (69%) and female (42%) literacy rates was alarmingly high.

Recognising that persistent illiteracy, particularly among women, was a major impediment to national development efforts, NIRANTAR – a national centre for gender and education – instituted the Sahajani Shiksha Kendra (One who helps women) and the Khabar Lahariya (News Waves) programmes in an effort to combat illiteracy among rural women and girls in Uttar Pradesh and, by extension, to empower them through gender-sensitive literacy training and educational support.

#### The Khabar Lahariya (News Waves) Programme (KLP)

Khabar Lahariya is a low-cost weekly rural newspaper (sold at about two rupees) which is entirely produced and marketed by women – most of whom are from the marginalised Dalit, Kol and Muslim communities – in the two rural districts of Chitrakoot and Banda of Uttar Pradesh in north India. The newspaper, which is entirely produced in the local Hindi and Bundeli

languages, was launched in Chitrakoot in May 2002 and a second edition was launched in Banda district in 2006. Currently, the paper has a print run of about 5,000 copies per week and a readership of about 35,000 people in over 450 villages in both districts.

Khabar Lahariya was initiated to complement the Sahajani Shiksha Kendra programme (<http://www.unesco.org/uil/litbase/?menu=14&country=IN&programme=82>) which provides basic literacy training and educational support to rural women and girls by filling the information gap that previously existed in these hinterland rural areas.

The principal goal of the programme is to foster a culture of family or intergenerational reading among rural families, and promote most importantly, lifelong learning among rural women, through the production of a contextually relevant and gender-sensitive newspaper. The newspaper endeavours to eradicate illiteracy in the State by enhancing and sustaining the literacy skills of newly literate women and communities by:

- enabling women to learn skills in news gathering and production, thereby creating a pool of community-based female journalists skilled to produce and disseminate essential news and information to and about their communities
- raising women’s awareness of issues affecting their communities in general and women in particular, at a local or national level
- providing women with opportunities to articulate these issues which are particularly relevant to their lives
- providing low-cost news and information to women in areas with limited or no access to reading materials
- enabling women to participate more effectively in community and national development processes and make informed choices (civic education and gender empowerment)
- promote family literacy, intergenerational learning and community development.

### Recruitment of Trainee Journalists

The production and marketing of Khabar Lahariya newspaper is entirely dependent on a cohort of about 20 female journalists who are mostly recruited from the rural communities where the newspaper is produced and circulated. Since the inception of the newspaper project in 2002, Nirantar has recruited and trained about 30 women on an annual basis to work as community-based journalists. Recruitment methods include using Sahajani Shiksha Kendra programme graduates, using posters and brochures, engaging local women’s and men’s groups, and encouraging project members to recruit other women into the project.

Given that programme participants have varying levels of literacy skills, Nirantar provides trainees with intensive training in basic literacy, ICT (including using the internet and digital cameras) and in the technical aspects of news gathering, reporting, writing, editing and production (journalism). Special efforts are also made to develop the trainees’ language and writing skills, especially their ability to write simply and concisely in the local languages. The training course has two modules which are undertaken over 14 and seven days. In order to enable the journalists to effectively and objectively report on a variety of subjects which satisfy the demands and interests of the readers in general and women in particular, the modules include:

- civic education (gender education or relations; dynamics of caste system; democratic governance; conflict management and resolution; gender violence including rape; and environmental management)
- national and international politics
- livelihood community development
- health (HIV/AIDS awareness and prevention; nutrition and sanitation)
- environmental management and conservation
- income generation or livelihood development (community development).

Nirantar employs various methods to provide trainees with the skills they need to function effectively and competently as community journalists. Participatory methods, including group work/activities, field visits and individual practical reporting assignments are, however, central to the learning process and include the following activities:

- review and analysis of materials produced by NGOs, textbooks, mainstream magazines, newspapers and films
- group discussions, debates, roleplays and presentations
- individual writing assignments and feedback
- lectures and presentations by resource persons
- reading articles and academic papers (which are translated into simple language)
- exposure visits to other organisations and meetings with other community-development practitioners.

### Assessment of Learners and of the Programme

In order to capture an objective picture of programme developments, achievements and challenges, both the trainees, facilitators and senior Nirantar officials are involved in assessing programme activities on an ongoing basis. For instance, while training journalists, facilitators are obliged to complete and submit student assessment forms to the main office, and trainees are asked to write down their observations and assessment of the training exercise on specially

designed feedback or course evaluation forms. Senior Nirantar officials and the Khabar Lahariya production team have monthly meetings to discuss and develop quality benchmarks, including course outlines (training) and the newspaper's content, language style, printing and general layout. In addition, the programme has also received positive evaluation from external experts during the evaluation process undertaken in 2008 as well as through periodic reports by other journalists. An example of the latter is a novel by Farah Naqvi entitled *Waves in the Hinterland: The journey of a newspaper*.

Furthermore, because Khabar Lahariya is a community-focused newspaper, its quality and impact on community development is not only evaluated on the basis of the number of copies produced and disseminated per week, but also through regular feedback from readers, other media organisations and NGOs as well as through the amount and frequency of advertisements.

The achievements or impact of Khabar Lahariya on community development in general and women empowerment in particular have not gone unnoticed by the national and international community. To date, reports about Khabar Lahariya in other newspapers and from NGOs in general, have been largely positive as manifested by the regular frequency with which other newspapers and NGOs ask Khabar Lahariya to run their community-focused stories and activities. In March 2004, the newspaper received the Chameli Devi Jain Award, one of India's highest annual honours for outstanding women journalists given by the New Delhi-based Media Foundation. For a rural women's media collective to get an award of this nature constitutes an important breakthrough in the male-dominated world of rural journalism. In 2004, three members of the production team also received fellowships from the Dalit Foundation for reporting on issues relating to the rights of the Dalit community. In 2009, Nirantar received the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize for Khabar Lahariya.

## Impact

One of Khabar Lahariya's major strengths is that it is journalism by the village, of the village, for the village. It is also by women, and since women are by far the main agents of community development and often more adept at articulating the issues that affect their families and communities, it could be argued that the newspaper is currently playing a central role in promoting development in the districts. In addition, the newspaper has opened up opportunities for women to break into formerly male-dominated socio-economic spaces and has created opportunities for other minority groups to produce their own papers in their own (mother-tongue) languages. The following are also notable achievements:

**An enhanced culture of reading within communities:** the availability of a cheap and easily accessible newspaper has changed ordinary people's perceptions of the importance of education in their lives. The paper has also enabled thousands of literate and semi-literate people to practise and sustain their literacy skills and created opportunities for lifelong intergenerational learning.

Its contribution to an increase of literacy rates in the districts.

**Civic awareness and empowerment:** readers have used some of the articles published in the newspaper to demand action and greater information from state officials regarding the implementation (or none thereof) of developmental projects, the provision of basic social amenities, official strategies of fighting cases of gender-based violence (and violence in general), bureaucratic negligence, and official apathy. In addition, local officials have been exposed for negligence of duty, corruption and, in some instances, people have received compensation and redress.

**Gender empowerment and poverty alleviation:** the paper has provided women with an avenue to fight caste, gender and traditional systems which often impinge their socioeconomic empowerment and advancement. The project has also enabled women to break into an industry previously dominated by 'upper-caste' men and in so doing, empowered women to objectively articulate gender-sensitive issues that were previously ignored or sensationalised. In addition, the newspaper has provided many women with opportunities and non-conventional avenues for gainful employment and income generation which in turn has enabled them to improve the standard of their lives and to provide for their families. Most importantly, the provision of formal employment opportunities has also raised women's status within their families and communities.

The production of the newspaper in local languages is helping to promote the conservation and propagation of minority languages.

The success of Khabar Lahariya has inspired women's groups in other marginalised districts to start similar projects. For instance, Nirantar has also assisted other women's organisations such as Mahila Jan Adhikar Manch (MJAS) in Ajmer district of Rajasthan in western India to establish a community newspaper called 'Samchar Ro Helo' (voice of the news). Five hundred copies of Samchar Ro Helo are printed and distributed to readers in Ajmer district.

## Challenges

In spite of the major developmental contributions that the project has engendered in local communities, challenges abound. These include:

**Social barriers:** within the predominantly traditional societies of Chitrakoot and Banda districts, women



are mainly restricted to the domestic sphere. In light of this, the programme has encountered severe challenges to attract, retain learners and most critically, to motivate trained women to move around their communities collecting news and information. Men have also been reluctant to allow women to actively venture outside the domestic space as reporters. As such, concerted advocacy and social education campaigns are needed to change people's perceptions with regards to women's participation in the public sphere; to build women's confidence in their abilities as reporters and social agents as well as to build the trust of their families, in particular that of the men.

The ability of women journalists to report on national and international political issues and events has been restricted by lack of understanding and/or knowledge of these issues. It has been challenging for women to gather information from male politicians who dominate the political sphere.

Low levels of literacy continue to undermine the production and readership of the newspaper.

The lack of established distribution systems for newspapers, including mainstream ones, beyond the urban enclaves. Hence, developing viable dissemination strategies has proved to be a challenging task.

### Sustainability

Nirantar has instituted some innovative and progressive strategies in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of the Khabar Lahariya programme. These include:

**Advanced marketing and advocacy:** efforts are made not only to expand the readership of the newspaper beyond the borders of the two districts but also to attract more advertisements. The money that is currently generated through advertisements is being put aside in order to create a corpus fund for the newspaper. Furthermore, senior Nirantar also undertakes concerted national and international advocacy campaigns to promote the newspaper. It has also established sustainable institutional links with other women's organisations.

**Community ownership:** although Nirantar initiated the Khabar Lahariya programme, it has made concerted efforts to devolve most of its functions to the community-based journalists in an effort to promote greater community ownership of the entire project. To this end, Nirantar has trained a pool of community-based female journalists who now spearhead the production and distribution of Khabar Lahariya as well as the provision of similar services and support to other groups who are in the process of establishing their own newspapers. In addition, in 2008 Nirantar registered Khabar Lahariya as a separate legal entity/organisation under the Societies Registration Act.

This will enable the newspaper to source funds independently.

Although securing long-term funding remains a major challenge, Nirantar has ensured that Khabar Lahariya has strong and strategic alliances with donors and also generates its own resources through advertisements and provision of services to other groups.

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## INDIA

# Sahajani Shiksha Kendra: Literacy and Education for Women's Empowerment

### Implementing Organization

Nirantar (a national NGO)

### Language of Instruction

Hindi and Bundeli (local languages)

### Funding

Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, DVV (German Adult Education Association)

### Date of Inception

May 2002

### Context and Background

In recent decades, the Government of India has instituted some educational programmes such as the National Literacy Mission, and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan in an effort to combat the scourge of illiteracy in the country. As a result, the rate of literacy rose from about 18% in the 1950s to about 52% in 1991 and then to about 65% as of 2000 – 2006. In spite of this notable achievement, about one-third of India's population is currently functionally illiterate and about 50% of the entire adult female population (aged 15 years and above) can not read or write. The rate of illiteracy is particularly high in rural areas, especially among socially marginalised minorities, women and people from lower castes. For instance, according to the 2001 national census, the urban and rural literacy rates in the state of Uttar Pradesh (north India) was 70% and 52% respectively. Similarly, the discrepancy between male (69%) and female (42%) literacy rates was alarmingly high. The launch of the Saakshar Bharat Mission for Female Literacy in September 2009 is one of the most recent and much needed efforts to bridge these gaps.

Recognising that persistent female illiteracy is a major impediment to women's empowerment, NIRANTAR – a national centre for gender and education – has since 1993 been working towards helping rural poor women access literacy and educational opportunities, enabling their access to information and engendering educational processes. Sahajani Shiksha Kendra, the literacy and educational programme for women's empowerment was initiated in 2002, in an effort to empower women in Lalitpur district of the northern state of Uttar Pradesh.

### Sahajani Shiksha Kendra: A Programme of Literacy and Education for Women's Empowerment

Nirantar initiated Sahajani Shiksha Kendra (SSK) in 2002. 'Sahajani' in the local language means 'one who helps women'. The programme broadly aims at empowering women and adolescent girls through literacy and education – an education that makes connections with their lived realities and rights, and enables them to develop analytical skills on gender, development and other issues. Through its different activities, the programme reaches over 2000 women and adolescent girls belonging to the most marginalised communities like Dalits (Scheduled Castes – SC) and Adivasis (Scheduled Tribes – ST).

SSK is a programme for empowering rural women and adolescent girls through education. This programme explores innovative ways of working with women on issues of gender and education. It is distinct in that all its strategies and programmes are women-centred and focus on adult literacy and women's education. SSK's work on adult literacy, nurtured by Nirantar, becomes critical in a context where women's literacy rates are as low as 20% in SC and ST areas and where there is a dearth of 'best practices' and models on adult literacy.

Some of the highlights of the programme include an innovative ethnographic research on literacy-numeracy practices, developing and testing various packages and modules of thematic literacy and Continuing Education (CE), and linking issues of health, gender, violence, caste, right to work, etc, with the educational work.

The unique value of SSK is that it is focused on women's empowerment. Today 'adult education' is used interchangeably with 'vocational training' or 'functional literacy', and there are very few initiatives that integrate women's empowerment and social transformation within their educational work. Nirantar's SSK programme foregrounds 'literacy for empowerment', by linking women's lived realities to its educational initiatives – which take the form of camps, centres or the development of locally contextualised material for enabling and sustaining literacy.

### Programme Implementation: Approaches and Methodologies

Thematic Literacy and Continuing Education (CE) Nirantar believes that literacy forms an important part of the education continuum and that literacy and education are rights which women and socio-economically disadvantaged communities have been denied. For literacy to indeed be empowering and transformative, we believe that the education process should connect with women's lived realities. We thus try and make this happen by embedding

our literacy work within the contexts and lives of the women we work with, and by exploring ways in which literacy can help women confront the challenges they face in their daily lives. We believe that this is best done by adopting multiple strategies that respond to emerging needs. The strategies adopted in the SSK programme are as follows:

- Village-level literacy centres, which are located in the community or hamlet and run over a period of 18 months
- Village-level (six-day) literacy camps
- Residential (ten-day) literacy camps
- Regular literacy follow-up and issue-based meetings with women learners

One example of the linkage of the educational initiatives with local issues is the initiative related to the right to work and employment. The main objectives of this initiative were to work on women's literacy along with awareness on the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), to enable their access to information on NREGA and to help women grow in confidence to demand and get their rightful entitlements vis-a-vis NREGA. The literacy module for this included activities like the use of literacy/numeracy skills for demanding and getting NREGA entitlements, applying for 'Job Cards', filling of 'demand-for-work' forms, reading 'Job Cards', submitting them to government officials, wall writings on NREGA entitlements, and community-level meetings with discussions on gender, women and work, and State accountability. Begun in 2007, the NREGA-literacy work has now covered about 80 villages of Lalitpur district, reaching out to over 500 SC, ST women.

### **Residential School for School Dropouts (Eight-month Bridge Course)**

Yet another important aspect of the SSK programme is to support young women and adolescent girls who are school dropouts to bridge the gap they have faced, and to continue their education through a mainstream process. This is a residential course in which the girls and women are taught language, mathematics and issues through a special curriculum developed by Nirantar that comprises the following themes – Society, Body, Land-Water-Forest, Market and Media. At the end of the eight months special coaching camps are held to help the women give examinations in the formal school system, and they are supported and encouraged to continue their studies further.

### **Developing a Cadre of Local Rural Women as Trainers/Facilitators**

The implementation of the SSK programme is possible through a cadre of young women belonging to the most marginalised sections of society. They

are all women, many of them single, from Dalit and Backward communities from the local area. Over the past eight years of the programme, Nirantar has made huge investments in building this human resource, many of whom are newly literate women themselves. They are skilled in working on issues of gender, in imparting literacy, continuing education and feminist pedagogy. They are good communicators and mobilisers in the field. To a great extent, this group manages its own programme and provides resource inputs to newcomers to the programme, as well as to outsiders.

### **Building Women's Leadership through Collectives**

At the village level, there is a cadre of newly-literate Dalit and Adivasi women leaders in the SSK programme. They are organised into loose collectives called 'samitis' and the vision is for them is to strengthen their literacy skills through a Continuing Education programme, and to come together in a collective formation – a federation – that will act as a pressure group in the area to demand and get entitlements. These collectives are engaged in dialogue and negotiation with local self-government, and events like awareness programmes, rallies, demonstrations, etc. This is an important strategy for strengthening greater participation and ownership of the local community in the SSK programme, and also in the long-term sustainability of the change process.

### **Creation of Teaching-Learning Materials and Curricula**

Developing material for the Sahajani programme has formed an important aspect of our work. We have employed different strategies to create a range of teaching-learning and reading material. The initial primer has been developed by the Nirantar team in Delhi. We have also been involved in developing locally contextualised material that has been informed by research studies using an ethnographic approach. This material is being developed collaboratively by the Nirantar and SSK teams. Women and adolescent girls together bring out 'Jani Patrika' – a local broadsheet which is produced in the local language of the area (Bundeli).

### **Impact**

So far 2,145 women and adolescent girls in 112 villages have undergone an intensive program of literacy, continuing education, awareness and empowerment. They have also been organized into 72 village level women's collectives. Over the years, a resource group and cadre of 50 women facilitators have been trained and established from among the newly literate women from the local area. 100% of the programme's out-

reach is amongst women from marginalised communities like Dalits and Adivasis.

### Challenges

One of the main challenges of this programme has been in working with the poorest and most marginalised communities in the country, especially women, for whom access to good quality education has never been prioritized. Since these women face multiple marginalisations in economic, social and political domains, it has been a challenge to integrate all these issues within the educational curriculum. Due to these vulnerabilities, as well as due to the programme being located in a geographically difficult interior area, there is huge dropout rate amongst staff members of the SSK programme.

At a programmatic level, NIRANTAR struggled to highlight the importance of women's literacy and education. While children's education has had policy and programme support, it has always been challenging to showcase and even raise money for an initiative like SSK, especially from the government.

### Sustainability

While working with the poorest and most vulnerable, who have been oppressed and marginalised for thousands of years – women, Dalits, Adivasis – 'sustainability' is not something that can be achieved in a few years. It often takes decades and decades of investment and capacity-building for the change to be visible and meaningful. Despite that, one of the achievements of the programme has been the fact that ownership and leadership of the programme is now in the hands of a local team. Initially, Nirantar played a proactive role in building this group, but they are now a fairly autonomous entity. The depth of the programme at the village level gives us reason to hope that the stakes to make the programme a success are no longer Nirantar's alone. The community and the local leadership of SSK have taken over this mantle. This probably bodes well for the sustainability of the programme since the human capacity for it exists.

Another important role that Nirantar and SSK are playing is in providing resource and technical support to several non-governmental and some governmental programmes in order to take on thematic literacy work with an empowerment focus. Through this, we are reaching out to many women across the northern belt of the country indirectly. Institutionalising our learnings, documenting them, providing trainings to others and supporting similar pilots in other regions based on our experiences are ways in which the programme's sustainability will hopefully be addressed over the next few years.

### Sources

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## INDIA

### Saakshar Bharat Mission

#### Implementing Organization

Department of School Education & Literacy Ministry of Human Resources Development, Government of India

#### Date of Inception

2009

#### Overview

Saakshar Bharat is the centrally sponsored nation-wide literacy scheme of the Indian Department for School Education and Literacy (DSEL) focusing on increasing women's literacy in India. It was launched by the prime minister on International Literacy Day in September 2009. Its aim is to significantly reduce the number of non-literate adults in India and foster an environment within communities that encourages lifelong learning.

