Learning Families

Intergenerational Approaches to Literacy Teaching and Learning

United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

UNESCO Institute
for Lifelong Learning

Learning Families – Intergenerational Approaches to Literacy Teaching and Learning

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Selected case studies from
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Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

UNESCO Institute
for Lifelong Learning

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Introduction

Lifelong learning is a key principle of the post-2015 education agenda, or 'Education 2030'. It is founded in the integration of learning and living, covering learning activities for people of all ages, in all life contexts and through formal, non-formal and informal modalities which together meet a wide range of learning needs and demands (UNESCO, 2014a, p. 2). While 'family literacy' is a relatively recent approach to promoting literacy and a culture of learning, particularly in disadvantaged families; the term 'family literacy' was first used by the US educator Denny Taylor in 1983 to describe literacy learning activities involving both children and their parents. Yet family literacy is in fact based on the most ancient of educational traditions: intergenerational learning. Intergenerational learning practices are rooted in all cultures, and educational programmes with literacy components involving families are found in all world regions, although these are not always referred to as 'family literacy'. Family literacy and learning presents adults and children with an opportunity to become independent, proactive lifelong learners.

As long ago as 1994, at a time of growing interest in family literacy as a field of specialization, UNESCO organized a World Symposium on Family Literacy. The symposium's aim was to review the theory and practice of family literacy in both industrialized and developing countries, as well as to consider its potential for promoting family education and strengthening family ties in a variety of economic, social and cultural settings (see UNESCO, 1995). The idea of developing family literacy programmes by bringing together two components of the education system – early childhood and/or primary education and adult and community education – spread from the United States to Europe in the 1990s, becoming particularly influential in the United Kingdom over the past decade. A few other European countries, such as Ireland, Malta and, most notably, Turkey, also have long-standing experience in family literacy. More recent family literacy programmes were developed and/ or piloted in Belgium, Bulgaria, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania and Romania. At the same time, the family literacy and learning approach can be found in many countries around the world, including Australia, Bahrain, Canada, Colombia, Cuba, Guatemala, Mali, Mexico, Namibia, New Zealand, Nigeria, Palestine, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda and Vanuatu. A number of examples from these countries of promising programmes using intergenerational approaches to literacy teaching and learning are showcased in this compilation.

What all of these examples have in common is that they combine elements of adult and community education with preschool or primary education to enhance the literacy, numeracy and language skills of both adults and children, and to help teachers and parents prevent school failure and drop-out. If children experience no culture of literacy in their families, if no one in the family ever reads a book to them, and if they never see how their family members use reading and writing in everyday life, literacy will not be meaningful to them. As a result, it is highly probable that these children will fail at school and struggle with reading and writing.

Why family literacy and intergenerational approaches to learning?

There is no single and officially accepted definition of the term 'family literacy'. Nevertheless, intergenerational approaches to literacy and learning share certain aims: they support the learning that happens in the home and in communities; they seek to break down barriers between learning in different contexts; they provide vital support to parents whose own education has been limited for various reasons; and they aim to develop both children's and adults' literacy learning (National Adult Literacy Agency, 2004). The term 'literacy' does not refer just to the acquisition of reading and writing skills but also to language, culture and orality. It is considered a social (inter-) action that is developed between people in different contexts and as a continuous process. The term 'family learning' involves broader learning activities beyond literacy in the family and in community contexts. Therefore family literacy and learning is an approach to learning that focuses on intergenerational interactions within the family and community which promote the development of literacy and related life skills. The term 'family literacy and learning' can be used to refer to literacy and learning practices within (extended) families as well as to describe an intergenerational educational programme with a focus on literacy and learning.

The intergenerational approach to literacy is supported by the view that the acquisition and development of literacy is an age-independent activity. This means that it is never too early or too late to start literacy learning, and so the development of literacy skills is not limited to and completed with formal schooling. Ideally, it starts before school, continues during and after primary school, and carries on beyond secondary and higher education. Many studies over the past decade have shown that the early years from birth to age two are crucial for setting strong foundations for learning. Family literacy programmes actually encourage parents to start cultivating their children's 'pre-literacy' skills as early as possible. This involves reading books to children, building their vocabulary and language skills, and developing their letter knowledge and phonological awareness as preparatory steps towards learning to read and write.

