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United Nations Literacy Decade

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

Presented at the UNESCO sub-regional Conference *Addressing Literacy Challenges in South, South West and Central Asia: Building Partnerships and Promoting Innovative Approaches*. (29 - 30 November 2007, New Delhi, India)

Programme name: Literacy through radio and ICTs

Implemented by: Centre for Continuing Education, formerly Non Formal Education Centre

Basic facts

Country: Maldives

Starting year: 1980

Target Population: illiterates of all ages, both men and women

Language of instruction: Dhivehi (local language)

Operating in: the whole country

Main Funding: Government of Maldives

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Brief Description

The Literacy through Radio and ICTs Programme was initiated by the Maldives' government in 1980 to improve the literacy rate in the country as a basis for social and economic development. The programme operated through radio programmes which were supported by print material and supplemented by face-to-face tutor training. Tutors were volunteers from the community.

Rationale

Prior to the programme there was widespread illiteracy in the Maldives, especially among the population in the atolls and older age groups. Through the use of public radio and a huge mobilization of the population, the programme achieved the outstanding result of a 98% literacy rate in the country.

Objective

The overall objective of the programme was to improve the literacy rate of the country by reaching especially remote areas and older generations.

Conceptual Model and Methodology

The programme was based around paper based lessons supported by regular radio broadcasts, and tutors who were volunteers from the community. The literacy and numeracy syllabi were well designed to allow the volunteer tutors to follow the programme easily. At the end of a certain period, certified assessors travelled to different islands to carry out literacy tests.

Innovative features

The programme was strongly backed by the government and promoted as a nation-building activity. A very effective awareness-raising campaign accompanied the programme and encouraged the public to take part in this national effort. All literate people were encouraged to teach at least one illiterate person. Furthermore, using public radio as the main tool for literacy lessons proved to be the best way to reach the important population in remote areas.