Whilst the 2011 census showed that India's literacy has reached 74.04%, an increase of 9.2% from the 2001 census, the literacy rate of women continues to be significantly lower at 65.46%, compared to men's rate of 82.14%. The programme's focus is on reducing this gender disparity and thereby achieving the government's target of 80% national literacy. This will be achieved through the provision of basic literacy to 70 million more people, of which 60 million are women.

#### Saakshar Bharat Mission

The mission aims to promote and strengthen adult learning, reaching out to those who missed the opportunity to access or complete formal education. As well as basic literacy/basic education, it covers vocational education and skill development, applied science and sports. Due to its approach Saakshar Bharat is described as a 'people's programme', with the government acting as facilitator and resource provider, but working closely with local communities to tailor the programme to their needs.

There has been a nation-wide drive to publicise and highlight the value of this programme, most notably in the recent promotional video which features national celebrities performing a song about the Mission with a Bollywood theme (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k7AOXQYgILM>).

#### Targets

The mission's focus is on women and adolescents, but this is not exclusive – gender is seen in conjunction with caste, ethnicity, religion, and disability. The

programme has a particular focus on people in rural areas where illiteracy can be highest. For each focus group and area, there is a specific target, approach and strategy, due to its community-centred approach.

#### Objectives

The Mission consists of four objectives:

1. Provide basic literacy and numeracy to non-literate and non-numerate adults. This represents the accomplishment of basic skills in reading, writing and numeracy. It also aims to help the individual understand how to achieve personal and community development, tackling causes of poverty.
2. Provide qualification equivalent to formal educational system and establish learning for neo-literates beyond basic literacy. This provides further educational opportunities to neo-literate adults, who can achieve a qualification which gives them access to further studies. From the lifelong learning perspective, this aspect is one of the most crucial factors.
3. Provide vocational education. Imparting learners with relevant skill development programmes is crucial to improving their working and living conditions. This is achieved through the Vocational Education phase which provides skill development training to non-literate and neo-literate adults based on their local context and the personal requirements of the learning group.
4. Promote a learning society by providing opportunities to neo-literate adults for continuing education. The continuing education aspect of the programme creates a sustainable learning environment for neo-literates to continue using and improving their skills. This is done through the provision of libraries and reading rooms, based in the Adult Education Centres. Such facilities also host short term thematic courses on issues such as health, nutrition and environment, according to the requirements of the local population. It uses a range of printed materials sourced locally and relevant to the community.

#### Adult Education Centres (AEC): Lok Shiksha Kendra

The Adult Education Centres are the operational arm of Saakshar Bharat, responsible for the organization and delivery of classes. Adult Education Centres are established in Gram Panchayats (Local Self Government at Village level) on the basis of one per a population of 5,000.

One AEC is set up in every village and is manned by two paid Preraks (coordinators), of which at least one is a woman. This reflects the drive to encourage and reinforce gender equality throughout the programme, including its core implementation, planning and management structures. The centre offers various services; registration, a venue for teaching, a library

and reading rooms. It is also used as a centre for promoting and practicing sports, adventure and cultural activities.

To impart functional literacy to non-literate adults a mass campaign approach is adopted. A literacy educator (volunteer) who is a local resident acts as a mobiliser, trainer and teacher and is responsible for imparting literacy on average to 8-10 learners. In a Gram Panchayat as many adult education centres are organised as are required to cover the non-literate adults in different areas. Literacy educators receive training – before and during their tuition.

### Continuing Education Programmes

Ensuring the overall aim to create a learning society is fulfilled, a wide range of Continuing Education Programmes are also organised at the Adult Education Centres, providing the opportunity to sustain literacy through the use of books, media and ICTs.

The programme seeks to build a permanent and institutionalized adult education system, parallel to the formal education system. The AEC are important in this aim of adult education in the lifelong learning perspective and creating a literate society.

### Programme Implementation

ICTs such as radio and TV have been utilised to help spread knowledge of the programme among relevant populations.

The curriculum includes Core Content (CC) based on the broad National Curricular Framework for Adult Education, and Locally Relevant Content (LRC), which are produced in the locally dominant language.

Learning material is developed from identifying the needs and interest of learners to ensure material is relevant. Based on these topics materials are developed by adult educators and subject experts. These are scrutinized at national level review meetings by the Quality Assurance Committee. After finalisation the material is field-tested and revised for improvement before eventually becoming standardised teaching material.

Alongside literacy, the core content encourages awareness of values such as democracy and gender equality. Furthermore the locally relevant content is linked to the learner's livelihood and socio-cultural realities, involving issues such as health and hygiene, agriculture, animal husbandry and local self-government. Learners typically undergo 300 hours of tuition to reach basic literacy.

The programme is implemented by volunteers situated in their adult literacy centres.

### Professional Development of Personnel

Saakshar Bharat must utilise a large number of Volunteer Literacy Educators to help reach the overall target of 70 million literates.

The programme places emphasis on development of its human resources through on-going training of its teachers, literacy facilitators and supervisors. Key resource personnel at the district level are provided with managerial training, and volunteer teachers are given in-service training in local languages, methodology and practice of teaching adults.

In the eventuality of qualified volunteers not being a resident within a particular village, as an alternative approach, instructors may be engaged outside the village or community to live with the community and provide instructional teaching. On average one resident instructor will be required to teach 30 learners over a year. Through this approach the centre functions for 7-8 hours every day and groups of learners attend classes for a couple of hours or more depending on their available free time.

### Assessment and Evaluation

Assessing and certifying the competency levels of neo-literates is a crucial feature of the Saakshar Bharat Mission. Over a period of 3 years, the National Literacy Mission Authority (NLMA) has assessed and certified 14,438,004 adults for their proficiencies in reading, writing and numeracy. The learners can take part in assessment tests twice a year in March and August and are tested in reading, writing and arithmetic skills through external tests lasting 3 hours. The tests are based on guidelines framed by the National Institute for Open Schooling (NIOS). Assessments are also designed to gauge the learners' awareness of social issues and the work-life environment. Certificates are issued within 60 days and all results made available on the NIOS website. The assessment aims to recognise their achievements and enable learners to take part in further education opportunities.

### Organisation and Funding

Accountability, transparency and decentralisation have been essential features of the planning and management process.

The total budget for the programme between 2009 and 2012 has been USD 1.2bn, with the national government providing 75% of the costs, and district governments covering the remaining 25%. The allocation of these funds for basic literacy is based on number of non-literate adults in each district. All districts with an adult literacy rate of 50% or lower (Census 2001) have been covered under this programme.

The mission devised a comprehensive, transparent financial management system that enhanced accountability, ensured uninterrupted availability of funds, facilitated regulation and monitoring of the flow of resources. This is especially important in terms of accountability for public expenditure. To meet this requirement a customised Funds and Accounts Management System was constructed. This features a Fund Flow System, Customised Banking System,

Online Accounting System, and MIS. The Fund Flow System removes the requirement of submission of manual reports as the funds expenditure details are available online. It ensures real time monitoring and availability of adequate funds to every implementing agency. The system also allows identification of good performers and laggards in terms of expenditure. The Online Accounting System ensures the Mission's implementing agencies always receive grants when required, that funds are not left unused, and that the executing agencies maintain regular, trustworthy accounts.

Whilst funding is coordinated with a predominantly centralised model, implementation of the programme is decentralised. Each district is responsible for regional planning and for each local body (Gram Panchayat). The Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs), are the main implementing agency at the district, block and Gram Panchayat levels. They are responsible for the establishment and provision of facilities for the Lok Shiksha Kendras (Adult Education Centres). However, all stakeholders, especially at the community level, have a say in the planning and implementation of the programme. The village bodies are responsible for preparation of literacy financial planning at the village level.

The plan entails conducting a household survey in every village, data collection, mass mobilisation, training schedules, procurement and distribution of learning materials, evaluation of learning outcomes, budgetary requirements. Aggregation of village plans lead to preparation of State and ultimately the national plan.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

The efficient management of the Mission is dependent on robust real-time monitoring. Each level of governance is responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of all units beneath it.

There is great complexity in the managing of Saakshar Bharat due to its magnitude, involving nearly 200,000 implementing agencies. To cover such a large learning base, the National Informatics Centre (NIC) has developed WePMIS, Web Based Planning & Monitoring Information System, a customised web-based system for planning, monitoring and impact analysis. This system allows Adult Education Centres to update information about the progress of each of the courses, tutors and learners online, improving efficiency in evaluations of the programme's impact. From 2011 all of the online data has been accessible to the public, encouraging engagement and an understanding of progress within a given area. It facilitates citizen feedback through providing information about the enrolled learners, including assessment and certification. Using the online feedback system, the ground situation can be appropriately evaluated and

corrective interventions made by the program managers at respective levels. Training has been provided to WePMIS to users at all levels. E-infrastructure such as computer and broadband connectivity up to the block level has been provided. These facilities now need to be extended to the village level.

### Impact

From 2009-2012 the programme expanded to 372 districts. The majority of the country's states have successfully implemented Saakshar Bharat, as per the framework detailed in the Organisational structure section of this report. 170,000 facilities such as libraries and reading areas have been established as part of the Continuing Education phase of the programme. In a period of 3 years, the National Literacy Mission Authority (NLMA) has assessed and certified 14,438,004 adults for their proficiencies in reading, writing and numeracy.

Furthermore, literacy in India is improving. The 2011 census showed literacy in India has increased from 64.84% in 2001 to 74.04% in 2011 and the male-female literacy gap has reduced from 21.59% in 2001 to 16.68% in 2011. All areas of India have almost without exception reported a rise in literacy rates from 2001-11. The total number of illiterates has decreased from 304.15 million to 272.95 million. Prior to Saakshar Bharat was the National Literacy Mission, from which it developed. As a key implementer for literacy we can say the Saakshar Bharat has been successful.

### Challenges and Solutions

The Planning Commission in the 12th Five Year Plan (2012-17) has recommended that the existing programme structures, as well as the resource support bodies, be remodelled, strengthened and further aligned to the goals of lifelong learning and literacy. The programme needs to transform from a literacy 'mission' to a regular and permanent system of education for adults. The active involvement of public authorities at all administrative levels would make this more effective. The states play the key role in establishing the necessary network of institutions for this to occur.

Volunteers could be given more incentives as they give their time up for long periods to improve adult literacy. There could also be greater active engagement with universities to develop scientific criteria to assess the learning outcomes of adults at the various stages of their development. A consortium of reputed universities and research institutions must be identified and engaged in research for this to take place.

## Sustainability

Provision for adult literacy is made in the national budget under education. Ministries such as the Ministry of Health and Women & Child Development also provide funding. USD 1.2 billion was allocated for the Saakshar Bharat programme for its first three years. Actual utilisation of funds, due to a long gestation period of making necessary preparations for implementing the programme, was low. The programme is to be continued during the 12th Five Year Plan (2012-17) in its original programme framework. A provision of USD 0.6 billion for Saakshar Bharat has been made in the 12th Five Year Plan.

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## INDONESIA

# Gender Justice Education for Marginalised Women

### Implementing Organisation

The Circle of Women's Alternative Education (CWALE, of Lingkaran Pendidikan Alternative Perempuan or KAPAL Perempuan)

### Language of Instruction

Bahasa

### Funding

ACCESS-Australia and KAPAL (self-funding)

### Date of Inception

2003

### Context and Background

Indonesia has made impressive strides in meeting the global Education for All (EFA) targets. In addition to enrolment rates of 96% in primary education, the total literacy rate for young people and adults was 99% in the period 2000–2006. However, there are gender disparities with regards to access to education and therefore, to literacy rates, due to socio-cultural and economic factors. These disparities are clearly manifested by the literacy rates among male and female adults (15 years and above) which stood at 95% and 87% respectively in the period 2000–2006. In principle therefore, two-thirds of the 15 million illiterate people in Indonesia are women.

Although it is widely recognised that eliminating gender disparities with regards to access to education is essential for long-term social and economic development, progress towards this objective has been limited as evidenced by, for example, the limited range of adult literacy programmes targeting women. As a result, women continue to have limited access to education compared to their male counterparts. This has, in turn, not only perpetuated their marginalisation from leadership positions at community and national levels but has also led to the feminisation of poverty as women have restricted capacity to compete with men in the economic sphere. Moreover, illiteracy also limits women's ability to claim their basic rights including access to social services and property. Thus, recognising the challenges facing illiterate and often poor women, the Circle of Women's Alternative Education (KAPAL Perempuan) initiated The Gender Justice Education for Marginalised Women Programme (GJEMWP) which offers marginalised women alternative means to access to education.



## Gender Justice for Marginalised Women Programme (GJEMWP)

The GJEMWP was initiated in 2003 to provide literacy, education and life skills training to marginalised women in urban slum and rural communities and women migrant workers. To date, the programme has been implemented in the Klender and Rawajati slum communities in Jakarta and has benefited an average of 100 learners each year. Plans are under way to expand the programme to other marginalised communities. While ACCESS-Australia provided initial project funding (for the period 2003–2004), the GJEMWP has since evolved into a wholly community-driven project, with members of KAPAL Perempuan and two women's schools providing the necessary funding.

The GJEMWP is an integrated programme which offers opportunities for basic and functional literacy and life skills training in, for example, leadership, income generation and health education. Most importantly, the programme also offers training in reproductive health, childcare, psychological support and other care services. In short, the project endeavours to promote holistic development and empowerment of marginalised women.

### Aims and Objectives

The GJEMWP endeavours to:

- combat illiteracy among women living in urban slums and other marginalised communities through the provision of alternative education opportunities
- promote social networking among women in order to join and develop self-help groups such as credit unions, to improve community living standards
- promote gender equity and justice
- empower women to actively participate in community development activities
- promote poverty alleviation through engagement of women in income generation activities.

### Programme Implementation: Approaches and Methodologies

The implementation of the programme was preceded by and based on the results of a needs assessment survey which identified key basic education needs of women. These basic needs formed the basis for the design and development of the two principal programme modules. In addition, the survey sought to identify formal and potential women leaders who would spearhead the implementation of the programme within their communities. This community-based element was also intended to publicise the programme and mobilise women to participate in programme activities. Following the survey, community-based women's groups were established and

these have acted as the focal points of learning and programme expansion ever since.

### Recruitment of Facilitators

A network of community-based facilitators are, primarily, responsible for programme implementation and monitoring the learning progress of participants. KAPAL Perempuan provides facilitators with training in adult teaching methodologies and programme modules. Thereafter, each facilitator is assigned a group of 15 learners with a possibility of individual mentoring for learners with particular needs. Facilitators are paid a monthly salary of Rp. 2000,000 (USD 220).

### Teaching / Learning Methods

Training is based on two modules which were designed and developed by KAPAL Perempuan in consultation with the communities. In order to promote effective community-based and participatory learning, women were divided into study groups. These groups, with assistance from programme facilitators, conducted learning sessions on a weekly basis at a time and place agreed upon by each participant. Learners were assessed through monthly tests and a final examination at the end of the six months.

In addition, study groups were also used to promote dialogue on matters which are pertinent to women's everyday lives such as reproductive health, childcare and community participation as well as providing psychosocial support to group members.

### Programme Impact and Challenges

In general, annual internal evaluations revealed that most women were eager for the programme to continue within their communities. This enthusiasm is aptly demonstrated by their resolve to continue funding the programme from their private resources. More specifically, the internal evaluations identified the following as the key programme impacts:

- most learners became literate after attending the literacy classes for six months
- two women's schools and two women's credit unions have been established in Klender (East Jakarta) and Rawajati (South Jakarta).
- twenty women have been elected into leadership positions in Klender and Rawajati and are currently spearheading development activities in their communities; in addition, women's groups are also actively advocating for improved provision of basic social services in their communities
- the programme has been officially recognised and promised financial assistance by the government (department of non-formal education).

## Sustainability

The sustainability of the programme is dependent on the enthusiastic support it has received to date from the community but especially from women, who as stated above are now the key financiers of the programme. In addition, the programme has been replicated in North Celebes (July 2005 to September 2006) and Aceh (ongoing). The commitment by the government to provide financial assistance is yet another demonstration of the programme's sustainability as this would, potentially, make it possible to expand it into other marginalised areas.

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## PAKISTAN

# Adult Female Functional Literacy Programme

### Implementing Organisation

BUNYAD Literacy Community Council (BLCC)

### Language of Instruction

Urdu

### Programme Partners

USAID under the Education Sector Reform Assistance (ESRA) Programme and BLCC

### Date of Inception

2003

## Overview

BUNYAD Literacy Community Council (BLCC) was formed in 1992 and registered in 1994 as a national non governmental organisation (NGO). Recognising that development is a multidimensional process, BLCC has adopted a multisectoral approach towards the promotion of development in Pakistan. To this end, BLCC is currently implementing a number of diverse yet inter-linked programmes, including literacy and education, health (sanitation, HIV / AIDS awareness, reproductive health), child labour, women empowerment and poverty alleviation, micro-credit and business development, farming and environment. These programmes are funded by various local and international organisations such as UN agencies (UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDP), CIDA, USAID, ILO and local business organisations. While BLCC generally endeavours to assist and empower underprivileged and marginalised communities in Pakistan, the Adult Female Functional Literacy Programme (AFFLP) is specifically tailored to meet the educational needs of rural women (aged between 15 and 25) through the provision of functional literacy training assistance. The overall goal is to empower women in order to enhance their capacity to improve their standard of life.

## Context and Background

Despite considerable progress made in recent years towards the provision of basic educational opportunities for all, levels of illiteracy in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan remain disturbingly high. Despite considerable progress made in recent years towards the provision of basic educational opportunities for all, levels of illiteracy in Pakistan remain disturbingly high. Between 1995 and 2005 the adult literacy rate, although increasing slightly, was only 50%. In addi-

tion, the disparity in the levels of literacy between women and men is also high. For example, between 1995 and 2004, the literacy rate for males and females aged 15–24 years was 77% and 53%, respectively. During the same period, the female literacy rate was as low as 35% for adults aged 24 years and above and was believed to be even lower among rural-based women.

In general, access to education for all is hindered by several factors, including poverty, low state funding of the educational sector (for example in 2005, total expenditure on education was 2.4% of GNP), mismanagement and corruption. The National Geographic summed up these problems more pointedly, 'It's not unusual in Pakistan to hear of public schools that receive no books, no supplies and no subsidies from the government. Thousands more are "ghost schools" that exist only on paper, to line the pockets of phantom teachers and administrators'. Further challenges arise from the political instability and insecurity which particularly limits access to education for people living in some rural areas, especially women.

Additionally, the gender disparity with regards to access to education is fuelled by various socio-cultural factors including: the practice of early marriages which prevents girls/women from continuing with their education; conservative religious beliefs which fuels negative attitudes towards educating girls; and shortage of female teachers in a social context that restricts the interaction of females with unrelated males.

BLCC initiated the AFFLP which primarily endeavours to assist women aged between 15 and 25 years to either gain access to education, or resume their studies after failing to continue due to the challenges outlined above.

### Adult Female Functional Literacy Programme (AFFLP)

The AFFLP, non-formal education programme, is currently being implemented in the sub-district of Daska Markaz (Sialkot District) as part of the USAID-funded Education Sector Reform Assistance (ESRA) programme. Daska Markaz consists of 12 Union Councils (nine rural and three urban) with an estimated 36,186 households. Daska Markaz has limited educational services and as a result, about 25% of children aged between eight and nine years are out of school while 23% of children aged between ten and 14 years are illiterate. The illiteracy rate is significantly higher for women aged between 15 and 25 years, the majority of whom had no or limited access to basic primary education and are therefore the primary targets of the AFFLP. AFFLP is an integrated programme which offers literacy, vocational, business and life skills training as well as civic (human rights, peace building), health (reproductive, HIV/AIDS, nutrition) and agricultural education.