However, supporting children's early cognitive, linguistic and pre-literacy development can be challenging for parents and caregivers who themselves experience difficulties with reading and writing. While many people never make it to

school, or leave school too early to acquire even basic reading and writing skills, large-scale national and international test-based literacy surveys (UIL, 2013, pp. 25–33) have shown that even people who have completed compulsory education are not always equipped with adequate literacy skills. Many children around the world attend school but do not learn to read, write or calculate. The outcome is that while the majority of young people and adults with literacy problems have attended at least compulsory schooling, they nonetheless lack sufficient competencies in reading and writing to fully participate in their society. Many of these adults experienced such frustration as children that they deliberately avoid literacy-related activities in later life. When they have children of their own, they tend to communicate (often non-verbally) their negative feelings towards literacy and schooling to their children, and thus perpetuate an intergenerational cycle of illiteracy. There is abundant research evidence indicating a strong association between parents' education levels and their children's level of literacy acquisition. Several studies stress the importance of involving families in literacy programmes by using intergenerational approaches to literacy learning (see Brooks et al., 2008; Carpentieri et al., 2011). Such approaches should address all aspects of childhood (i.e. be 'childhood-wide') and focus on 'multiple-life-cycles' education, in which children are guaranteed a right to educated and literate parents and grandparents (Hanemann, 2014).

Very often the desire to help their children with school motivates parents to (re-)engage in learning themselves. By encouraging and valuing all forms of learning (formal, non-formal and informal), overcoming artificial barriers between home, school and community, and breaking down divisions between generations, a family literacy and learning approach can support the development of literacy and other skills for all age groups. Research on the results of family-centred literacy programmes shows that there are immediate benefits as well as a longer-term impact for both children and adults (see for example Brooks et al., 2008; Carpentieri et al., 2011; Hayes, 2006; Tuckett, 2004).

How are family literacy and learning programmes structured and implemented?

Many different forms of family literacy programmes have been developed over the years. There is no universal model; a diverse range of policies, strategies and programmes based on the intergenerational learning approach exists at the international level. The extent of this diversity is in evidence in the different aims and objectives of such programmes, as well as in the different contexts, target groups, and institutional settings and capacities. Normally, family literacy programmes target preschool and primary school children and their parents, relatives or caregivers, and are based in (pre-)schools or community centres. The most common model of such programmes has three pillars: adults' sessions; children's sessions; and joint sessions bringing adults and children together.

Four fundamental types of approach can be identified in family literacy and learning programmes and activities:

- Programmes that provide broad services directly to parents (mothers and/or fathers) and children, either together or separately
- Programmes that provide services directly to parents (mothers and/or fathers) with the aim of developing their reading and writing skills and indirectly those of their children
- Programmes that focus directly on the development of children's reading and writing skills by using the parents (mothers and/or fathers) as 'instruments' and indirect receptors of change
- Activities that are developed in the community or other spaces without directly involving the children and adults, but that have an indirect impact on both (for example, an awareness-raising media campaign about domestic violence)

The family literacy and learning programmes featured in this compilation are mostly based in schools or community learning centres. Some programmes, such as the Mother-Child Home Education Programme in Bahrain, the Family Literacy Project in South Africa, the Mother-to-Mother Programme in Palestine, and the Mother-Child Education Programme (MOCEP) in Turkey, also involve home visits.

The three-pillar approach – parents' sessions, children's sessions, and joint sessions bringing parents and children together – is used in the Hilti Family Literacy Programme in Malta, the Parent Empowerment Literacy Programme in Romania, and the Mother-Child Education Programme (MOCEP) in Turkey, to mention just three examples. The Vanuatu Family Literacy Programme focuses on different components: literacy and the home, parental roles and multilingualism. Its strategy is to involve parents as supporting partners in the classroom and to thereby bridge the gap between home and school. Other programmes have developed more complex programme designs. For example, the Manukau Family Literacy Project in New Zealand has four components – adult education, child education, parenting education and parent-and-child-together time – taking place in an early childhood centre, an elementary school and an adult education centre. The Family Basic Education Programme of LABE (Literacy and Adult Basic Education) in Uganda consists of five major components: train-the-trainer (adults only); classroom-based learning (children only); classroom-based family learning (adults and children); home-based family learning (adults and children); and adult basic literacy learning (adults only).

With regard to aims and objectives, some of the programmes – such as Run Home to Read in South Africa, Reading Together in Australia, the Bookstart Educational Programme in the UK, and the Voorlees Express Programme in the Netherlands – focus mainly on nurturing a culture of reading and learning in families. Other programmes address a broad range of family learning needs. An example of such a programme is the Integrated Intergenerational Literacy Project in Uganda, which seeks to empower rural families to engage in sustainable livelihood activities by integrating literacy learning with livelihood and life skills training. The Integral School Literacy Programme in

Colombia also integrates literacy with life skills training.

