



2008/ED/UNLD/PI/EP/24

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: Community Learning Centers

Implemented by: Literacy Movement Organization, Ministry of Education, Islamic Republic of Iran

Basic facts

Country: Islamic Republic of Iran

Starting year: 2000

Outreach: approximately 250,000 per year

Target Population: illiterate and neo literate people

Language of instruction: Persian and local languages

Operating in: in urban and rural areas

Facilitator/Beneficiary ratio: 1/15

Main Funding: Ministry of Education and in some cases international organizations such as UNICEF and UNFPA.

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Brief Description

The literacy program started its activities in 2001 upon the pilot implementation in 4 villages partially funded by UNESCO and expanded its activities to more the 3200 centres in 2007. The literacy programme is a life skills oriented programme tackling different topics such as health, environment, decision-making, effective communication, values, problem solving and so on. The Community Learning Centers (CLCs) act as the places for involvement of the community people and local people, CBOs as well as different development organization in field in the overall community development through training of basic literacy integrated with life skills and development of vocational skills based on the real needs and demands of the learners. CLCs are also the mechanism of fostering lifelong learning at the community level.

In addition to basic literacy many other activities take place in the centres:

- Consultancy services such as family planning issues

- Follow-up literacy circles in order to prevent relapse in to illiteracy by Neo literate people and to encourage them to use their literacy skills by reading books
- Integrated teaching of literacy and Basic life skills
- Vocational skills training in areas like production of greenhouse crops, bee keeping carpet weaving, sewing, etc.
- Practicing national and religious rituals
- Study tours, sightseeing and pilgrimage

Rationale

The programme operates according to the following strategic approaches:

- Establishing of CLCs to integrate community members in the programme development and content selection and adaptation;
- Developing of a strategic master plan to train and retrain of instructors;
- Programming for family-oriented training and publicizing the purposes of the programme, using key community members to facilitate the processes of literacy learning for women;
- Using TV programmes for publicizing the programme and capacity-building in the community;
- Recruiting female instructors and training them in the teacher training centers.

Objective

The Literacy Movement Organization (LMO) was established to provide literacy for illiterate adults and young adults across the country, especially in remote areas.

The programme aims at providing suitable conditions for enjoying the educational opportunities particularly by women and improvement of quality of life for villagers. The programme effectively expands the human resources for development of the local communities, enriches the people's life through awareness raising and knowledge sharing. The process of establishment and management of CLCs requires active involvement of people in educational and income generation activities and development of their knowledge and skills.

Conceptual Model and Methodology

CLC program enjoys the commitment of two highly supportive bodies, namely, the supportive committee at the district level (governors and representatives of the agriculture ministry and LMO, health, welfare organization and organization of Cooperatives) and the executive committee at the village level headed by the village's Islamic councils and educational staff of CLCs. CLCs take advantage of more participatory approach in needs assessment, planning and evaluation fields. The programs have enough flexibility in terms of time to keep pace with the learners' free times. The program has created very good linkages with the governmental and international bodies and providers of learning materials in their working fields.

Active learning-teaching methodologies are used in the literacy classrooms. Some of the methodologies used are: discussion, working in small groups, panels, and cooperative/participative learning.

Innovative features

All sectors of the community and the government are taking responsibility for the literacy programme from its beginning to its end. The learners are thus involved in the overall process of the literacy programme.

The successful implementation of any literacy programme requires the people's participation and feeling of ownership of the programme. CLCs are the focal places of gathering for the learners. Agencies and different providers build a strong coalition for development of the people, in individual aspects of life as well as social and economical ones. CLCs promote a bottom -up approach in planning and implementation of literacy programmes.