### Aims and Objectives

The project endeavours to:

- improve the basic and functional literacy skills of rural women aged between 15 and 25 years
- promote poverty eradication through literacy empowerment
- empower women to make positive contributions to their communities
- raise health awareness, particularly reproductive, among women
- raise public awareness about the importance of adult female literacy for community development.

### Programme Implementation: Approaches and Methodologies

The project began in 2003 and was implemented in two phases: Phase 1, September 2003 to December 2004 and Phase 2, January 2005 to April 2006. During these two phases, the project was implemented in 182 villages across the sub-district.

### Community Mobilisation

BLCC has been working with local communities in Daska Markaz since 1999 and by the time the AFFLP was launched strong working partnerships had been established with community leaders and community-based organisations (CBOs). Nonetheless, before the launch of the AFFLP, BLCC conducted community-based qualitative and quantitative needs assessments in Daska Markaz. In the process, about 5211 potential programme participants aged between 15 and 25, the majority of whom had never attended school, were interviewed and the results revealed the need to implement literacy training for women. The surveys were also used to communicate the purpose and significance of the literacy project to the community.

Most importantly, the existing social networks enabled BLCC to mobilise community support as well as learners through community-based sensitisation and dialogue meetings. For example, BLCC held about 101 meetings with community leaders and other influential persons in different locations during which they were briefed about the project: its objectives, the importance of improved female literacy on community development and most importantly, the importance of their active involvement for the success of the programme. Following these meetings, BLCC established Village Education Communities (VEC) and Family Education Communities (FEC). The VECs and FECs were given the responsibility, for example, of identifying and encouraging learners to join the project as well as maintaining and organising activities relating to ESRA literacy centres in their areas.

## Recruitment and Training of Teachers

Recruitment of teachers was based on their commitment to education and skills development as well as their teaching experience and qualifications. Two hundred and forty-two teachers were recruited and trained in adult education teaching methodologies, curriculum content and class management and organisation. BLCC also conducted monthly follow-up training workshops for teachers.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring of the project was undertaken on an ongoing basis using the various organisational structures of BLCC. Thus social / community mobilisers and teachers were responsible for ensuring the learners' continued attendance in classes and progress in acquiring literacy skills. On the other hand, project coordinators and managers were responsible for monitoring the work of the teachers, supervisors and activities at the learning centres. They also provided continuous training support and assistance to the teachers and the VECs and FECs to address the challenges which arose during the programme implementation process. As such, constant contact had been kept with the community through the regular meetings of VEC and FEC so that their participation ensured the smooth running and the success of the centres.

## Impact and Achievements

A total of 5,600 learners has participated in the programme. The learners have acquired basic functional literacy and numeracy skills in Urdu and English and a variety of vocational skills. A majority of the graduates (86%) are now able to read and write while 14% require remedial assistance. Ultimately, with improved reading skills, most learners are now able to lead more independent lives as they do not have to, for example, ask for directions when travelling or ask for assistance to administer medication to their families. Similarly, but perhaps most importantly, most learners are now able to read the Qur'an or the Bible, which was often the primary motivation in joining the literacy programme. The programme has promoted inter-generational learning because the mothers and their children are now assisting each other to learn various literacy skills. This has, in turn, cultivated positive relationships between parents and their children. Many learners acquired vocational skills such as cutting and sewing skills and are positively contributing towards family subsistence. This has enhanced the status of women within their families and communities. In addition, the project has improved their confidence and thus enabled them to be proactive agents of social change and progress. Two hundred and forty-one community-based teachers have been trained and

these will remain an invaluable community resource for a long time. Already some teachers in cooperation with VECs and FECs, are independently implementing developmental projects in their communities.

## Challenges and Solutions

Some community leaders and influential families prevented the establishment of community learning centres in the villages. As a result, a number of meetings were arranged with community elders and the programme was further explained to them with regards to the benefits of literacy centres for community development. In most cases, centres were only established after community leaders and elders were convinced that they would be responsible for running and monitoring centre activities. Some of the challenges faced and their remedies were:

- Adolescent girls and young adult women are often not permitted to leave their homes unaccompanied by a male relative due to conservative traditions. As a remedy, literacy classes were organised in village centres close to participants' homes. Additionally, learning centres were established in homes of highly respected local teachers who guaranteed the moral security of the participants.
- Some parents were fearful that the literacy programmes would lead to the marginalisation of their religious beliefs. To ameliorate these fears, BUNYAD developed a curriculum which integrates learning in Arabic (the language of the Qur'an) and Urdu, the language spoken by most participants. Equally important, BUNYAD developed easy-to-read learning materials which were distributed to parents to demonstrate to them that the programme was not undermining tradition and that, in fact, it was strengthening it. This gave some parents confidence in the programme, resulting in more learners enrolling. BUNYAD also shared with the parents, the aim of learners to be able to read the Urdu translation of the Holy Qur'an. This really excited the parents and the young women, after reading the 30 chapters of the Holy Qur'an in Urdu, were more comfortable to continue learning.
- Due to high rates of poverty, many potential learners could not afford to attend classes due to family responsibilities.
- Most learners were frustrated after failing to be employed after graduating from the project. As a result, programme emphasis is now on vocational skills training which would increase self-employment opportunities for learners.

## Sustainability

BLCC has established Community Citizens Boards (CCBs) and entrusted them to spearhead the initiation and implementation of programme activities within



their communities as well as to undertake fundraising activities. With regards to the latter, BLCC has linked the CCBs to commercial banks such as the Khushali Bank and local governments, providing invaluable lines of cheap loans. In addition, the establishment of the BUNYAD micro-credit enterprise has enabled BLCC to fund its activities from internal resources as well as to assist programme participants with short-term and cheap loans for income generating activities. Finally, demand for functional literacy skills programmes among women is still high due their limited opportunities to access quality education.

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## PAKISTAN

### Mobile-Based Post Literacy Programme

#### Implementing Organisation

UNESCO Islamabad

#### Language of Instruction

Urdu

#### Programme Partners

Punjab Department of Literacy and Non-Formal Basic Education, Lahore; BUNYAD Foundation, Lahore; Dhaka Ahsania Mission Pakistan, Islamabad; Mobilink Pakistan; Nokia Pakistan

#### Date of Inception

2009

#### Background and Context

Gender disparity in literacy is one of the issues many countries face today. According to Pakistan's recent national survey (PSLM, 2010-2011) the adult Pakistani literacy rate is 67% for males and 42% for females, showing a significant gender gap. One of the reasons for the low literacy rate is that there is no appropriate opportunity for newly literates, who have completed a basic literacy course to practice their literacy skills, and then relapse into illiteracy. The available literacy materials are not well adapted to their daily lives in terms of content and interests, and newly literates experience difficulty retaining their interest in reading. Constant acts of reading are required to retain and develop newly acquired literacy skills; it is therefore imperative to provide support to keep their interest in literacy and to maintain their regular daily practice of reading. In 2009, facing this challenge, UNESCO Islamabad, BUNYAD Foundation (an NGO) and Mobilink Pakistan (a mobile phone company) came together to implement a project entitled «Mobile-Based Post-Literacy Programme» to address the literacy retention problem of newly literates, specifically young and adult females. The piloting phase and the second phase of the project demonstrated significant benefits through the use of mobile phones. The project is currently in its third phase (March–August 2012) . It has been scaled up by acquiring more partners, namely the Punjab Department of Literacy and Non-Formal Basic Education, Lahore; Dhaka Ahsania Mission Pakistan, Islamabad; and Nokia Pakistan.

#### Aims and Objectives

The main objective of the project is to develop a mobile-based literacy programme where the newly literates receive literacy materials as messages on

a mobile phone, which they read and then respond to. This programme is designed not only to provide appropriate reading materials to learners in order to maintain and develop their literacy skills through a medium which has become an indispensable means of communication among youths today, but also to promote knowledge concerning many aspects of life and to teach learners about and familiarise them with technological advancements.

### The Rationales of the Programme

Among young adults in Pakistan, mobile phones have become an important means of accessing information, communication and learning. Mobile phones, therefore, would make a good medium for newly literates to sustain their interests in reading and writing. Mobile phones, which are provided by the programme, become the property of the learners at the end of programme.

The programme is compatible with existing basic literacy programmes in that it includes two months of basic literacy coursework. The learners, having gained some level of literacy through the course, are then provided with mobile phones in order to retain and develop their newly acquired skills.

Sending e-mail messages and monitoring learners' participation in the mobile-based literacy programme only requires a simple web-based system and it is cost-effective.

### Programme Implementation: Approaches and Methodologies

A baseline survey is conducted in order to identify the areas where at least 25 female adults are either illiterate or have only basic literacy skills. Community leaders, families and female members of the community are sensitised through meetings which provide information about the advantages and disadvantages of mobile phones and the content of the messages learners would receive on a mobile phone. Village Education Committees are formed and they select the site for the establishment of the literacy centres and identify facilitators in their communities. Village Education Committees are also in charge of management of the literacy centres. Facilitators are then trained in pedagogical methodologies.

Young and adult women aged 15–30 with no or limited literacy skills participate in the programme. The learners are tested to determine the level of their understanding of simple sentences and maths problems before they begin the literacy programme.

### Literacy Programme

The duration of the programme is six months. The programme is divided into two stages: The first stage lasts two months. During this stage, learners attend a basic literacy course at a community literacy cen-

tre which meets two to three hours per day and six days a week. They learn to write the alphabet and to read with emphasis on phonics. Recently, computers and the Internet were introduced in the basic literacy course, and learners also use UNESCO's interactive DVD *Becoming literate*.

For the second stage, following the two-month basic literacy course, the mobile-based literacy programme begins. Learners are provided with free mobile phones. Originally over 600 messages were developed on 17 different topics for the mobile-based programme. The topics include Islamic teaching, numeracy, health, general knowledge, local government, beauty tips, food recipes, jokes and riddles. Then additional 200 messages were created on topics such as disaster risk management, the economy, the right to free compulsory education, cultural diversity, the culture of Pakistan, the culture of peace, human rights, rights of persons with disabilities, freedom of expression, and the voting process. The BUNYAD head office initially sent simple religious messages and then moved on to messages which address other topics. Learners receive short message service (SMS) on their mobile phones 6–8 times a day. They are instructed to read them, practise writing them in their workbooks, and answer questions. Simple maths is also taught using the calculator function on the mobile phones. Recently, Nokia Pakistan equipped mobile phones with uploaded contents of UNESCO's interactive DVD through a software application called «e-Taleem App» (e-Education App). The mobile phone, therefore, has also become also a direct medium for literacy learning.

### Monitoring

Monitoring the learners' participation in the mobile-based programme is done by the web-based system which is used to send text messages to the learners. In addition, newly literates respond to questions/multiple-choice-questions (MCQs) or tests sent by SMS, and the results of these tests are summarised and recorded in the web-based system. Learners also report to literacy centres on regular bases. A monthly exam is given to learners at learning centres to track their retention rate and the development of their literacy skills.

### Roles of the Partners

**UNESCO Islamabad:** Overall execution, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programme; assessment of each learner's progress; providing textbooks, mobile phones and computers; providing facilitators' salaries

**BUNYAD foundation; Punjab Department of Literacy and Non-Formal Basic Education, Lahore; and Dhaka Ahsania Mission Pakistan, Islamabad:** Provision of needs assessments, mobilisation of the community and families, provision of basic literacy courses and

facilitator training, SMS message delivery, learner support after the completion of programme

**Mobilink Pakistan:** Provides (1) free SIM cards and SMS services for four months for 2,500 learners, (2) the free web-based software which allows sending and receiving SMS messages and (3) the back-end server which collects learners' responses to the MCQs

**Nokia Pakistan:** Development of the software/application, installation of the software/application in the mobile phones

### Impact

Ten literacy centres were established in three districts of the Punjab province and 250 learners completed the programme. Remarkable results were found regarding learners' achievements during the mobile-based programme. For example, at one of the districts, Sialkot, the test results from the first month of the mobile-based programme showed that 90% of the learners were in the 0 to 50% range and none made it to the 70 to 100% range; however, results from the last month of the programme indicated only 14% of the learners fell into the 0 to 50% range and 39% of the learners reached the 70 to 100% range, showing a clear benefit of the mobile phone programme.

After the success of the pilot phase, 50 literacy centres were established in the rural areas of 4 districts of Punjab, where 1,250 learners participated. During this phase, again, a notable improvement in learners' literacy skills was found.

### Reports and learners' testimonials from the first two phases

It was reported that learners were satisfied with the effectiveness of this programme. They have become more confident about themselves. They learned how to read, write and solve small money problems through calculations. Learners can now read the Urdu newspaper, signboards and simple Urdu books. They can also understand the Holy Quran via its Urdu translation. Learners reported exchanging messages among fellow learners. The programme appears to have left a very deep impact on the lives of all who are connected with one another through this programme. Learners shared information and lessons with family members, and sometimes they brought their daughters to the literacy centres. Below are selected learners' testimonials:

*«It had been difficult for me to join a school to get formal education, but through this diverse way of learning it has become very easy for me as it is less time-consuming. I have developed great interest in my learning so I don't miss a day of my classes. Although my brother is against my going to the classes I still go there because of my mother's and teacher's support. I have also gained a lot of confidence.»*

*«I would like to say thanks to UNESCO and BUNYAD for enabling us. Before joining this programme I did not know how to read and write but now I have come to know how to read and write. We come to know about many useful things through the messages sent to us by the head office. We want that other programmes like this should be started also to help us further.»*

*«We have not only learnt how to read and write but have also come to know about other uses of cell phones e.g. setting the alarm, setting the reminders and having a record of our contacts.»*

Following the success of the second phase, additional partners joined the project: (1) Dhaka Ahsania Mission Pakistan, Islamabad; and (2) a public sector organisation, the Punjab Department of Literacy and Non-Formal Basic Education, Lahore. Fifty additional literacy centres were established in the Punjab province in collaboration with the BUNYAD Foundation; twenty in the Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province in collaboration with Dhaka Ahsania Mission Pakistan, Islamabad; and thirty in the South Punjab province in collaboration with Punjab Department of Literacy and Non-Formal Basic Education, Lahore. An additional 2,500 learners are expected to complete the programme by the end of this phase.

### Challenges and Lessons Learned

Religious and cultural constraints and the authoritative attitude of males keep females from receiving education. As far as this particular programme is concerned, family members – especially males – were initially very negative and hostile when they were approached to allow their young female family members to participate in the programme. They strongly disagreed with the idea of giving mobile phones to young women and doubted the effectiveness of the programme's approach. In order to overcome this problem, the trust the community had in the BUNYAD Foundation, a local NGO partner, was a great source of help.

The security situation in the country is deteriorating, and extremist opposition against women's education makes it difficult for women to receive education.

Learners found typing messages on mobile phones difficult and time-consuming. However, with extensive month-long training by the facilitators, learners learned to type comfortably in Urdu.

### Sustainability

Right from the inception of the programme, communities were mobilised through Village Education Committees which were involved in the planning, execution and evaluation phases of the programme. This developed a sense of ownership amongst the communities and all other stakeholders. It is believed

that this community involvement will play a key factor in the sustainability of the programme.

At the end of the six-month programme, the mobile phones become personal property of the learners. They can continue receiving SMS messages for another six months and learners can also use the mobile phones to continue communicating with each other.

The Village Education Committee will continue its work as an administrative body and will be responsible for mobilising funds for meeting the running cost of the literacy centres. The implementing partners will provide technical assistance such as sending SMS messages for another six months and providing occasional computer training to facilitators and learners, even after the project phases out. Supervision and monitoring of the literacy centres will be ensured on regular basis by the implementing partners.

The SMS messages developed under the project can be adopted by the mobile phone companies and can be sent to people in Pakistan on a wider scale. Media campaigns on literacy by the mobile phone companies may create an enabling environment to achieve UNESCO's Education For All (EFA) goals in Pakistan.

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## PHILIPPINES

# Supporting Maternal and Child Health Improvement and Building Literate Environment (SMILE)

### Implementing Organisation

Notre Dame Foundation for Charitable Activities, Inc. Women in Education and Development –NDFCAI –WED; Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO

### Language of Instruction

Maguindanao for learners without basic literacy skills, Filipino and English for learners with some level of literacy skills

### Programme Partners

Local authorities

### Date of Inception

2007

### Background and Context

According to UNESCO's 2011 EFA Global Monitoring Report, the Philippines' basic literacy rate among adults was 94% for females and 93% for males. The 2008 Functional Literacy, Education, and Mass Media Survey (FLEMMS) indicated the functional literacy among persons ages 10 to 64 was 88.7% for girls and women and 84.2% for boys and men. The FLEMMS also revealed, however, a significant gap between the poor and the non-poor populations, showing that 7 out of 10 persons who were poor were functionally literate compared to 9 out of 10 among the non-poor.

The Philippines has three main geographical divisions: Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao. In the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM), a region located in the Mindanao division, predominantly consists of Muslim provinces. The ARMM has a low standard of living and high incidence of poverty and illiteracy has been perennially reported at high rates (FLEMMS, 2008). Moreover, in the ARMM, high infant and maternal mortality rates have also been reported. Compared to other regions of the country, this area and its potentials for growth and development are often further hampered due to intermittent internal armed conflict. The Notre Dame Foundation for Charitable Activities, Inc.-Women in Education and Development (NDFCAI-WED) has been serving and catering to people in the ARMM through alternative



learning systems or non-formal education projects since its inception in 1984.

### **NDFCAI-WED**

Since NDFCAI-WED was organized, it has offered many and diversified education and human resource development projects and activities in ARMM. NDFCAI-WED is a renowned NGO for its dedicated work and successful activities in the promotion of the development of initiatives focusing on literacy, alternative learning systems for adults, and out of school children and youth integration. One of its notable projects is the Gender and a Culture of Peace Project (GENPEACE). This project offers girls and women literacy and continuing education programmes which integrate peace education aimed at building a culture of peace in conflict-affected areas in Mindanao. GENPEACE also has been installing community radio stations to use as tools to promote a culture of peace and enhance community participation, as well as mobilization and communication among people. So far 15 stations are organized all over conflict affected areas in Mindanao.

Another notable and quite recent project of NDFCAI-WED is the SMILE Mindanao project. Among many projects and activities NDFCAI-WED has undertaken, this case study focuses on the recent innovative endeavour, the SMILE Mindanao project.

### **The SMILE Mindanao Project**

The SMILE Mindanao project is designed under the Supporting Maternal and Child Health Improvement and Building Literate Environments (SMILE) project formulated by the Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU). Among marginalized families in the ARMM, strong correlations are found among illiteracy, poverty, poor health, and nutrition. The ARMM has the lowest performance for common indicators of service coverage including prenatal care, immunization and nutritional supplementation and family planning services. Lack of adequate knowledge of maternal and child health and nutrition has contributed to higher maternal and child mortality in the poorest areas in the region. SMILE Mindanao, therefore, provides health and literacy education to support the families in the ARMM.

### **Aims and Objectives**

SMILE Mindanao project aims to enable mothers to develop, to actively participate in, and to promote positive mother-child health practices and behaviours. In other words, it aims to improve their lives, the health of their families, and to promote healthy living and family literacy.