With regard to the target groups, some programmes, such as the National Literacy Programme in Namibia, focus primarily on adults. The aim here is to enable these adults to share the knowledge, skills and educational practices gained through the programme with their children and generally to improve their children's lives. The Integral Intra-family Literacy Programme, meanwhile, which is run by CONALFA (the National Commission for Adult Literacy) in Guatemala, encourages primary school students in grades four to six to provide literacy teaching to adult family members (usually their mothers) at home. The Family Learning Pilot Programme in Mexico takes a different approach towards its goal of 'building a literate community': it mobilizes learning resources and tutoring networks consisting of volunteers from schools, families and communities to improve the literacy and numeracy skills of students who have performed poorly in national educational achievement tests. Finally, the Prison Family Learning Programme in the United Kingdom primarily targets imprisoned mothers and their children in order to enhance their literacy skills, relationships and family bonds.

With regard to the design of the various programmes, all are run as partnerships between different institutions and/or organizations with the involvement of governmental or local authorities. Some of the programmes, such as the Turkish MOCEP Programme are very structured and 'school-like', whereas others, like the Family Literacy project in Germany, have very flexible time frames and curricula. Family literacy programmes in South Africa, Uganda and Nigeria have prioritized learning from families, while Grandparents' Stories of READ Nepal is an example of a programme that has put the wisdom of older generations at the core of the learning content. Many programmes work around the need to build a reading culture into families' daily lives, to encourage families to make use of libraries, and to develop literate environments. Other programmes, including the Mother and Child Education Programme in Nigeria, the Family Literacy Project in South Africa and the Family Learning Programme in Mexico, have included the learning of a second language in their curricula because their target groups need to master the national language.

Whether practised in the home, neighbourhood libraries, community learning centres or schools, the impact of the programmes featured in this compilation illustrates that family literacy as a family-centred and community-based intergenerational approach to learning offers more than just educational benefits. High-quality family literacy and learning programmes prepare adults to succeed as parents and members of the community; enhance bonds and improve relationships between children, young people and adults; strengthen connections between families, schools and community-based institutions; and vitalize neighbourhood networks, ultimately leading to social cohesion and community development.

Success factors and challenges in family literacy programmes

There is a sound body of evidence suggesting that successful family literacy programmes respond to the needs and concerns of learners, have adequate long-term funding, and are committed to strong partnerships (National Adult Literacy Agency, 2004). According to the findings of a recent study produced for the European Commission, four key factors shape the long-term success of family literacy programmes: 1) programme quality; 2) partnerships; 3) research-based evidence of achievement; and 4) funding (Carpentieri et al., 2011). Some programmes have also cited media support as a fifth factor for sustainability. According to this study, reading and learning must be natural and fun, but this requires a cultural shift. National programmes must be flexible enough to meet local and individual family needs. Parents and caregivers have an active role to play in supporting their children's learning and development, and the home environment is crucial.

An international seminar on family literacy held by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning and the University of Hamburg in 2009 identified the following elements of good practice:

- Promoting collaboration between different institutions and stakeholders
- Building on literacy practices and strengths already present in families and communities
- Responding to the needs and interests of participating families
- Demonstrating cultural and linguistic sensitivity in the use of resources and learning strategies
- Celebrating and emphasizing the joy of learning
- Using sound educational practices appropriate for the literacy development of children and adults
- Employing highly dedicated, qualified and trained staff
- Providing accessible and welcoming locations
- Helping learners to overcome barriers to participation
- Establishing ongoing, manageable monitoring and evaluation processes that produce information useful for programme improvement and accountability

Some of the challenges that family literacy and learning programmes face include:

- Motivating disadvantaged families to participate and remain in family literacy programmes
- Tackling limited or poor literate environments
- Delivering programmes in and for multilingual contexts
- Dealing with limited access to resources
- Overcoming the predominance of traditional pedagogical ('deficit') approaches
- Improving staff attitudes and professional development
- Developing a sense of ownership among communities and target groups
- Ensuring the sustainability of interventions

Many kinds of barriers related to language, distance, gender relations, cultural traditions and rigid power relationships can prevent families from enrolling in programmes and attending them regularly. Such barriers are particularly prevalent in rural areas of countries in the South

that have high levels of non-literate young people and adults and poorly developed literate environments. Here, action-research methods should be used to analyse and pilot possible solutions.