Its objectives are:

- To conduct classes on health education which target mothers with children from 0 to 6 years old

- To develop and improve mothers' literacy and post-literacy skills in order to ensure
- their acquisition of new knowledge and skills related to health
- they become active partners in the promotion of family literacy
- To train mothers on organic farming of vegetables and crops and to support food security for their families while emphasizing that improving their reading, writing, and numeracy skills are necessary in farming and enterprise/livelihood activities.
- To facilitate mothers to organize a "Mothers' Organization" which functions as a support group for their collective efforts and actions for civic engagement.

### **Programme Implementation: Approaches and Methods**

Courtesy calls, dialogues, consultations, and meetings with government officials were made, and religious leaders in the area/community were contacted. This is to inform and receive the support of women and other civic groups. This activity resulted in the establishment of institutional linkages, coordination, and collaboration among local leaders and other concerned members of the community. Moreover, community meetings, orientations, and house to house visits/interviews were employed to directly contact potential beneficiaries of the programme.

### **Recruitment and Training of Barangay Health Workers/Adult Facilitators**

First, barangay health workers were identified and recruited to become the adult facilitators of the SMILE Project. Because they lacked the knowledge and experience to conduct the literacy component of the classes, they underwent intensive training, mentoring, and tutoring with the more trained and experienced adult facilitators of NDFCAI-WED from another project.

### **Community Needs Analysis**

A series of meetings were conducted with the community leaders, including the municipal mayor, municipal planning and development officer, municipal agriculture officer, municipal health officer, barangay (or village) captains, and barangay government officials to determine the needs of the mothers, and a community needs assessment was conducted with 30-40 mothers. Preferred activities were then identified.

### **Instructional Materials Development and Distribution of Learning Materials**

Intensive review, sourcing, and research were conducted in order to develop learning materials suited for the project goals and objectives. A booklet of materials

and a manual for the facilitators were created based on the materials from the Departments of Health and Education. It covers topics such as: prenatal care and services, nutrients needed during pregnancy, breastfeeding, preparing the baby for complimentary food mixes, preventing diarrhea and feeding sick babies, and child growth and milestones. These materials were given to the barangay health workers.

Learners receive textbooks which contain modules on health, food, nutrition, children's rights, environment and sanitation, communication and life skills, basic mathematics, citizenship, and the world map and their neighbours, and other materials (ex. notebooks, pencils). Learners who lack functional literacy skills are also given textbooks for literacy skills development.

### Capacity Training Workshop of Adult Facilitators and Community-based Partners

NDFCAI-WED conducted a three-day live-in capacity-building workshop. Its purpose was to help workshop participants 1) build teaching competencies through acquiring knowledge of different teaching strategies used in facilitating literacy classes, 2) familiarise themselves with learning materials and modules, and 3) enhance their capabilities to utilize learning assessments in order to monitor learning progress and to facilitate learners' self-study or group-study outside the classroom.

### Trainings on Organic Vegetable Gardening

A 1,000 to 1,500 square meters communal plot was created. The Municipal Agrarian Office distributes seeds to each learner to plant in their backyards and communal gardens. Gardening tools and equipment are also given to the mothers. Series of training sessions are provided on organic vegetable gardening in partnership with the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. The agricultural technologist of the municipality regularly monitors/visits the communal garden.

### Regular Meetings

Every month, a meeting for barangay and municipal officials is held aiming to strengthen the relationship among barangay and municipal officials and to provide them the opportunity to share experiences in the implementation, concerns and effective practices.

### Health Education/Literacy Class

Two of the barangays' health workers provide six-month long health education classes in the two barangays (one health worker per barangay). At the beginning of the six-month programme, learners who are illiterate and learners who have some literacy skills attend separate classes. For the learners who are illiterate, literacy materials are distributed and class

sessions focus on basic literacy. At the later phase of the programme, the non-literate learners gain some level of basic literacy skills; therefore, the two groups of learners then begin to attend the same classes. The materials used in the classes are focused on health related issues; however, they are also used as learning materials for numeracy, reading and writing.

All learners are provided a textbook that include self-directed learning modules and are encouraged to use them and learn at their own homes during their own free time. Learners quite often gather together to study outside class time.

### Mothers' Organization

Immediately after the initiation of the health education classes, each class creates their Mothers' Organization and prepares their own action plans for collective activities for civic engagement.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

To determine the progress of the implementation of the health education classes, the following monthly reports are submitted by the barangay health worker before receiving her monthly salary:

**Accomplishment Report:** Used to report the topics and activities covered and the results from those topics and activities.

**Progress Report:** Used to track class/learner progress, special activities, problems encountered and solutions of the problems encountered.

**Attendance Sheet:** Completed by learners to track their attendance

Unannounced monitoring of literacy classes is conducted periodically (once or twice a month) by the SMILE project coordinator to evaluate and assess the barangay health worker's performance. It covers:

- learners' learning progress,
- efficiency of barangay health workers,
- effectiveness of learning approaches applied, and
- impact of the project on the community. The information gained through each monitoring visit is then shared with the barangay health worker.

At the end of 6-month project, a conference with the barangay health workers is carried out to discuss the areas needing improvement and the areas that must be maintained for quality delivery of services.

### Impact

A total of 57 learners participated in the health education in the two barangays and 52 completed the six-month project cycle so far.

Learners' testimonies on their knowledge on health:

*"There are so many things I learned from our class. I now understand the natural way of family planning;*

*I know how to plan and cook balanced diet, and the importance of vegetables.”*

*“I learned so many things in our class like balanced diet, cooking nutritious food, health and family health particularly for my daughter (1.3 years old) and many more.”*

Learners’ testimonies on their literacy skills:

*“I was an illiterate woman when I joined my class. Today, in just a few months, I know how to write my name, read, know my numbers. I have gained self-confidence, have new friends and always look forward to my class. My husband is very happy and always tells me to go and attend my class. The materials I got have been used by me for my child and family. I want to continue learning in my literacy class.”*

Learners’ comments on their garden:

*“The gardening lessons and our vegetable is now a source of food and nutrients for my family. I do not need money to provide good food for my family.”*

*“I now have my own garden plot with my vegetables, thanks to the SMILE project.”*

Regarding Mothers’ Organizations which are formed in health education classes, several activities have been planned in cooperation with the office of each barangay’s chairmen and their councils. One of the Mothers’ Organizations is registered and certified in the Cooperative Development Authority of ARMM.

## Challenges

One of the challenges is the limited capacity of the project. Too many barangays and learners are interested in the project and NDFCAI-WED has not been able to accommodate all of the barangays and learners.

NDFCAI-WED hopes that local authorities and communities, who gained experiences through running the project with the support of NDFCAI-WED, will replicate the programme independently in other villages in their community. Unfortunately, however, they lack the will to do so without support from NDFCAI-WED.

## Sustainability

- In order to foster sustainability of the project, NDFCAI-WED involves local authorities and communities in all stages of project implementation.
- The knowledge learners gained from the project appeared to be sustaining.
- From their vegetable garden, some learners are not only securing food for their family but selling the vegetables in the market.
- Follow-up interviews with learners indicated maternal-child care knowledge and literacy skills learners gained are fully utilized.

## Lessons Learned

Three factors are important for successful programme implementation:

- Focus of the programme on being integrative, responsive and relevant to the lives of learners and their families.
- Partnership building with diverse groups.
- Community mobilization and active community participation.

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# REPUBLIC OF KOREA

## Mothers' School

### Implementing Organisation

Purun Citizen Community

### Language of Instruction

Korean

### Programme Partners

National Basic Adult Literacy Education Association (of Korea)

### Date of Inception

1994

### Background and Context

Although it may be a small statistical difference between the adult literacy rate of women and men, many women in Korea were denied opportunities for education for socioeconomic reasons and patriarchal ideology. These women remain illiterate and face difficulties in their everyday lives.

Illiteracy in Korean women is found most frequently for those who are over 50 years of age for these women are of the generation that experienced the Korean War in 1950s and the economic hardships of the 1960s and 1970s in Republic of Korea. During those decades, it was often the women who were asked to sacrifice their education for financial reasons or due to prejudice that women did not need to be educated.

In order to support these women, Purun Citizen Community provides literacy education through 'Mothers' School'. The name Mothers' School does not indicate that the programme is limited to women who are mothers. Rather, the term 'mother' is used as a form of respect for adult women in their mid-40s, regardless of whether the woman has a child or not. Therefore, the Mothers' School programme is open to all women willing to participate.

In 1999, many organizations working in adult literacy education formed the "National Basic Adult Literacy Education Association" in Korea. About 30 literacy education institutes, including Purun Citizen Community, work in partnership with one another for adult literacy education development and the promotion of adult literacy education in the Korean society.

The association works to promote awareness on the issue of adult literacy education. The association lobbied for governmental funding from the Korean government, which led to the start of the governmental funding in 2006. These efforts also led to the status of the adult literacy education provided by these organizations to be recognized as equivalent to elementary and secondary education. The partner or-

ganizations also share knowledge of different types of literacy education, teacher training, learner counsellor training, grassroots citizenship education programme and various management consulting techniques within the association.

While many adult education institutes exist in the Republic of Korea, this case study looks specifically at Mothers' School, which provides valuable educational support for women who have missed out on a formal education.

### Aims and Objectives

The main objective of the programme is to offer women, who were not included in the formal education system in Korea, an education that would help these women become literate in Korean. The education programme is designed to help these individuals be able to function independently in society as a member of the community.

### Specific Objectives of Purun Citizen Community in Literacy Education

- Purun Citizen Community aims to educate individuals so that they can share the knowledge rather than to compete with one another and increase knowledge only for themselves.
- Increasing self-esteem for a new chapter in the participants' lives should be included in the education programme for the participants were often frustrated at their illiteracy and embarrassed by it.
- Through Purun Citizen Community's education programme, participants should learn to understand others outside of their families, become more aware of the society and participate in social affairs as a member of the community.
- Purun Citizen Community seeks to lead individuals to become leaders in their communities, regardless of their socioeconomic class.

### Programme Implementation: Approaches and Methodologies

The duration of the programme is two semesters per year. Each semester is for six months. The first semester is from March to August; the second is from September to February. The teacher/ instructors participate by the semester schedule. While new participants are allowed to join at any time of the semester, the 'formal recruitment' of new participants takes place prior to the beginning of each semester. The beginner level class is open in both the fall and spring semesters.

There are three levels of classes – beginner, intermediate and advanced – with each level lasting for a year. The classes take place two or three times a week. The classes can take place either in the morning



(10:30am – 12pm), in the afternoon (3pm – 4:30pm) or in the evening (8pm – 9pm).

In the beginner level class, participants learn the basic Korean letters (called Hangul). The participants learn the rules of phonics and how each letter contributes to the formation of a word. The learners also practice basic sentences, equivalent of those of 1st or 2nd graders in elementary school.

In the intermediate level class, participants practice more advanced sentences, equivalent to those of 3rd or 4th graders in elementary school. The participants also practice different types of writing.

In the advanced level class, participants learn to compose an essay on their own at the level equivalent to that of 5th and 6th graders in elementary school. These participants are taught to advance their reading and writing skills they learned from the intermediate level class.

After a participant completes the advanced level class, she can participate in ‘composition class,’ where the focus is on writing. The participant can write her autobiography and other types of writing in this class.

The participant can also take basic mathematics class after she advances to the intermediate class level. In this class, participants learn how to distinguish numbers, basic addition, subtraction, multiplication and division.

### Learning Materials

The classes use textbooks from elementary schools and other organization-produced materials. Each month, participants at the school and the teachers volunteer once or twice at social welfare organizations for orphans or children with disabilities. Like the regular school in Korea, learners participate in field trips once each semester. They also have opportunities to visit artistic or cultural venues around the city. The participants participate in writing competitions on Hangul day (a national holiday to celebrate the creation of the Korean language), which is organized by the National Organization for Adult Literacy Education in Korea.

In addition, the participants hold a theatrical performance once a year (either in August or in September). The celebrations for completing the course are held at the end of the semester.

### Poetry

Poetry writing classes are offered to participants of different levels – beginner, intermediate and advanced. They write poems based on their life experiences. Through this activity, they learn to express themselves in a more artistic fashion. Writing one’s own poems allows a learner to really see the result of their education in the programme while increasing their self-confidence in the process.

A big part of the poetry programme is creating one’s artwork with her poem. In the beginner level, learners read the poems of poets they like. The poem of their choice is then copied while the learners draw a picture appropriate to the poem. In the intermediate and advanced class, the learners create their own poems and include the poem on their artwork. The poetry programme collects learners’ work and print a book of learner poetry each year.

### Artwork Exhibition

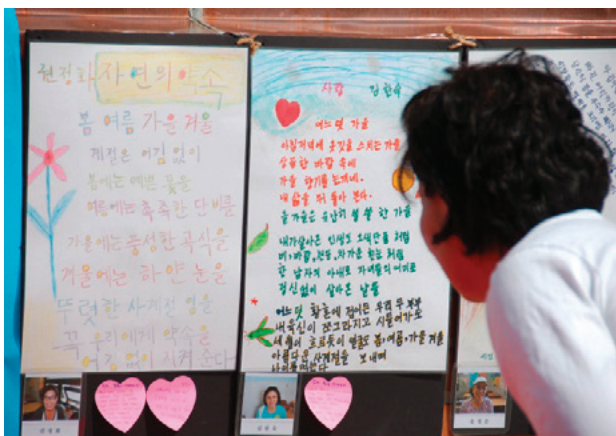
Every October, there is an exhibition of these poetic works along with a poetry reading event. The goal of this event is to allow the participants to achieve a sense of accomplishment and to be able to enjoy the process of poem. Also, by holding this event, the surrounding community can become more aware of the adult literacy education in the area. The participants of the programme are encouraged to participate along with the migrant women and the children of the surrounding community so that the participants can become exposed to different types of poems written by different age groups and culture in their community.

### Theatrical Performance

There is a learner-led theatre group named Bombom within Mothers’ School. This programme is intended for learners in the intermediate and advanced levels. This activity was organised as a way to increase the participants’ self-esteem by offering them an opportunity to express themselves through acting.

Many plays Bombom performs are about stories that are similar to the life experiences of the participants. These plays are about women who experienced the Korean War in 1950s, their financial struggles after the war which led them to workplaces rather than schools, their marriage, children, family and other aspects that many Korean women of that generation may share. The participants write the lines of the plays together through a workshop. The plot of these plays is based on the experiences of the women participants of the programme. The plays are an opportunity for the women to bring their stories to the surface, in this case on a stage, thus giving them a voice.

About 12-15 learners participate in this theatre group. In 2005, Soomin Lee, who studied play directing at the Korean National University of Art at the time, was the director of Bombom. Lee commented that “We were not turning the impossible into possible, but rather discovering what was possible (with the theatre group).” One participant mentioned, “I saw the confidence in all these women. I also got rid of the prejudice that only professional actors could perform that could move the hearts of the audience.”



## Autobiography

For participants of the advanced level, they are offered a chance to participate in autobiography writing class. This programme is intended to promote self-confidence in the participants.

As new literates of the Korean language, the participants are able to write their own stories, including the painful past as illiterate women. This activity is used as an alternative form of therapy for the participants – the writers can face their past as illiterates. Expressing themselves in written forms, the participants learn to look forward to their future as literate women.

Participants in this autobiography activity reported an increased sense of achievement and self-confidence. In 2011, the participants' autobiographies were printed.

## Programme Development in the Last Six Years

In addition to the activities described above, Mother's School provides various means to support learners in their literacy education. The additional support has developed significantly in the past six years.

In order to meet individual's needs, Mothers' School provides counselling for learners. In 2006, learners received individual counselling prior to each semester and, in cases where there was some concern or complaint, they received additional counselling. As of 2012, each learner now has a designated counsellor and receives counselling not only at the beginning of the semester but also during semester. In addition, they have counselling sessions with either the principal or vice principal of Mother's School.

The amount of extracurricular activities has also increased. In 2006, only the activities of a play performance, field trips and a writing contest on Hangul Day were available to learners. In 2012, however, learners may now also participate in other activities such as movie days, liberal arts lectures, poetry and artwork exhibitions, poetry presentations, laughter therapy,

photography exhibitions, and community sharing festivals.

In 2006, to demonstrate their achievements, the learners took part in a dictation, submitted their work to internal and external writing competitions, and contributed their work to literary journals. In 2012, in addition, they also contribute to poetry books, created individual writing portfolios, and participated in play performances.

## Programme Impact and Challenges

In 1994, Purun Citizen Community built the Community Culture Center in Heo-gi Dong in the north-eastern part of Seoul. The Korean classes for mothers and women who missed the opportunity to attend school were offered here. About 8,000 learners took classes in basic Korean, mathematics and English. In 2004, the school held its first theatrical performance 'Pencil Sharpener,' a play about the time in Korea's past where learners could not have access to education.

Currently there are six Korean classes, two English classes and two computer classes during the day in addition to three Korean classes in the evenings. About 70 learners are participating in the programme. There are 12 Korean teachers, 2 math teachers, 2 English teachers, 2 computer teachers and 1 Korean composition teacher.

## Challenges and Lessons Learned

As illiterates, the learners were marginalized from the Korean society in many ways. Often, it was noticeable that many learners had lost self-esteem or self-respect due to their illiteracy. This sense of loss sometimes translated into being overly aggressive or offensive in classrooms which led to interpersonal conflicts among the learners. In one case, a learner gave up participating in the programme due to such conflict.

As a way to ease tension among learners and to have the learners understand that the school was not just for one person but for all participants, a theatrical group Bombom and other participant-led volunteer groups were created. By participating in theatrical performances, the learners were able to express themselves and about their lives as illiterate individuals in the Korean society. The themes of the performances evolved around family, marriage and children so that the learners were more familiar with the themes. By sharing their experiences and their lives, the women were able to recover parts of the lost self-esteem and self-respect.

Initially, the learners regarded the extracurricular activities as unnecessary to their learning for their opinion of literacy only resulted from classroom instruction and academic exercises within the classroom. This belief led to refusal to participate in diverse

methods of instruction and civic education activities outside of the classroom.

However, Purun Citizen Community kept its original educational philosophy which was to expose the programme participants to experience as many different educational methods as possible. Through the volunteer activities and theatre group participation, learners were able to express themselves better and also share their new knowledge with others. By helping others who are disadvantaged in the society, the participants came to understand that sharing their knowledge could also be a joy for them. Also, the learners seemed to increase their trust in the education offered by Purun Citizen Community after their participation in these activities.

### Publicity of the Programme

Publicity is difficult for it costs lots of money. There are more illiterate women that the programme seeks to reach, yet fail to reach due to the cost of publicity. So when the participants of the programme learned of such hardships faced by the organization as well as the fact that there are many others who still need to be reached, some participants willingly volunteered to join the teachers when they went to public spaces around the community to advertise the programme. Some participants bring other women to the programme who may fit the ideal profile to join the programme. However, this is only possible for women who have gained a bit more self-esteem after participating in the programme for they are not embarrassed anymore to be associated with a programme targeting illiterate women.

### Financial Matters and Human Resources

The two most difficult aspects of programme management are finances and human resources management. Although Purun Citizen Community did not experience a great hardship where it had to stop the programme, it often struggles to maintain the governmental funding which does not consider the unique psychological and socioeconomic factors of the programme participants.

Some policies are meant only for short-term literacy projects while Purun Citizen Community's programme seeks to run long-term programmes that are tailored specifically to adult women whose experiences are unique in the Korean history. The differences in these perceptions sometimes lead to decrease in governmental funding or support.

### Sustainability

Mothers' School by Purun Citizen Community has three full time staff members—a manager, a vice-principal in charge of administration and the principal

managing all school-related affairs—who manage affairs related to the school on a daily basis. The instructors for the programme are mostly volunteers. Some of the instructors are paid on a part time basis. The volunteer instructors report being personally enriched by the participation in the programme. However, for a more in-depth curriculum development, there is a need for full time instructors which is impossible under the current structure.

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## BOLIVIA

# Bilingual Literacy and Reproductive Health

### Implementing Organisation

Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport (MECD)

### Language of Instruction

Quechua and Spanish

### Funding

UNFPA, Turner Foundation

### Programme Partners

VEA (Vice Ministry of Alternative Education); Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC/CEPAL); Demographic Centre for Latin America and the Caribbean (CELADE)

### Date of Inception

1999

### Overview

Since 1998, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport (MECD) has been working in partnership with the UNFPA to implement the Bilingual Literacy Project in Reproductive Health. The project was instituted in response to the high levels of illiteracy and high maternal and infant mortality rates among poor people, particularly those from the indigenous population. In light of this, the project endeavours to promote literacy skills development in order to improve people's living standards as well as reproductive health and child care practices. The project employs a gender-based approach and primarily targets women (85%). The project is aimed at people living in poor urban and rural areas, such as Chuquisaca, Potosí and Cochabamba, which have the highest concentration of indigenous peoples and high levels of illiteracy, as well as maternal and infant mortality. Furthermore, a multicultural approach is adopted to cater for the cultural and linguistic diversity of the participants.

The project is also being implemented in Paraguay, Mexico, Peru, Chile, Argentina and Guatemala with coordination and support from the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (CEPAL/ECLAC).

### Context and Background

Bolivia is one of the poorest countries in Latin America. Wealth and socio-economic services are concentrated in urban areas, while about 90% of the rural population, most of whom are from indigenous populations, lives in extreme poverty, with limited access to basic

services such as health and education. This has resulted in high levels of illiteracy and poor health standards in rural areas. For example, while the national illiteracy rate for women is 19%, it stands at around 40% in the department of Potosi where 90% of the population belongs to the indigenous population. Similar disparities exist with regard to reproductive health: while the average birth rate is 3.8%, it can be as high as 5.5% in the rural areas. In 2001, the maternal mortality rate in these rural locations was as high as 235 per 10,000 live births, and 62% of the deaths were of women with no access to professional reproductive health care services. Overall, these indicators reveal a strong correlation between a population's standards of reproductive health (e.g. the use of contraceptives, the rate of maternal and infant mortality) and its level of education.

In this context and due also to the fact that 58% and 25% of Bolivia's population is under the age of 25 and of reproductive age (15–49 years), respectively, it was considered imperative to implement the Bilingual Literacy Project in Reproductive Health in order to address the inter-connected challenges of illiteracy and low reproductive health care awareness. The need for such a programme was even greater within the indigenous population due to the disparities between literacy rates and reproductive health standards detailed above.

### Programme Implementation: Approaches and Methodologies

The programme is based on the experiences learned from the pilot project in Peru, which focused on 100 indigenous women from poor communities. In 1999, the Bilingual Literacy Project in Reproductive Health was introduced in Bolivia by the UNFPA and the Ministry of Education. Since then, the programme has been funded by the Ministry of Education, local municipalities and NGOs in areas with high illiteracy and maternal mortality rates, such as Chuquisaca, Potosí and Cochabamba. UNFPA chose literacy training as means of improving participants' reproductive health and encourages active social participation in the programme's implementation.

### Aims and Objectives

The aims are to:

- reduce illiteracy and maternal and infant mortality rates within the indigenous population;
- improve living standards among the poor (poverty eradication);
- promote the development of bilingual literacy skills within the indigenous population;
- increase awareness of sexual and reproductive rights;



- promote gender equality and multicultural awareness; and
- improve women’s participation in civic life and decision-making processes.

### Training of Trainers

Programme facilitators of the Bi-Alfa Programme are mostly teachers in the formal education system but people with at least a secondary education and community leaders have also been engaged. All facilitators attend 16 to 20 days of formal training per year. The training curriculum includes literacy teaching methodologies, programme content and organization, management and evaluation of the learning process. The role of the facilitators is to moderate the learning process while encouraging the learners themselves to learn from each other through active engagement and participation in programme activities. Each facilitator is assigned about 20 learners in order to ensure effective learning.

### Teaching/Learning Methods

The teaching methodology used by the programme is based on Paulo Freire’s principles and approaches to education, and thus emphasises the learners’ own life experiences and learning through critical, creative and active forms of teaching and learning. Accordingly, literacy training is conducted bilingually in order to encourage learners’ active participation in group activities, debates and discussions. Moreover, basic literacy courses are designed to be as relevant as possible to learners’ lives. For example, the alphabet is introduced and taught using key and relevant thematic words such as health, pregnancy, children or gender relations. This method is designed to provoke and encourage critical thinking and debate.

Facilitators supplement these learner-centred methodologies with relevant visual aids (such as posters and videos) and practical activities (such as painting, group reading sessions, writing on the blackboard, cutting words out of newspapers and working with literacy manuals). An innovative strategy in this context is that most of the learning materials or aids are exclusively developed and produced by the indigenous communities and the learners themselves.

The programme is divided into basic and advanced levels. At both levels, learners attend two or three sessions per week (totalling 144 hours) over a period of six to eight months.

### Thematic Focus

Literacy courses focus in particular on promoting: bilingual literacy, reproductive health, gender equality and multiculturalism.

### Bilingual Literacy

olivia is a multicultural and multi-ethnic society. In order to promote and strengthen ethnic relations and cultural identity, the project employs a bilingual approach to literacy training. Hence, learning is conducted in both indigenous languages and in Spanish. The bilingual approach is vital because it not only helps learners to comprehend the issues covered, but also draws on the learners’ experiences and cultural sensitivities.

### Sexual and Reproductive Health

The gender perspective – a dimension that is neglected by many literacy projects – is central to the Bilingual Literacy Project in Reproductive Health. As highlighted above, the high levels of illiteracy among indigenous women means that they need special assistance in matters relating to reproductive health, and this can only be achieved by developing their literacy skills. The project therefore endeavours to increase learners’ knowledge and awareness of women’s reproductive health rights and needs in order to empower them to lead healthy lives and make use of the appropriate primary reproductive medical services. This is ultimately intended to reduce the incidence of maternal and infant mortality.

Furthermore, the literacy courses harness the gender perspective in order to hold open discussions on topics such as self-esteem, self-care, violence-free relationships, the empowerment of women, parental roles in the education of children, and decision-making and negotiations within families. The integration of gender-specific topics is intended to promote gender rights awareness, equality and respect. This is particularly important for women given their culturally-designated subservient social position both within the family and in the community as a whole.

However, because the idea of equal rights and opportunities for women defies entrenched traditional value systems, the programme not only encourages mixed groups of women and men to discuss these issues but also employs a community-based learning system and sensitisation activities that involve the entire community.

### Multiculturalism

The programme employs a multicultural approach that reflects the cultural diversity of its learners, particularly with regard to history, language, cosmology, beliefs, forms of production and social structures. Multiculturalism is understood to imply a horizontal examination and mutual recognition of cultural differences, and learners are encouraged to reflect on their own and others’ culture and cultural identity in order to recognise these differences and learn from them.



A multicultural approach also involves integrating indigenous knowledge systems into the learning process, and thus strengthening ethno-cultural identities rather than imposing specific world-views or practices and acting in a protectionist attitude towards cultural traditions. Ultimately, the project aims to empower indigenous people to become full, active and respected members of national society.

### Advanced Literacy Training

At the end of the basic literacy level, the programme offers learners the opportunity of starting advanced literacy skills training. The advanced level draws on both scientific and traditional systems of medicine to extend learners' knowledge of health-related topics, such as community health and hygiene, healthy living (nutrition), family planning, childbirth and postnatal health, child care, and sexually transmitted diseases. The programme also promotes the development of skills for the purposes of income generation.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

The project uses a system of ongoing evaluation in which facilitators undertake assessments. Professional external evaluators are also engaged to carry out a quantitative and qualitative evaluation of the programme's impact on participants and their communities.

### Impact and Achievements

**Enrolment:** 1,610,091 learners enrolled in the programme between 1998 and 2007, of whom 112,241

completed the first level (88,624 women) and acquired functional bilingual literacy skills. 24,527 enrolled in and completed the second level, of whom 19,515 were women and 5,012 were men. During the last year, 375 learners enrolled in the third level of the programme (213 women and 162 men). Overall, between 78% and 86% of learners have become functionally literate.

**Training of trainers:** During nine years of implementation, the programme has trained 390 pedagogical coordinators and 5,468 facilitators.

**Health and gender issues:** The integration of health and gender-related topics into the literacy programme has empowered indigenous communities and improved women's awareness of family planning and women's reproductive health care needs. As a result, many rural women are now seeking primary health care services, including screening for cervical and breast cancer. Improvements in primary health care have led to a decline in maternal and infant mortality rates in rural areas.

**Sensitive issues:** The open discussion of culturally-sensitive topics such as family violence and women's rights has led to a decline in violence against women and an improved awareness of women's fundamental rights.

**Emancipation:** Women are increasingly participating in civic life due to the liberating effect of education.

**Poverty eradication:** Programme participants have been empowered to engage in income generating activities.

**Parental support:** Because parents from indigenous communities have developed a greater interest in education, many children in the formal school system are now receiving support from their parents.

## Challenges

The following are some of the key challenges that the programme faces:

- The government has generally shown little interest in supporting or prioritising literacy programmes. As a result, adult education programmes have not been integrated into the country's educational policies and programmes. Furthermore, bilingual literacy training is not sufficiently integrated into the teacher training system for the non-formal education sector. This lack of governmental support has been a barrier to the full implementation of the programme.
- In addition to limited governmental support, the lack of adequate funding for resources, project facilitators and pedagogical coordinators has also hindered the institutionalisation of the programme.
- Poor infrastructures create major difficulties for rural learners who are forced to commute long distances to reach the nearest learning centre. This has often forced rural-based learners to drop out and deters prospective learners from enrolling.
- The rate of enrolment often decreases during the peak agricultural seasons when most rural learners concentrate on their farms.
- Traditional gender roles further limit women's participation in the programme. For example, female learners with children have often found it difficult to care for their children and simultaneously participate in learning activities. Furthermore, traditional value systems work against the full implementation of the programme because they restrict the openly discussion of issues related to reproductive health.

## Lessons Learned

The following are the key lessons that have emerged from the programme:

- The contents and methodologies of an adult literacy programmes must be contextualised and based on the specific situation, needs and interests of the learners. Moreover, to promote gender equality, human rights, and intercultural learning, the cultural background of the learners should be integrated into the programme. This cannot be done "from above"; instead, the programme must be designed for and together with the learners themselves, and it must respect and promote local knowledge.
- Literacy training should be adapted to the participants' agricultural calendar, and more courses should be scheduled during the off-peak season.
- The programme has demonstrated how important it is for different stakeholders to cooperate at all levels of the project. Despite the fact that the programme received insufficient funding from the national government, partnerships established with

the municipal and local governments have helped to sustain it.

- Similarly, partnerships with indigenous organizations are an equally important means of raising awareness and generating positive publicity among potential learners. Hence, sensitisation and public awareness campaigns are critical to securing much-needed support for the institutionalisation of the programme.
- The programme serves as a good model for adult literacy campaigns. It fights discrimination against indigenous languages, strengthens the cultural identity of indigenous people, and opens up possibilities for lifelong learning.
- The programme's success shows that it is possible to learn two written languages simultaneously, while at the same time addressing the culturally sensitive issues of gender equality, reproductive health and multiculturalism.

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## MEXICO

### Bilingual Literacy for Life

#### Programme Title

Bilingual Literacy for Life (BLL) / MEVyT Indígena Bilingüe (MIB)

#### Implementing Organization

The National Institute for Adult Education (INEA)

#### Language of Instruction

Spanish and indigenous languages (bilingual)

#### Funding

The Federal Government (through the Ministry of Education and the National Commission for Development of Indigenous Populations – CDI)

#### Programme Partners

The Federal Government of Mexico (through the Ministry of Education), State Adult Education Institutions (IEEAs), NGOs, Local governments and professional institutes (see below under Institutional Partnerships)

#### Date of Inception

2007

#### Context and Background

In recent years, Mexico – one of the most populous, ethnically diverse and economically advanced countries in Latin America – has made significant progress in promoting access to basic education for all through increased public funding of education and the implementation of various educational programmes. A recent study noted that “since the 1980s, public spending on education has been steadily increasing in absolute and relative terms [and] represented about 26% of the federal budget in 1999, up from about 12% in 1983”. Universal access to basic education has also been promoted through the institutionalisation of various educational policies and programmes such as the promulgation of the universal education law (which guarantees every child aged 6 to 15 years access to primary and junior secondary education), the OPORTUNIDADES (opportunities) programme which provides financial assistance to school children from poor families); the Telesecundaria (which promotes distance learning through the use of multi-media technologies at secondary school level) and the Educational Model for Life and Work (Modelo Educación para la Vida y el Trabajo – MEVyT), which provides basic education to youths and adults.

As a result of these proactive measures, Mexico’s educational system has expanded rapidly at all levels, the most significant being the expansive growth in the net student enrolment rates across the entire formal educational system. According to government reports, school enrolment rates increased more than

eightfold from 3.25 million students in 1950 to 28.2 million in 2000, of which 81% were enrolled in basic education. By 2006, the net primary and secondary school enrolment rates had risen to 98% and 77%, respectively. The primary school completion rate also increased from 74% during the 1993–94 school year to 83% by 1997–98 and to 87% by 2000–2001. As a result, the percentage of people with 9th grade education (i.e. basic education) rose from just 9% in 1970 to 41.4% in 1998. Overall, the 2010 national census established that Mexico had achieved near-universal primary school net enrolment and youth literacy rates while adult literacy rates had improved significantly.

Despite the impressive progress in promoting access to basic education for all, Mexico’s education system continues to be plagued by major challenges such as the lack of basic learning resources, shortages of qualified teachers and the lack of gender equity with regard to access to education. These challenges, which are more acute in rural than in urban areas and are exacerbated by the high levels of poverty among rural families and the predominant use of Spanish as the language of instruction, have created significant barriers which preclude the meaningful participation of indigenous peoples in the public education system. As a result, school enrolment, retention and achievement rates are particularly low in rural areas and, more specifically, among indigenous people. According to recent studies, indigenous Mexicans have an average of 4.6 schooling years compared to a mean of 7.9 years among non-indigenous people. The 2010 national census established that the illiteracy rate for indigenous people was about 27.2% while the national average was 5.4%. Illiteracy rates are substantially higher among indigenous women (about 40%), due in part to entrenched cultural practices which often put the girl child at a disadvantage including less parental support to access education. At a local level, literacy rates in the more developed areas such as Mexico City and Nuevo León exceeded 95% as of 2005 to 2008 but were around 75% in the less developed (and mainly indigenous) states such as Chiapas, Guerrero and Oaxaca during the same period. Overall, one third of the indigenous population is considered to be functionally illiterate.

Hence, in an effort to address these challenges and disparities, and in particular to create quality and sustainable learning opportunities for the traditionally disadvantaged indigenous communities, the federal government (through The National Institute for Adult Education – INEA) initiated the Bilingual Literacy for Life Programme (BLLP) / MEVyT Indígena Bilingüe (MIB) in 2007.

#### INEA: A brief history of its origins and core mandate

The National Institute for Adult Education (INEA) was established in 1981 as the federal agency in charge of non-formal education – including literacy and basic



adult education – in the country. Since then, INEA has developed and implemented various educational programmes – including Plazas comunitarias (Virtual Community Centres), and life skills training programmes for youths and adults. The main objectives of these programmes, which are part of the comprehensive MEVyT programme, were to create an alternative and sustainable route for disadvantaged population groups such as women/girls, indigenous peoples and ethnic minorities, to gaining access to basic education; improve levels of literacy rates in the country; address the specific learning and livelihood needs of various ethnic groups and promote national socio-economic development. Accordingly, people who participate and graduate from INEA programmes are provided with recognised certificates which are equivalent to those provided to learners who follow the formal educational system. In a nutshell, INEA was instituted and is motivated to continue providing a wide range of non-formal educational programmes because the federal government believes that education is a basic human right which should not be denied to any citizen and also one which affords participants the opportunity to appropriate knowledge and skills necessary for both personal and national development. The Bilingual Literacy for Life Programme (BLLP)/MEVyT Indígena Bilingüe (MIB) is indeed one such programme that aims to achieve these integrated goals.

### **The Bilingual Literacy for Life Programme (BLLP) / MEVyT Indígena Bilingüe (MIB)**

The BLLP is an integrated and bilingual non-formal educational (basic literacy and life skills training) programme which primarily targets non-literate and semi-literate people (aged 15 years and above) from socio-economically disadvantaged indigenous communities within Mexico. The programme – which is conducted in Spanish and in local indigenous languages – particularly targets women and out-of-school girls (to date, women have constituted about 92% of the total of programme participants) not only because they constitute a social group that is highly disadvantaged within indigenous communities but also because a majority of indigenous women have, traditionally, failed to effectively benefit from the formal education system. This is due to the fact that most parents prefer to educate boys, as one female programme participant testified: “My father did not want us to study. He told us that as women we would not work so it would be useless”. As such, more than 65% of the illiterate indigenous population are women and are therefore in need of targeted educational interventions.

The programme is currently being implemented in 15 federal states (comprising of 2,223 localities in 263

municipalities) with the prospect of increasing this to 17 states.

The populations of which consist predominantly of indigenous people. To date, the programme has been implemented in 42 main indigenous languages found in the 15 participating states. The fundamental goal of the BLLP/MIB is to create sustainable learning opportunities for indigenous communities in order to address the challenges that limit their ability to access formal basic education (see above) as well as to facilitate their integration into mainstream Mexican society by enabling them to learn and speak in Spanish which is spoken by about 90% of the national population. It also endeavours to empower and promote sustainable development within indigenous communities. To this end, the programme provides learners with literacy and contextually relevant life skills training covering a range of themes including:

- basic and functional literacy (in Spanish and indigenous languages);
- livelihood- or income-generating skills training (including practical skills and business management training);
- life skills training/civic education (including: health awareness, nutrition, reproductive health, human rights awareness, gender awareness, conflict management/resolution, citizenship);
- environmental management/natural resource conservation; and
- social/intercultural studies.

### **The BLLP/MIB curriculum**

The bilingual indigenous MEVyT (MIB) programme is based on an integrated, comprehensive and structured curriculum which covers the basic or initial literacy learning level and the middle or functional literacy skills learning level. MIB modules have to take into account the particular linguistic and cultural situations of each ethnic and linguistic regional group, as well as their interests. For this reason, the modules are developed differently by teams located within the State institutes.

The initial level of the bilingual indigenous MEVyT programme with Spanish as a Second Language (MIBES) has five learning modules (MIBES 1–5) while the middle level has seven learning modules – two specifically for indigenous learners (MIBES 6–7) and five for MEVyT learners in Spanish – but with some activities in indigenous languages. It takes learners an average of 18 months to complete initial level, and 6 to 10 months to complete middle level.