Conclusions

All of the literacy programmes featured in this publication share valuable experiences and lessons. They reflect a view of effective learning families whereby each child is a member of a family, and within a learning family every member is a lifelong learner. Among disadvantaged families and communities in particular, a family literacy and learning approach is more likely to break the intergenerational cycle of low education and literacy skills and foster a culture of learning than fragmented and isolated measures to address low levels of learning achievement and the lack of reading, writing and language skills (Elfert and Hanemann, 2014). However, to make such an approach successful, it is necessary to provide sustained teacher training, develop a culture of collaboration among institutions, teachers and parents, and secure sustainable funding through longer-term policy support.

More examples of innovative literacy programmes can be found on UNESCO's Effective Literacy and Numeracy Practices database (LitBase), which is a continuously developing database of promising adult literacy and learning programmes (http://www.unesco.org/uil/litbase/). UNESCO warmly invites providers of innovative programmes not yet featured in LitBase to contribute material about their literacy initiatives; please visit the LitBase website for further details.

Ulrike Hanemann

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NAMIBIA

National Literacy Programme

Implementing Organization
Government of Namibia

Date on Inception
1992

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The majority of Namibia's population of 2.1 million (2007 estimate) depends on agriculture and the informal sector for subsistence. Societal problems mainly arise from and are reflected by the disparities in income distribution, unemployment and poverty. 60% of the population live below the poverty threshold. The 1991 census revealed that about 300,000 – 400,000 people or 35% of the entire population was illiterate. Estimates in recent years also suggest that 19% and 20% of young men and women, respectively, aged 25 to 29 years old are unemployed. In rural areas, the average unemployment rate is 40% compared to 30% in urban areas. Linking literacy to livelihood skills development, particularly in poor rural and peri-urban communities, is therefore critical for the enhancement of the communal subsistence economy and its integration into the mainstream national cash economy as well as for the improvement of people's living standards.

THE NATIONAL LITERACY PROGRAMME IN NAMIBIA (NLPN)

Introduction

NLPN was officially launched in September 1992, two years after Namibia gained independence. The programme was built on a long tradition of literacy and adult education campaign dating back to the early activities of the missionaries but most importantly, to the Literacy Campaign (SLC) of the South West African People's Organisation (SWAPO), and NGOs such as the Namibia Literacy Programme and the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN). All of these programmes were initiated during the struggle for liberation.

NLPN targets out-of-school youth as well as illiterate and disadvantaged adults. Its aim is to enable them to participate effectively in national development. NLPN was initially funded by the Dutch, Swedish and Namibian Governments but is now wholly funded and facilitated by the Government of Namibia through the Ministry of Education. However, the ownership of the programme rests with the community, which is expected to participate actively in the planning, directing, monitoring, recruitment of learners and evaluating of all programme related activities (through its regional and community literacy committees). NPLN has experienced rapid growth; for example, by 1999, it had enrolled around 46,000 learners distributed across all regions of the country.

Programme Aims and Objectives

NLPN is driven by the broader national vision, which is to facilitate national development and transformation. The government's specific and long-term vision for educational development is for Namibia to become a fully literate nation with a literate work force that is capable of driving and sustaining national development. In the short term, however, the programme aims to achieve a total youth and adult literacy rate of 90% by 2015. The overall qualitative goal is to use NPLN to promote social, cultural, political and economic development nationwide in order to improve the quality of life for all people. To this end, the NPLN aims to:

- promote literacy and numeracy skills in local (mother-tongue) languages and in English in order to enhance multicultural and multi-religious tolerance and understanding;
- promote further learning among out-of-school youth and adults with a view to reducing existing educational inequalities;
- improve people's communication capacity and self-confidence in order to create a well-informed citizenry;
- enhance the participation of all people in the democratic process, including the exercising of their rights and responsibilities as citizens;
- enhance the capacity of both youth and adults to become more productive and self-reliant; and
- enable parents to participate in the improvement of their children's lives, particularly by exposing the parents to useful health practices and enabling them to share the knowledge, skills and educational practices gained through NLPN with their children.