Each module of the integrated curriculum is intended to equip learners with particular literacy and life skills which will enable them to advance to a higher learning level where the previous skills are reinforced. The modules are built as follows:

- MIBES 1 (I start reading and writing in my own language) – the module provides literacy training in the learners' mother tongue. The module employs brief and easily comprehensible texts covering themes relating to the learners' everyday experiences such as social life, environment and culture.
- MIBES 2 (Let's speak Spanish) – this module introduces learners to Spanish as a second language, through communication in everyday situations. The teaching-learning approach at this level is predominantly oral because the primary goal is to develop the learners' Spanish oral and comprehension skills and thus to enable them use Spanish in different situations.
- MIBES 3 (I read and write in my own language) – this module is also produced in the learners' mother tongue and takes the approach of MIBES 1 but is intended to enable learners to develop more complex literacy skills and to use these skills to solve everyday problems. In short, the module intends to equip learners with functional literacy skills in their mother tongue.
- MIBES 4 (I start reading and writing in Spanish) – this module is produced in Spanish. It primarily aims to enable learners to read and write texts in Spanish and further develops oral communication skills in Spanish.
- MIBES 5 (I use written language) – this module is bilingual and aims to enable learners to advance their indigenous and Spanish functional literacy skills.
- MIBES 6 – (Numbers and calculation) – this module, is part of the MIB middle level and addresses necessary aspects of mathematics in primary education, based on both traditional indigenous and western mathematics.
- MIBES 7 (I read and write my mother tongue) – this module is written in Spanish and in indigenous languages and is addressed to facilitators for developing their own skills in reading and writing in their mother tongue. It intends to increase language awareness of teaching staff, in particular with regard to grammar, spelling and use of their mother tongue. The module also works for young and adult learners studying the advanced level of MIB in order to keep them reading and writing in their mother tongue.

It must, however, be noted and emphasised that this integrated curriculum only acts as a guide for field technical teams and facilitators because the specific themes covered and learning activities undertaken in each module have to be adapted to suit the participating group's mother tongue as well as their specific needs and interests. To achieve this, INEA works closely with the communities and local state institutes in order to integrate their specific and unique suggestions into the modules.

## Aims and Objectives

In addition to the fundamental goals of the programme highlighted above, the BLLP/MIB also endeavours to:

- raise literacy levels among indigenous peoples through the creation of sustainable bilingual educational opportunities that address their specific learning needs;
- equip learners with bilingual functional literacy skills that are necessary in solving everyday problems,
- promote equal access to quality basic and life skills education (i.e. to reduce regional, gender and ethnic disparities with regard to access to education);
- nurture a culture of lifelong learning among indigenous peoples;
- empower indigenous peoples to be self-reliant and to improve their living standards by enabling them to acquire practical and relevant life skills;
- facilitate the integration of indigenous peoples into mainstream Mexican society through the learning of Spanish as a second language;
- combat the socio-economic marginalisation of indigenous peoples;
- promote development in indigenous communities; and
- empower indigenous peoples to value and preserve their culture and cultural identity.

## Development of Teaching-Learning Materials

INEA has developed various monolingual and bilingual illustrative training / learning materials (including five modules and posters) with technical support from learners' organisations and institutional partners with expertise in indigenous languages. These illustrative teaching-learning materials (see pictures below) are distributed free of charge to all learners.

As noted above, the themes covered in each module are not uniform across the 15 states because they are informed by and adapted to reflect each group's specific worldviews, culture, existential realities and linguistic characteristics as well as addressing its needs and aspirations. In addition, INEA has also produced teaching modules for use by programme trainers / facilitators using the same format.

The production and free distribution of these teaching-learning resources not only intends to facilitate the efficient and sustainable implementation of the BLLP/MIB but also to motivate learners and communities to participate in the BLLP/MIB as well as nurturing a culture of lifelong learning (and thus preventing learners from relapsing into illiteracy) by enabling learners to keep and continue to use the materials long after participating in the programme.

## Recruitment and Training of Facilitators

The practical implementation of the BLLP/MIB is heavily dependent on a cohort of locally or community-based volunteer trainers or facilitators. As of 2011, INEA had trained about 5,000 volunteers (72% of whom were women and 28% men) to act as BLLP/MIB promoters and trainers. Most of these have basic education qualifications while a few are high school students and graduates and professionals working with local schools (teachers) and community development organisations. In all cases, however, volunteers are required to be proficient bilingual (Spanish and indigenous language) speakers. The volunteer trainers work under the supervision of an INEA technical team based in each of the 15 participating federal states.

Given that an overwhelming majority of the volunteers have lower educational qualifications and no professional training and practical experience in non-formal educational practices, INEA's state-based technical teams – with support from INEA's various specialised institutional partners (see above) – provide them with professional training, in order to ensure the effective and efficient implementation of the BLLP/MIB. The norm includes 72 hours for initial training, and at least 32 hours of permanent training. The training-of-trainers and mentoring scheme for programme facilitators focus on:

- reinforcement of reading and writing in the mother tongue, since most of the facilitators speak their mother tongue fluently, but do not use it in writing;
- the educative model (MIB) and pedagogy (focusing on non-formal education teaching-learning methods or approaches);
- design and development of appropriate teaching-learning activities mother tongue teaching methodologies;
- Spanish as a second language teaching methodologies; classroom management practices; and
- assessment and evaluation of teaching-learning outcomes.

Once trained, each facilitator is entrusted with teaching a class of between 4 and 15 learners over the two-year duration of the programme. For this, they are paid a monthly stipend of 722 Pesos (USD 58). In addition to providing training services, programme facilitators are also required to evaluate the learning processes and outcomes on an on-going basis as well as assessing the changing needs and aspirations of the learners in order to assist INEA technical staff to further develop the curriculum to reflect these “new” needs. Facilitators are also required to organise and manage the virtual community centers, to promote the programme within their communities and to recruit new learners.

## Recruitment of Learners

INEA's technical field teams and programme facilitators, with support from community leaders, former learners, CBOs and NGOs, are responsible for mobilising and recruiting new learners into the programme. This system is based on the 80 zone coordination offices that are involved in the 15 states.

Potential learners are invited and motivated to enrol by using state, zone or local institutional joint campaigns, local census, door-to-door invitations or linkage with other social programmes, such as Oportunidades (Opportunities) which brings economic benefits to mothers who are responsible for their children's schooling and their families' health.

When individuals show an interest in studying, an initial interview is held to find out about their background, interests, level of reading and writing skills, and degree of mono- or bilingualism. This step is very important, as it enables the learner to be placed on the best educational route to encourage learning, in particular literacy skills. Especially motivating for learners is the possibility of being registered on the national accreditation system and database (SASA-I) which has special provisions for the Indigenous Programme. For initial registration a valid identification (ID) is requested, and if the applicant does not have any, technical officers from the micro-region help to obtain it.

## Teaching-learning Approaches and Methods

BLLP/MIB classes (or study circles) are conducted by facilitators but in some instances and often in response to learners' requests, facilitators also conduct home visits in order to provide learners or groups of learners with specialised or face-to-face assistance. Programme study timetables are flexible as they are often arrived at after consulting the learners. In this way, learners have the opportunity to choose the times which are best suited to their situations. For instance, during the agricultural season, classes can be conducted in the late afternoon after learners have tended to their fields while in the off-season, classes are often conducted mid-day.

Similarly, since each indigenous language has its own linguistic structure and characteristics, INEA does not prescribe the use of a unique method of literacy training across all the states. Nonetheless, facilitators are encouraged to use a variety of learner-centred (participatory) teaching-learning methods such as games, dialogues, formal activities and group discussions which are inspired by the “meaningful word-generating discussion” and the “meaningful topic-generating discussion” principles developed by Paulo Freire. Through this approach, the learners' literacy and life skills are nurtured by using their local environment and relevant teaching-learning aids as the

basis of learning and thus for developing their literacy skills. While learners develop their oral and written language, they also acquire life skills which enable them to cope with and improve their situations.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

The impact of the BLLP/MIB, including student learning outcomes, is closely monitored, assessed and evaluated on an on-going basis by INEA's technical field teams, programme facilitators and learners themselves through a combination of class observations, final examinations at the end of each module and student self-evaluation. In order to facilitate student self-evaluation, for example, INEA has developed standardised instruments such as questionnaires which guide learners through the process of assessing not only their learning progress and achievements but also the teaching methods and the overall impact of the programme on their lives. Additionally, external professionals are also engaged by INEA on an annual basis to undertake summative evaluations of both the student learning outcomes and the impact of the programme on literacy and community development. To date, several external evaluations have been undertaken by various experts (see sources below). Together, these programme evaluation and assessment processes feed into the national information system, the Automated System for Monitoring and Assessment (SASA-I), "which aims to collect reliable data on the progress of the adults who enter the INEA programmes" with a view of, among other things, facilitating the certification or accreditation of learners and future planning.

### Impact

As established by several evaluation studies, the BLLP/MIB has created alternative and viable learning opportunities for indigenous peoples. In so doing, the programme has played (and continues to play) a critical role in combating the scourge of illiteracy and cultivating a culture of learning among indigenous peoples as well as in promoting social empowerment, economic development and poverty alleviation within indigenous communities. More specifically, the major impacts of the programme include:

- **Creation of educational opportunities:** since its inception in 2007, the BLLP/MIB has created an alternative route for about 90,474 indigenous learners (92% of whom have been women) in gaining access to basic literacy and life skills training. As such, the programme is making a major contribution to improving levels of literacy among indigenous peoples as well as in promoting the development of literate environments in their communities;
- **Social Integration:** being a bilingual programme, the BLLP/MIB also enables learners to engage

more equitably with mainstream Mexican society by enabling them to read, write and speak in Spanish;

- **Social empowerment and community development:** the BLLP/MIB has been a major vehicle for empowering traditionally disadvantaged and marginalised indigenous communities. This is particularly the case for women who are often disadvantaged both within their local communities and at the national level. Hence, by equipping such groups with functional skills, the BLLP/MIB empowers them to be self-reliant, to exercise their rights and to participate in the development of their communities, all of which enhances their self-esteem, confidence and living standards. The programme has also empowered parents to proactively participate in the education of their children, as one participant testified: "(...) I have two children and now I can help them with homework at school. So this way, they will not feel embarrassed because of their mom". In addition, the programme has also empowered adults to be less dependent on others in undertaking everyday activities such as writing and reading letters: "[...] since I was a child my parents would ask me to take care of the cows in the countryside, so there I grew up and I couldn't go to the school. [...] When I started (to learn), I didn't know even how to grab the pencil, letters were very difficult to me but little by little I could do it. I now know how to write my name well, and to sign, I know the numbers. [...] I like to read every kind of paper that I reach or somebody gives me. I like to know what it says".
- The BLLP/MIB has been a major catalyst in the development of indigenous languages which, in turn, has improved literacy rates among indigenous peoples. This phenomenon is exemplified by the formation of 51 small technical groups which are currently engaged in the development of relevant teaching-learning materials in indigenous languages within the 15 participating states and two others. Given that most indigenous languages had only existed in oral form, it can be concluded that the institutionalisation of the BLLP/MIB has been a major force that has promoted the development of indigenous languages in written form. In light of this, INEA was awarded the 2011 UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize for this programme (more information is available at: <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/education-building-blocks/literacy/literacy-prizes/2011/>).

### Challenges

Despite its major contributions towards the development of indigenous communities as noted, the BLLP/MIB is also encumbered by numerous challenges. These include:



- Inadequate support from the government: notwithstanding the government’s public statements regarding the need to facilitate development in indigenous communities in order to enable them to catch up with the rest of Mexican society, governmental support in this endeavour has generally been inadequate. Thus, within the education sector, the State has also been rather lethargic in funding programmes such as the BLLP/MIB that aim to create sustainable educational opportunities for the traditionally disadvantaged communities. Therefore the implementation of the BLLP/MIB is encumbered by the lack of financial and human resources due to limited State support;
- The lack of adequate funding has also prevented INEA from hiring highly qualified facilitators; as these demand higher remuneration; as well as from undertaking intensive research on indigenous languages. This has, in turn, affected the quality of training provided to learners and INEA’s capacity to extend the programme to other States.
- Since indigenous languages continue to be marginalised at the national level, there is little incentive for people to participate in the programme (e.g. proficiency in one or several indigenous languages does not enhance one’s employment prospects because Spanish continues to be the only useful language).
- Although indigenous peoples’ perceptions on modern education are changing, some people still place little value on education and therefore prefer to continue leading their ‘traditional’ lives. As such, BLLP/MIB field practitioners have often found it difficult to mobilise community members (especially men) to participate in the programme and most importantly, to continue learning once enrolled in the programme.
- Most learners face challenges in mastering Spanish and therefore cannot proceed beyond MIBES 1.

### Lessons Learned

Over the past few years of implementing the BLLP, several critical lessons have been learnt. These include:

- The promotion of bilingual educational programmes expands the educational opportunities available to minority groups and thus enables the State to achieve the central goals of education for all (EFA).
- Non-formal educational programmes act as a critical catalyst for rural development and social empowerment.
- To be viable and sustainable, bilingual educational programmes must be adapted not only to the needs of the communities concerned but also to the goals and vision of the entire state.
- The use of learners’ respective mother tongues as well as relating learning practices and themes to

their culture and everyday experiences plays a critical role in enhancing indigenous peoples’ ability to grasp more complex literacy skills. With regard to the former, a BLLP/MIB beneficiary testified that, “*I am a peasant from Cuilapan Guerrero, I like a lot INEA’s programme, literacy in mother tongue because I understand more my facilitator’s explanation. Besides, I understand other things more than before about my own Nahuatl language*”. As such, intensive research and formalisation of local languages is a critical prerequisite for the success and sustainability of bilingual educational programmes.

- The proactive involvement of critical stakeholders involved in indigenous issues is central to the success and sustainability of bilingual educational programmes.
- Bilingual educational programmes are a critical vehicle for cultural preservation as well as for social mobilisation, integration and cohesion within multi-ethnic societies,
- Engaging locals as programme promoters and facilitators enhances the potential success of bilingual non-formal educational programmes not only because local facilitators can effectively communicate with learners but also because they motivate their family and friends to aspire to achieve similar levels of educational success,
- Formal accreditation of learning motivates learners to continue learning.

### Sustainability

The long-term sustainability of the BLLP/MIB hinges on several critical factors including:

- The active involvement of a wide range of stakeholders. More specifically, the Federal Government has made practical commitments to fund basic education programmes, particularly those that address the needs of the traditionally disadvantaged population groups such as indigenous communities. In light of this, the federal government is currently contributing more than 50% of the USD 6.8 million annual budget of the BLLP. In addition, INEA has also nurtured strong institutional networks with several specialised and interested stakeholders (see above) who can be trusted to promote the programme on a long-term basis.
- INEA has developed and adopted an integrated curriculum that specifically addresses participants’ basic and multiple existential needs. As result, the programme continues to be attractive to youth and adult learners.

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## TURKEY

### Family Literacy Programmes

#### Implementing Organization

Mother-Child Education Foundation (AÇEV)

#### Language of Instruction

Turkish

#### Programme Partners

UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDP, European Commission, World Bank, government (through the Ministries of National Education and Health), media groups (TRT, NTV, Kanal D) and local NGOs.

#### Date of Inception

1993

#### Context and Background

Turkey has made impressive progress in the provision of access to education for all over the past few years. As of 2006, primary school attendance for children aged 6-15 years was 91%, while the total literacy rate for male and female youth and adults was 90% and 70% respectively. These gains are partly a result of the provision of public and free formal and non-formal education by the state. NGOs have also successfully complemented state education programmes.

Nonetheless, numerous challenges remain, particularly with regards to access to Early Childhood Education (ECE) and basic adult education for socially marginalised groups. Recent studies suggest that only 23%, 33.4% and 51% of children aged 3-6, 4-6 and 5-6 respectively benefit from ECE, while those in extremely marginalised communities have virtually no access to ECE at all since such services are often available in large cities. Furthermore, although the rate at which girls and women are accessing basic and higher education is on the increase, the gender disparity with regards to access to education remains significantly high in most marginalised communities due to long-standing socio-cultural practices such as early marriage or, in the case of poor families, the tendency to educate male rather than female children.

The continued neglect of ECE has long-term, negative impacts on the future development of the nation. Studies have demonstrated that lack of access to quality ECE in children's formative years undermines their psycho-social (cognitive, emotional, personality, etc.) development and, by extension, their potential to succeed in the education system. This, in turn, robs the nation of a critical mass of human capital necessary for development. In light of this, it is therefore

imperative to institutionalise ECE, particularly among socially marginalised groups.

However, for ECE programmes to be effective, efforts should also be made to develop adult literacy/education programmes in order to enhance parents' capacity to effectively perform their duties as the children's first educators as well as their ability to support their children in pursuing an education. Studies have also revealed that parents, particularly mothers, have a profound effect on the psycho-social development of children. As such, children with educated parents are more likely to receive positive support and, in turn, be higher educational achievers. In response to the gaps identified in the Turkish education system (especially the lack of ECE services) and the link between adult education, ECE and children's development, The Mother Child Education Foundation (AÇEV) – a national NGO founded in 1993 – instituted the integrated and intergenerational Family Literacy Programmes (FLPs) in an effort to provide universal access to education and thus combat structural social inequalities.

#### Family Literacy Programmes (FLPs)

FLPs are integrated and intergenerational programmes which provide families from poor and marginalised areas of Turkey with ECE and adult literacy/education training. Through the FLPs, AÇEV endeavours to:

- create equal opportunities for all citizens to gain access to education;
- provide socially disadvantaged people with access to low-cost, alternative early childhood and adult education (lifelong learning);
- promote family involvement in child education; and
- improve societal development and quality of life through family education and empowerment programmes.

Over the years and through concerted scientific research and strategic partnerships with local and international institutions of higher education, such as Harvard University and the Synergos Institute, AÇEV has refined the FLPs into its two main constituent components: ECE and adult education. These are in turn sub-divided as follows:

#### Early Childhood Education Programmes (ECEPs)

**Mother-Child Education Programme (MOCEP):** This is a home-based ECE (for children aged 5-6) and adult education programme which was initiated in 1993 (see below for details).

**Pre-school Parent Child Education Programme (PCPEP):** This scientifically-based training programme was initiated in 1999, and targets children attending state-run pre-schools and their parents. PCPEP aims to strengthen the curriculum and training strategies

used by existing state ECE programmes, as well as to support parent-school cooperations as a means of improving the effectiveness of ECE programmes. To this end, AÇEV provides pre-schools with ECE teaching-learning materials, while parents are provided with both literacy materials and training in order to empower them to effectively support their children's learning. It also facilitates teacher-parent networking through inclusive, monthly parent seminars.

**Pre-school Education Programme (PEP, since 1993):**

PEP is a scientifically-based, intensive pre-school programme lasting 9 weeks that targets children from exceptionally underprivileged communities or regions. It aims to support the holistic and psycho-social development of children in order to improve their educational achievements and social success. The programme trains children, parents and teachers.

### Adult Education Programmes

**Mother Support Programme (MSP, since 2003):**

MSP is a modular programme targeting mothers of children aged 3-11, providing them with training that increases their capacity to support the psycho-social development and well-being of their children. The programme lasts eight weeks and focuses on: positive child rearing; sexual reproductive health for mothers; ways of positive learning environments; and the importance of play. MSP is often facilitated by teachers, social workers and counsellors.

**Father Support Programme (FSP, since 1996):** The FSP evolved from the MSP (that is, at the request of MSP participants) and thus endeavours to promote holistic child development by improving the parenting skills of fathers of children aged 2-10 years.

**Family Letters Project and Parenting Seminars:**

These complement the MSP and FSP programmes.

**Functional Adult Literacy and Women's Support Programme (FALP):** FALP was initiated in 1995 and provides illiterate women with literacy and skills training (see below).

AÇEV also undertakes other literacy/educational advocacy initiatives, including the "7 Is Too Late" and the EU-funded "Raising Women: Reducing Gender Disparity in Education" campaigns, as well as educational TV and radio broadcasts.

Essentially, therefore, FLPs are primarily concerned with creating a social environment supportive of the holistic, psycho-social development of children by providing entire families with low-cost alternatives to formal education and training. Since its foundation and through the FLPs, AÇEV has trained 5,000 educators and served 411,000 children and their parents through face-to-face instruction. A further 36,000,000 people have benefited from TV and radio-based educational programmes and the production and distribution of educational materials. In addition, its advocacy campaigns have been instrumental in persuading the

government to introduce compulsory free education. AÇEV's approaches to education and training have proven so successful that FLPs have been adopted in other countries such as Belgium, Germany, France, Holland, Bahrain, Jordan and Palestine. In order to fully comprehend the interconnectedness and contribution of the constituent projects of FLPs towards combating illiteracy, this report analyses MOCEP and FALP in greater detail.

### The Mother-Child Education Programme (MOCEP)

MOCEP is an intergenerational, culturally-sensitive and home-based ECE and adult education/literacy development programme which targets socially disadvantaged children (aged 5 to 6 years) with limited access to formal pre-school education and their mothers, many of whom are illiterate or semi-literate. It emerged from two decades of scientific and action-based research undertaken by AÇEV with professional assistance from Boğaziçi University. MOCEP was developed in response to the lack of pre-school services in marginalised communities and thus seeks to foster the holistic, psycho-social (cognitive, emotional, social, physical, etc.) development of pre-school children through appropriate ECE and training. As a home-based programme, MOCEP was developed using an environmental approach to child development and education. This approach recognises the critical role of children's social environment in fostering optimal child psycho-social development. As such, MOCEP endeavours to support families (mothers) and child development through appropriate literacy training.

### Aims and Objectives

MOCEP aims to:

- provide access to ECE opportunities to underprivileged children;
- foster optimal psycho-social development among children in order to enhance their preparedness for advanced education (primary, secondary and tertiary);
- instil mothers with positive parenting attitudes and the skills they need to facilitate the holistic psycho-social development and long-term social wellbeing of their children; and
- create a home environment that helps children gain an education.

In order to achieve these goals as well as to be effective and sustainable, MOCEP focuses on three interlinked and theme-based training areas:

- **Mother Empowerment or Home Enrichment Programme:** This programme focuses on the role of mothers in children's psycho-social development and therefore aims to enhance their capacity to create a positive home environment which is



conducive to optimal child development. This is fostered through training in literacy, child-rearing practices, conflict management, health education and sexual education.

- **Reproductive Health and Family Planning:** This component increases mothers' awareness of their reproductive systems, rights, the principles of safe motherhood and various family planning methods.
- **Cognitive Education Programme (CEP):** CEP endeavours to empower mothers by providing them with the skills needed to support the cognitive development of their children and prepare them for enrolment into primary school. In other words, it enhances the role of mothers as first teachers/educators of children, training them to develop their children's basic literacy skills, ability to recognise geometric shapes, and listening and communication skills. For example, mothers are trained to use story books to foster language, critical thinking, comprehension and communication skills among children. This also gives mothers the opportunity to consolidate their own literacy skills.

### Programme Implementation: Approaches and Methodologies

MOCEP is implemented by AÇEV in collaboration with the Ministry of National Education (MoNE, General Directorate of Apprenticeship and Non-formal Education). Learning is conducted at Adult/Public Education Centres (A/PECs) across Turkey by a network of teachers and social workers who are trained in ECE and adult literacy/education by AÇEV and MoNE. The facilitators are also responsible for managing and coordinating centre-based learning activities. AÇEV provides trainers with ongoing and on-the-job follow-up training, mentoring and supervision in order to enhance programme effectiveness.

Mothers attend weekly literacy classes for a period of 25 weeks (six months). In addition, programme facilitators undertake home visits to provide further individualised literacy learning assistance to participating families and consolidate mothers' acquired parenting and literacy skills. This, in turn, increases their ability to act as the first educators of their children.

Although different teaching-learning approaches are employed, MOCEP emphasises interactive and participatory methodologies in order to encourage learners to learn from each other. For example, for the Reproductive Health and Family Planning and Mother Enrichment programmes, groups of 20 to 25 mothers attend weekly, three-hour adult education sessions during which they engage in active and socially-relevant group discussions and role plays. Mothers are also expected to apply their acquired skills in real-life situations (i.e. in the home), a process which enables

AÇEV to monitor programme effectiveness through feedback provided during class discussions.

Additionally, mothers are encouraged to participate in the learning process (both in classes and at home) and thus to assist their children in various learning activities including book reading and story telling; letter or word recognition through sounds and images; recognition of colours and shapes; and discussion-based problem-solving skills. These activities stimulate intergenerational learning and positive parent-child communication and relations. Furthermore they provide children with emotional security and the scaffolding necessary for progressive development and effective learning. Overall, encouraging mothers to learn together with their children enhances the literacy skills acquisition process for both.

### Impact / Achievements of MOCEP

MOCEP is one of the most successful components of the Family Literacy Programmes and has, as a result, attracted significant attention as an innovative and effective ECE and adult literacy/education programme. Accordingly, several academic and evaluation studies have been undertaken to assess how the programme has contributed towards child and adult literacy development and harness the results to learn from and improve the programme. In addition, the adoption of the approach by other nations provides further evidence of its effectiveness and adaptability to different contexts. Evaluation studies have demonstrated that MOCEP has been critical in fostering optimal child psycho-social development, as well as child and adult literacy. Key indicators of the impact of MOCEP are as follows:

- To date, MOCEP has trained 900 teachers and reached a total of 237,000 mothers and children, of whom 28,568 benefited in 2007 alone. Each year, the programmes targets around 45,000 mothers and children.
- Several studies have revealed significant differences in psycho-social development between children whose mothers had participated in MOCEP and those who had not. Furthermore, they have shown that children who participate in MOCEP together with their mothers achieve higher scores in intelligence and aptitude (IQ) tests and standardised school examinations, and were therefore better prepared for school. In addition, they also demonstrate significantly higher levels of positive social and personality development (e.g. positive interpersonal relations, good communication and creative skills, more self-confidence and a greater ability to integrate into the school environment). Most importantly, the school retention or completion rate was significantly higher (87%) among children from families that had participated in MOCEP compared to non-participants (67%). Overall, these

indicators demonstrate that ECE and adult education programmes foster children's psycho-social development and help prepare them for continuing education. Most importantly, they also indicate the capacity of ECE programmes to mitigate the distressing effects that socially disadvantaged environments have on child development and learning.

- MOCEP has also assisted mothers as child care givers and educators. MOCEP graduates display better child-rearing practices, such as improved parent-to-child interactions and learning assistance, than those who received no MOCEP training. This in turn has fostered positive parent-child relationships and, in turn, holistic child development.
- Trained mothers displayed greater self-confidence than mothers who had received no MOCEP training and reported that patterns of interaction with their husbands had changed. They enjoyed a greater degree of communication and role-sharing with their spouses, and were more likely to make joint decisions on matters such as birth control and child discipline. It was also found that trained women enjoyed a higher status in the family. This indicates the importance of the programme in further stimulating positive and functional family relationships.

### Functional Adult Literacy and Women's Support Programme (FALP)

Women constitute two thirds of the more than five million illiterate adults in Turkey. Functional illiteracy and the lack of livelihood skills severely restrict women's ability to participate in family and community development or help their children gain an education. In light of this, AÇEV initiated the Functional Adult Literacy and Women's Support Programme (FALP) in 1995. FALP is a functional literacy development programme which targets illiterate women (aged 15 years and above) living in socially disadvantaged (low-income) communities. The programme is provided free of charge and provides women with literacy skills training designed to enable them to participate in the socio-economic development processes of their families and communities and thereby improve their social standing. It also aims to raise women's awareness of the socio-political and economic rights and issues that directly affect them as women and parents. To this end, the FALP focuses on the following thematic areas:

- Basic literacy and numeracy.
- Civic education (citizenship, gender relations, human rights, peace-building, and women's rights with regard to inheritances and property).
- Health education (reproductive health, family planning, child care, nutrition, first aid and sanitation).
- Life skills.

FALP has been strengthened by the inclusion of the EU-funded project entitled "Raising Women: Reducing Gender Disparity in Education".

### Implementation of FALP

The implementation of FALP involves the active collaboration of various actors, including MoNE, NGOs and local communities. This collaboration has been instrumental in enabling AÇEV to extend FALP's coverage nationwide, as it has enabled it to reduce operational costs by drawing on both private and public resources, such as the buildings where classes are conducted. FALP is approved and certified by the MoNE and as a result, AÇEV offers literacy certificates to adult learners who have successfully completed a course of training. This has provided women with an added incentive to participate in FALP.

### Training of Trainers

FALP training activities are conducted by Volunteer Literacy Trainers (VLT), all of whom must have completed high school. AÇEV provides VLTs with intensive training in adult literacy over a period of two-and-a-half weeks. Adult educators also receive on-going technical support and mentoring from AÇEV. In order to boost their working morale, VLTs receive certificates (for adult educators) which are certified by the MoNE. To date, AÇEV has collaborated with 3,090 volunteer trainers in the context of its literacy training programmes.

### Teaching-Learning Approaches and Methods

FALP learners are mobilised and recruited through the collective efforts of local primary schools, village leaders and/or Public Education Centres. Thereafter, learners are divided into groups of 20 to 25 and attend literacy classes three times a week over a four-month period. Literacy classes last three hours for a total of 120 learning hours. 80 hours of supplementary classes are also provided. In addition to the formal classes, AÇEV has also initiated the Reading Days Project (RDP) for FALP graduates in order to reinforce and further develop women's acquired literacy skills. The RDP is also intended to encourage women to continue learning independently. VLTs assist women participating in RDPs by providing them with additional literacy tutorials at weekends.

Most of the teaching and learning methods employed by FALP are participatory and interactive. They encourage learners to participate actively in lessons, which are structured non-hierarchically and designed to enable learners to draw on their cultural backgrounds and prior knowledge. FALP volunteer teachers differ from their counterparts in the formal education system. They act as guides whose responsibility it is

to make the learning process as easy as possible for participants, and to maintain equality within the group. The programme is divided into 25 topic-based units spread over 120 hours and the teaching-learning approach used has a number of key characteristics:

- FALP emphasises the link between the characters (orthography) and sounds (phonology) of the Turkish language – a significantly different methodology than that used in mainstream programmes.
- FALP encourages discussion, reasoning, inferencing and sequencing, thereby fostering critical thinking and comprehension.
- FALP attempts to make literacy functional and meaningful to participants' lives and includes exercises based on everyday activities, such as taking notes or reading bus numbers, price labels or user manuals for household appliances.
- FALP has a unique "Women's Support Component", consisting of 25 topic-based units that increase women's awareness of their rights and issues relating to health and hygiene, communication and child development.
- Interaction between instructors and beneficiaries is based on mutual respect and trust; hence it is important for instructors to familiarise themselves with their participants' characteristics, needs, goals and aspirations.

### Teaching-Learning Materials

The basic teaching and learning manuals have been produced and revised by professionals over the years. These materials are intended to progressively foster the development of literacy and comprehension skills among adults. FALP is based on three books that have been developed to complement each other:

- **Teacher Handbook:** a highly-structured handbook for tutors that details the aims of the course and the activities that will take place in class.
- **Teacher's Manual for Reading:** a background book that explains the programme methodology and the activities used.
- **Student Workbook:** used alongside the Teacher Handbook and includes pictures, reading passages and exercises for the participants.
- **Other supplementary reading and arithmetic materials (e.g. newspaper and magazine articles):** give participants more opportunity to practice reading, writing and arithmetic skills.

### Impact/Achievements of FALP

Evaluation studies have revealed that FALP has been instrumental in combating illiteracy among adult women. To date, over 85,000 young girls and women have directly benefited and most have developed better reading, writing and critical thinking skills than graduates of mainstream adult literacy courses. Ad-

ditionally, participating in FALP has improved female learners' social status, autonomy, self-esteem and family cohesion. As a result, women are increasingly participating in decisions, family matters and community-building as the following testimonies reveal:

*"I wouldn't go to the parent meetings. I was very ashamed in front of the other parents as I couldn't sign the attendance list. There was a parent meeting at my son's school today. As the meeting finished, they asked us to write our names and sign. I was proud to have written it. I was very happy. My friends noticed that my hands were trembling from the excitement."*

*"As I got on the bus, I would shyly ask the driver if the bus passed through where I wanted to go. I would never know at which stop I should get off. Now I can read the bus numbers. I can go wherever I want, without asking anyone."*

*"I couldn't go to the hospital alone before. As I couldn't read, I couldn't find the department of the hospital that I needed to visit. I was afraid to ask... Now I can find the hospital departments without asking anyone. First I check the entrance to see which floor I need and which way I should go, and then when I get to the right place, I read the door plates."*

*"My greatest wish was to learn phone numbers. When somebody gave me their number I couldn't write it and I felt miserable. Yesterday I got a phone call. They wanted to talk with my husband. I said that he wasn't at home and wrote their phone number down. I am so happy."*

*"Before, I couldn't go out alone. When I went somewhere, I had to take someone with me. Now I can go everywhere by myself. I gained self-confidence. My son joined the army. I came to this course so I could write to him. Yesterday I sent my first letter to him. He will be very surprised. I am very happy."*

FALP has also enabled women to actively participate in and contribute towards the development of their families and communities, as well as to lead more independent lives. In addition, women are more enlightened about their reproductive health and civic rights, and more aware of the need to provide their daughters with access to education. Overall, FALP has improved women's self-confidence, self-esteem and status within their communities.

### Challenges

One of the difficulties faced was the low number of available volunteers, especially in the small provinces of East and South-East Anatolia where girls receive little schooling and the number of high-school graduates to volunteer for the programme is therefore limited. Women are also prevented from volunteering for the programme due to cultural beliefs and practices which discourage women from venturing outside the

home. Due to a shortage of manpower, it is therefore difficult to satisfy the huge demand from learners.

In smaller provinces, the programme is experiencing difficulty in securing adequate learning spaces (buildings).

The definition of literacy has proven problematic: in Turkey, literacy courses are designed exclusively to teach basic skills to illiterates. Even if (complete) illiteracy is eradicated, therefore, efforts to target semi-literates or people with low levels of literacy will continue to represent a significant challenge.

There are also problems related to effective learning. The regulatory 120-hour course duration (stipulated by the MoNE) remains a limitation for a number of reasons. The recommended time needed to develop effective literacy skills is 250-300 hours. Furthermore, participants often live in difficult conditions, with minimal opportunities for study or support at home, limited one-to-one tutoring opportunities and few post-literacy activities.

### Sustainability

AÇEV remains committed to providing disadvantaged women and girls with educational opportunities. It is also committed to reaching larger numbers of illiterates and is working to employ television as a new and important teaching medium. AÇEV will also continue to work with the Ministry of Education to develop and improve national education policies with regard to literacy.

Furthermore, AÇEV is working on improving volunteer recruitment and retention strategies through awareness-raising and marketing campaigns. In order to reach more illiterates, television will be used as an additional teaching tool, as well as a number of other models that employ distance and face-to-face learning techniques. AÇEV also aims to intensify its post-literacy activities and increase the variety of volunteer work, one-to-one tutoring and reading groups.

### Lessons Learned

Mutually beneficial partnerships with academics, public and private groups are essential to improving adult literacy programmes as well as maximizing resource usage. AÇEV collaborates with public and private bodies to reach a larger number of beneficiaries. AÇEV's primary partner is the Ministry of Education's Non-formal and Apprenticeship Directorate, which provides certification, administrative support and physical space. AÇEV also partners with local NGOs who provide volunteers to be trained by AÇEV, physical space for courses or mobilise beneficiaries and communities. International and national NGOs and private companies provide funding for the implementation of courses. By tapping into existing resources such as public facilities and volunteer training initi-

atives, AÇEV has been able to reduce its operational costs without compromising programme quality.

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## TURKEY

# Functional Adult Literacy and Women's Support Programme (FALP)

### Date of Inception

1995

### Operational Area

Turkey

### Implementing Organisation

Mother Child Education Foundation (AÇEV)

### Target Groups

Women with limited literacy skills

### Language of Instruction

Turkish

### Thematic Focus

Literacy and numeracy skills development for women

### Background and Context

Presently, 3 million adults over the age of 15 in Turkey, the majority being women, cannot even read or write their own names. These individuals often cannot take part in many daily activities or meet their basic social needs. Denigrating markers are often ascribed to them.

Increasing the literacy rate has been one of the most important goals of societal development since the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1928. The literacy rate for those aged six years and older in Turkey is 95.78% (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2013). While literacy rates are 91% and 98.3%, for female and male adults respectively, there are still those on the fringes of society not being served.

In addition to the adults who cannot read or write, there are 3.8 million adults in Turkey who have no elementary school education, 70% of whom are women. These data demonstrate the current basic adult literacy levels are still inadequate to realize the right to basic education for all Turkish citizens.

In Turkey, Adult Education Centres under the Directorate of Lifelong Learning of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) are the responsible institutions delivering the two levels of adult literacy courses. The first level adult literacy programme targets adults with no literacy skills. Conversely, the second level adult literacy programme targets adults who are semi-literate. The examination administered at the second level also serves as the primary education examination. In both programmes, literacy and numeracy

are considered together. Each of the two courses offer 120 hours of instruction.

AÇEV's mission is to make a lasting contribution to society and to improve the quality of life through education. In its two areas of expertise, early childhood and adult education, AÇEV develops and implements various training programmes and projects both within Turkey and abroad. To date, AÇEV programmes are still actively implemented in Germany, Bahrain, Belgium, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and the United Kingdom for Turkish migrants.

AÇEV is guided by three fundamental tenets:

- Equal opportunity in education for all;
- Learning is a lifelong process that must begin in early childhood;
- The child as well as his or her immediate caregivers must be educated and supported.

In line with these fundamental beliefs and the extent of illiteracy in Turkey, AÇEV developed the Functional Adult Literacy Programme (FALP) in 1995 with a comprehensive assessment of current literacy programme methodologies and implementation strategies. A team of academics and practitioners developed the programme as an effective alternative to available literacy courses to principally target the largest group of non-literates: girls and women. In 1995, AÇEV signed an agreement with the previously established MoNE Directorate of Non Formal Education and Apprenticeship (now the Directorate of Lifelong Learning) where all literacy activities would be conducted under the framework of this partnership. The programme began in Istanbul and has been subsequently implemented in 25 of the 81 provinces of Turkey between 1995 and 2013.

FALP targets women with limited literacy skills aged 15 and older. However, the programme has also benefited a number of men, especially those who have conscripted into the Turkish Military Forces. To date, 125,000 individuals have benefited from FALP.

### Programme Strategy

**Operational Structures and Mechanisms:** FALP is the first adult literacy programme in Turkey developed with a scientific base by a non-governmental organization. FALP aims to develop literacy and arithmetic skills. Additionally, the programme seeks to enhance participants' comprehension, interpretation and critical thinking skills. It is the hope that individuals can utilize literacy in meaningful ways that contribute to their welfare and personal development.

FALP courses have a 120 hour curriculum equivalent to the basic literacy courses of the MoNE. Participants meet in groups for 3 to 4 hours, three times a week, over the course of 3 to 4 months. A distinguishing feature of FALP is its facilitation. The programme is implemented by volunteers who participate in a three week training seminar provided by AÇEV trainers.



Upon successful completion, volunteers are officially certified as literacy instructors by AÇEV/MoNE.

**Pedagogical Methodology:** FALP has a number of distinguishing features designed to benefit the target group of underprivileged women and girls. FALP instruction integrates important issues, such as family and work life. Participants are encouraged to actively participate by expressing their opinions. In this supportive environment, participants are encouraged to bring their own cultural richness and knowledge to the group. The programme is prepared as 25 topical units. The following delineates further several programme attributes:

1. FALP takes full advantage of the phonology and orthography of the Turkish Language. This methodology differs to what mainstream programmes deliver.
2. FALP emphasizes bolstering critical thinking and comprehension skills through active discussions, and reasoning, inferring and sequencing exercises.
3. FALP attempts to make literacy meaningful in the lives of its participants by espousing practical exercises, such as reading bus numbers, prices, or taking notes.
4. FALP is sensitive to the needs of course participants. In addition to emphasizing women's empower-

ment, programme design has been appropriately tailored to address issues of rural-urban migration.

5. FALP has a unique Women's Support Component of 25 topics designed to increase awareness of women's and human rights, health and hygiene, and communication and child development.
6. Interaction between instructors and beneficiaries are based on mutual respect and trust. Instructors need to be familiar with the characteristics of the participants, their needs, goals and desires.
7. Programme participants are encouraged to work in cooperation with fellow classmates to create a mutually supportive environment.

### Development of Training and Learning Materials

FALP learning materials have traditionally been developed by a team of academicians and instructors. These materials were originally developed by Dr. Banu Oney, Prof. Aydin Durgunoglu and Hilal Kuscul in 1995 and has since undergone six major revisions and intermittent minor revisions, based on pedagogical trends and realities from the field.

FALP is based on three complementary books:

1. Teacher Handbook – a highly structured trainer manual detailing the targets and activities that will take place in classes.
2. Teacher's Manual to Reading – a background primer explaining the programme methodology and activities.
3. Student Workbook – a parallel book to the Teacher Handbook which includes pictures, reading passages and exercises for the participants.

Supplementary materials are also available for additional opportunities to practice reading, writing and arithmetic.

### Monitoring and Evaluation Mechanisms

One of FALP's strongest assets is its monitoring and supervision system. Volunteer instructors are continuously supported by field coordinators through course visits and evaluation meetings. Each new volunteer is observed at least 3 times throughout the duration of the programme, and at least two group evaluation meetings are arranged. Continuous monitoring ensures technical support to volunteers, increases motivation, supports course formation and provides a feedback mechanism for programme revisions.

In addition to site monitoring, the programme has also undergone external evaluation studies (Öney & Durgunoğlu, 1997; Kagitçibaşı, Goksen & Gulgöz 1999; Durgunoğlu 1998; Gülgöz 2001). These studies have found that participants of FALP have higher scores in reading, writing and critical thinking skills than mainstream adult literacy courses. Results have also suggested that FALP encourages social integration, positive self-concept and family cohesion of women enrolled.

### Human Resource Management

FALP has a core education team of three education specialists working in headquarters. These specialists are principally responsible for planning, implementing and monitoring FALP activities. Twelve master trainers support this team in training seminars and supervision activities and 24 field coordinators serve as direct supervisors of volunteers in individual provinces. Volunteer instructors are required to have at least a high school diploma, although prior teaching experience is not required.

Master trainers and field coordinators are part time semi-professionals. They are often selected among successful volunteer instructors. Master trainers undergo both training seminars and on the job training.

Pre-service field coordinator training occurs in two levels: volunteer and field management training and supervision training. Volunteers receive three weeks of training on the programme's philosophy, technical

curriculum, field orientation and communication skills.

### Public Mobilization and Awareness Raising Activities

Raising awareness on literacy and mobilising support is a significant part of FALP activities. Posters, brochures, radio and TV programming have been utilised to recruit beneficiaries, volunteers, and galvanize communities to support literacy. Community briefings and information sessions are held periodically to promote this awareness among local stakeholders and leaders.

### Programme Impact

**Programme Distinction:** FALP was created as an alternative to official MoNE programmes in Turkey. FALP is a state-recognized literacy programme which is a distinction for an NGO.

**Improvements in Learners Lives:** FALP has accumulated a library of field notes, trainer reports, supervisor notes, diaries of beneficiaries, research reports and evaluation studies which provide comprehensive details of impact of FALP on beneficiaries. According to these documents, graduates have greater agency to participate in society and be apprised of their rights.

FALP's methodology has also had an impact on literacy policies of the MoNE, by introducing new programmes similar to FALP that employ letter-sound correspondences and other aspects of developing reading skills.

The programme has created a number of links across other educational and development engagements, particularly in the area of reproductive health. FALP is integrated in the EU project, Literacy for Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights (September 2001 – August 2003). This project was aimed to increase awareness of reproductive health and improve health practices and utilization of services in their community.

FALP is also implemented in the EU Project to Achieve Gender Equality in Education and Social Participation (January 2005 – December 2007). The project's objective was to develop a community-focused model designed to reduce the number of illiterate women and increase the participation of women in private and social decision-making mechanisms.

### Lessons Learned

**Mobilising Stakeholders:** AÇEV has made strong efforts in the field to involve community leaders, public authorities and NGOs. FALP has the largest network of partners and supporters. These efforts have paid off as FALP is the most widely implemented literacy programme by an NGO.



**Policy Implications:** FALP has been instrumental in increasing the official duration of literacy courses from 90 contact hours to 120 contact hours. After demonstrating the programme's gains over the years, MoNE enacted the 120 hour requirement. This stipulation responds to the need to provide adequate time that is conducive to participant growth and progress.

**Adapting to Learner Needs:** After receiving feedback from the field, it was concluded that there was a need for more information on women related topics. In 2002, the Women's Support Component was designed and included in FALP. The component is unique in that it seeks to increase women's awareness of women's and human rights, health and hygiene, communication and child development.

**Civic Involvement:** Nobody would have thought it possible that AÇEV could work with volunteers as instructors. In 1996, AÇEV received accreditation from MoNE for its facilitator orientation and training and was able to train almost 4,000 trainers up to the date. FALP is the first programme authorized by MoNE to train volunteers as literacy instructors, promoting volunteerism and civic responsibility.

## Sustainability

**Partners:** Mutually beneficial partnerships with academics, public and private groups help to maximize resources. AÇEV collaborates with public and private bodies to reach a larger number of beneficiaries. AÇEV's primary partner is the Lifelong Learning Directorate of MoNE who provides certification and administrative support. AÇEV partners with local NGOs who may provide volunteers to be trained by AÇEV, physical space for courses or mobilise beneficiaries and communities. International and national NGOs or private companies provide funding for implementation of courses.

**Programme Extensions:** FALP has also developed FALP II, a post literacy programme for graduates of FALP to improve reading and writing skills in preparation for further learning. Additionally, FALP's "Reading Days" project allows volunteers to work with graduates of FALP to help improve and retain literacy skills, and maintain the social support network redolent of FALP participation.

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# UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

## Prison Family Learning Programme

### Implementing Organisation

Best Start for Families (BSfF)

### Language of Instruction

English

### Programme Partners

Learning Unlimited, Big Lottery, Camden and Islington Family Learning, and National Offender Management Service through HMP Holloway & Pentonville Prisons

### Date of Inception

2008

### Context and Background

Although the UK has achieved near universal literacy rates across all age groups (see above) due, in large part, to strong State support of education over many decades (see <http://www.unesco.org/uil/litbase/?menu=15&country=GB&programme=89>), levels of literacy skills among prisoners are still lower than among the general population. Indeed, studies by the Prison Reform Trust (PRT) and the Basic Skills Agency (BSA) have revealed that 60% of all prisoners in the UK have problems with basic literacy, and 40% have severe literacy problems. Similarly, the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) recently reported that 80% of prisoners' literacy skills (writing, reading and numeracy) are at or below the level expected of an 11-year-old child and 50% of prisoners have no professional/vocational qualifications (Jones 2010; Clark and Dugdale 2008). The lack of basic literacy and vocational skills among prisoners – most of whom are from low socio-economic backgrounds – is a cause of great concern among stakeholders because it perpetuates the existing socio-economic inequalities in the country, prevents effective communication between prisoners and their families and slows down or even precludes the prisoners' rehabilitation and their reintegration into society once released from prison, all of which leads to high levels of offending and re-offending.

Given the fact that the socio-economic costs of crime are extremely high and the belief that the provision of quality literacy education to prisoners is potentially one of the most effective forms of prisoner rehabilitation and crime prevention, Best Start for

Families (BSfF) instituted the Prison Family Learning Programme (PFLP) in August 2011.

### Prison Family Learning Programme (PFLP)

The PFLP is an integrated, intergenerational and in-prison non-formal educational programme which primarily targets imprisoned mothers and their children. The programme was previously implemented by the London Language and Literacy Unit (LLU+), based at the London South Bank University until August 2011 when the university closed down the LLU+. Following this closure, former employees of the LLU+ formed the BSfF and Learning Unlimited (LU) in order to continue implementing the PFLP. The PFLP is currently being put into practice at the HMP Holloway and Pentonville prisons by the BSfF with technical and financial support from Learning Unlimited and various organisations (see above).

The primary goal of the PFLP is to create quality family learning opportunities for imprisoned mothers and their children. Accordingly, the BSfF has designed and developed an integrated programme curriculum which covers a wide range of themes or topics that specifically address the learning needs and interests of parents and their children. The themes covered during the Mothers-only learning sessions (see below) include:

- functional literacy (e.g. numeracy and writing of poems, prose etc.);
- good parent practices (based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs and including the importance of praise, positive behaviour and discipline; managing difficult behaviour);
- the role of the parent in supporting a child's literacy development (i.e. how children learn to read, how children are taught to read, individual learning styles etc.); and
- book making.

The themes or topics covered during family learning sessions (see below) vary greatly since the primary aim is to enable parents and children to interact and learn together. The themes are therefore tailored to cover the learning needs and interests of adult and child-learners and are also highly interactive and educative. Thus, as elaborated below, the common themes covered during family learning sessions include:

- basic literacy;
- making photograph frames using lolly sticks, cards and glue;
- composing and writing poems, rhymes etc.;
- developing a theme-based quiz for class discussion;
- games/sport (including table tennis, table football, swimming etc.); and
- art: role plays/drama, song and dance.

## Aims and Objectives

As an integrated and intergenerational educational programme, the PFLP has various aims and objectives. In particular, the programme aims to:

- create quality and sustainable learning opportunities for imprisoned mothers and their children in order to enhance their literacy skills and relationship or family bonds;
- enable imprisoned mothers to continue to proactively participate in the education and development of their children despite their imprisonment;
- enhance positive communication between imprisoned mothers and their children;
- nurture positive literacy, life and social skills among prisoners in order to facilitate their effective rehabilitation as well as to reduce the rate of re-offending and combat the scourge of crime;
- empower prisoners to effectively reintegrate into their families and communities after their release from prison; and
- empower imprisoned mothers and their children to improve their literacy skills.

## Institutional Arrangements and Partnerships

In order to facilitate the efficient and sustainable implementation of the PFLP, the BSfF has established functional partnerships with several institutions, including: Learning Unlimited, Big Lottery, Camden and Islington Family Learning, National Offender Management Service through HMP Holloway and HMP Pentonville Prisons. These institutions provide the BSfF with critical technical and financial support necessary for the efficient and effective implementation of the PFLP. For instance, Camden and Islington Family Learning and the National Offender Management Service are currently assisting the BSfF with all the financial support needed to implement the entire PFLP while Learning Unlimited plays a vital role in the training and mentoring of programme facilitators, in monitoring and managing the implementation of the programme and in the production of appropriate teaching-learning materials. In addition, prison officers from HMP Holloway and HMP Pentonville Prisons also assist BSfF in supervising programme facilitators during classes as well as in managing in-prison learning groups. Support from these institutions has been and continues to be fundamental for the efficient implementation of the PFLP.

## Development of the Curriculum and Teaching-Learning Materials

As noted above, the PFLP curriculum and teaching-learning materials such as illustrative posters, poems, rhymes, etc. were designed and developed by BSfF and Learning Unlimited with technical support from various institutional partners. Programme beneficiaries (prisoners) were also actively consulted and

involved during the process of designing and developing the programme curriculum and teaching-learning materials. For instance, imprisoned mothers are encouraged to make personalised poem and song books for their children and, in so doing they not only improve their literacy skills and play an active role in their children's education but they also strengthen their relationships with their children. The strategy of involving mothers in the development of the curriculum and learning materials also helps to determine their learning needs and interests in order to ensure that these are appropriately addressed.

In addition, the results of programme evaluations have also been used to review and update the curriculum and teaching-learning materials on an ongoing basis. The BSfF has also adopted and adapted teaching-learning materials that were developed by other organisations such as the LLU+ which used to implement a similar programme prior to September 2011. Essentially therefore, the development of the curriculum and teaching-learning materials is achieved through a participatory and consultative process involving all key stakeholders.

## Recruitment and Training of Facilitators

Whereas full-time programme facilitators or tutors were engaged to facilitate the practical implementation of the PFLP prior to mid-2011, currently programme facilitators and volunteers (some of whom are former prisoners) are employed on a part-time basis. All facilitators and volunteers are, nonetheless, required to possess recognisable professional qualifications and practical experience in non-formal education, especially in adult and early childhood education. In addition and in order to ensure the effective and sustainable implementation of the PFLP, the BSfF and LU also provide facilitators and volunteers with opportunities for professional advancement through regular and ongoing in-service training and mentoring in adult and early-childhood education as well as through participation in relevant conferences. The in-service training and mentoring sessions focus on a wide range of non-formal education including:

- non-formal education and intergenerational teaching-learning methodologies;
- management of mixed-learning groups;
- psycho-social practices of dealing with prisoners;
- design, development and use of teaching-learning materials;
- assessment and evaluation of learning outcomes.

Once trained, each facilitator – with assistance from a trained senior prison officer and volunteers – is entrusted with training an average of 7 participants during mothers only sessions and up to 40 participants during mixed-group sessions comprising of mothers and their children. They are also required to assist the BSfF and LU in evaluating the learning outcomes on an ongoing basis. Facilitators are currently being paid a stipend of £35 (USD 56) per hour.

## Teaching-Learning Approaches and Methods

As noted above, the PFLP is an integrated and inter-generational learning programme for imprisoned mothers and their children. Accordingly, the actual learning process is divided into two categories: (1) family learning sessions or classes, which involve mothers and their children learning together, and (2) mothers-only classes. Family learning sessions are conducted during family visiting days when children are brought to the prisons by their carers. Typically, family classes are conducted once every month and involve an average of 60 to 90 children and 20 to 40 adults. During the joint family learning sessions, parents and children work together on a wide range of common, practical and interactive activities which have been specifically designed and adapted not only to address adults and children's learning needs and interests but also to empower mothers to take an active role in the education of their children. Common family learning activities include but are not limited to:

- basic literacy (through, for example, making photograph frames, greeting cards, posters, writing poems, simple science activities etc.);
- composing and writing poems, rhymes etc.;
- developing a theme-based quiz for class discussion;
- games/sport (including table tennis, table football, swimming etc.); and
- art: role plays/drama, song and dance.

The aim of these learning activities is to positively engage families in order to improve their literacy skills as well as to strengthen family bonds.

Mothers-only classes are conducted once every week and each learning session lasts for, on average, one and a half hours. Typically, each class has about 15 learners. The actual learning process is conducted through a variety of participatory or interactive methods (such as group discussions/dialogues; question and answer; role play, demonstrations, reading and writing of poems, rhymes for their children etc.) and is largely based on learners' personal experiences. The rationale for employing these teaching-learning strategies is to enable facilitators to determine the prisoners' primary needs and interests in order to effectively equip them with appropriate literacy and social skills necessary for their successful reintegration or resettlement into society once released from prison. These sessions also provide women with an opportunity to talk about the purpose of the children's visits, the aims of the activities the facilitators will be running and how the mothers will encourage their children to join in the activities with them. As a direct result of these workshops with the mothers the percentage of mothers who engage in activities with their children during the children's visits has increased.

## Monitoring and Evaluation

Although external evaluators have not been engaged since July 2011 (when BSfF took over the implementation of the PFLP), the programme is, nonetheless, currently being evaluated on an ongoing basis by BSfF technical staff, partners, prison officials, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (OFSTED) and learners through field-based observations, in-depth interviews and consultations. Most importantly, programme beneficiaries also evaluate (using a standardised questionnaire) the learning outcomes through a reflective process which asks them to identify and highlight what they have learnt, the impact of the programme on their lives and well-being and the challenges they faced during the entire learning process. They are also asked to make suggestions on how to improve the programme based on their learning experiences.

## Impact

Existing results from the internal evaluation processes indicate that the PFLP is making an impact on the lives and well-being of female prisoners and their children. A total of 1,264 prisoners and 1,000 children have participated in the programme during the past three years. Apart from playing a vital role in strengthening family bonds (i.e. the relationship between mothers and their children), the programme has also equipped prisoners with crucial social skills which have prevented a majority of them from re-engaging in criminal activities and thus in successfully reintegrating into their families. As such, the programme has been an essential catalyst in prisoner rehabilitation, empowerment and reintegration. More specifically, the major impacts of the PFLP include:

- the development and dissemination of high quality learning materials and guidance modules to support in-prison family learning programmes;
- the transformation of family visiting days into family learning days: this created an opportunity for imprisoned mothers to interact and learn together with their children, most of whom are in foster families and/or child-caring institutions;
- prisons (i.e. HMP Holloway and Pentonville) have now fully embraced the principles and practice of family learning enshrined in the BSfF publication, *Family Learning in Prisons: A complete guide*, as a strategy of developing their prisoner rehabilitation and reintegration schemes;
- BSfF has also created training and employment opportunities for facilitators and volunteers who are engaged as trainers or tutors. In so doing, the programme is contributing towards social and community development,

## Challenges

Despite its major impact as noted above, numerous challenges continue to plague the effective implementation of the PFLP:

The programme is currently being implemented in remand prisons and, as such, there is a high turn-over of prisoners due to transferrals to other prisons after being sentenced or being released when acquitted. In light of this, it is extremely difficult for prisoners to continue participating in the programme and for BSfF to follow up prisoners' learning, rehabilitation and reintegration progress.

Another major challenge has been getting prison authorities to recognise the value of family learning in promoting the development of literacy, language, numeracy and communication skills among prisoners and how this positively impacts on their long-term rehabilitation and eventual reintegration into normal society.

The programme offers no official accreditation of learning. This dissuades some prisoners from participating in the programme.

BSfF has also encountered numerous challenges in bringing children to prisons for family learning sessions.

The prison environment creates unique challenges such as psychosocial problems among prisoners and lack of adequate learning spaces, all of which hinder the effective and efficient implementation of family learning programmes.

Funding: BSfF can afford to pay programme facilitators 'nominal' per diems. As a result, staff turn-over rates are very high which leads not only to inconsistencies with regards to programme implementation but also to increased operational costs as facilitators are regularly trained.

## Sustainability

Despite the challenges being faced, the long-term sustainability of in-prison family learning programmes in the UK is guaranteed due, in part, to increased State support of such activities and the changing attitudes among prison officials who now see the intrinsic value of family learning programmes in fostering the effective rehabilitation of prisoners. Similarly, the sustainability of the PFLP is guaranteed not only because of the aforesaid, but also because BSfF has trained many prison officers, volunteers, carers of prisoners' children and civilian staff working with prisoners in order to enable them to continue implementing this or similar programmes alongside BSfF and other organisations.

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