IMPLEMENTATION: APPROACHES AND METHODS

The Directorate of Adult Education (DAE), which is part of the Department of Lifelong Learning in the Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture, is responsible for coordinating the development of the curriculum, developing and distributing learning resources/materials and providing learners with literacy and numeracy skills training. To this end, DAE works in close cooperation with the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED), Regional Literacy Officers (RLOs) and District Literacy Organisers (DLOs). This decentralised structure of programme development and implementation has made it possible for NLPN to strike a balance between national, regional and/or local interests and needs as well as to develop learning

materials in the eleven (11) main national languages, as well as in English. In addition, DLOs and RLOs are responsible for implementing the programme in their regions and districts by recruiting and training literacy promoters (teachers).

Literacy classes are attended by 15 to 30 learners and are held on a part-time basis, usually meeting three times a week for two hours. The teachers are also employed on a part-time basis and the programme recruits about 2,400 literacy teachers annually. Newly recruited promoters go through an initial, three-week pre-service training course in adult literacy. Thereafter, they participate in monthly in-service or refresher training courses. A learner-centred methodological approach is used for literacy teaching and learning. Group discussions, simulations, drama, song and dance and story-telling are some of the most commonly used methods.

The NLPN programme consists of two broad components/stages: 1) the Adult Basic Literacy Education Programme and 2) the Post-Basic Literacy Education Programme.

ADULT BASIC LITERACY EDUCATION PROGRAMME

The literacy phase of the NLPN adult basic education programme comprises three formative one-year training stages, each averaging about 240 learning/lesson hours:

Stage 1: Basic Mother-Tongue Literacy

Emphasis during Stage 1 is to foster the development of mother-tongue literacy skills among learners. As such, learning is mainly conducted in the language of particular regions/districts.

Stage 2: Intermediate Literacy Learning

In the second year (Stage 2), the medium of instruction is still the mother tongue, and the key objective is to enable learners to improve, consolidate and sustain the literacy skills and experiences acquired in Stage 1. In addition, Stage 2 also introduces learners to functional literacy and life skills, incorporating issues related to agriculture, health, small-scale business entrepreneurship, environmental awareness and civic education. It is hoped that functional activities like this will empower learners to improve their quality of life and that of their communities.

Stage 3: English for Communication / Communicative English

Stage 3 is equivalent to Grade 4 in the formal primary education system and is the last stage in the Adult Basic Literacy Programme. It is dedicated to developing basic and functional English skills for general communication, and the task of literacy promoters is to create an environment conducive to the development of these skills. In addition, an emphasis is also placed on reinforcing developmental and livelihood activities.

THE POST-BASIC LITERACY EDUCATION PROGRAMME

Following Stage 3 (equivalent to Grade 4 in the formal primary education system), there is a need to bridge the gap between the level achieved in Stage 3 and the level required of a secondary student. Hence, a fourth stage has been introduced. This stage (which is not necessarily linked to the three years of adult basic literacy learning and is open to anyone who has achieved the required level of literacy) primarily serves to equip learners with general knowledge, life and livelihoods skills. Graduates from the basic literacy classes can therefore continue their education by choosing one of the following options available in the NLPN programme's Post-Basic Literacy Education component:

Adult Upper Primary Education Programme (AUPE)

This is a three-year course of post-literacy/general knowledge training for those who have completed Stage 3 or Grade 4. Unlike the basic literacy programme, AUPE has its own curriculum which includes general knowledge in addition to language and numeracy. The "language of business" is also an important component of this curriculum. Learners take two subjects per year. There are four compulsory and two optional courses. The programme endeavours to equip adults with knowledge and skills equivalent to Grade 7 in formal education

Adult Skills Development for Self-Employment (ASDSE)

This project was piloted in the Karas and Oshana regions with the objective of providing adult non-formal training activities at national, regional and district levels. The main goal of the project is to provide a better service to the community by harnessing adult education to create employment and income-generating opportunities. It also contributes towards national efforts to alleviate poverty by affording those who have acquired basic literacy skills the entrepreneurial skills needed for self-employment and employment in both urban and rural areas. Accordingly, graduates from the literacy programme are trained in various entrepreneurial skills which eventually enable them to acquire finances to establish small-scale businesses. Some of the learners go on to study at Community Skills Development Centres (COSDEC), where they learn skills such as plumbing and bricklaying. Many of these centres are being established in rural areas where there are no libraries for those who have acquired reading and writing skills. The aim is to provide access to reading material and promote a culture of reading and learning in the country.

PROGRAMME IMPACT AND ACHIEVEMENTS

The NLPN employs a continuous assessments and external evaluations in order to determine programme impact and challenges as well as the achievements of the learners. To date, three external evaluations have been undertaken, in 1995, 1998 and 2008. Learners are also formally examined at the end of the literacy academic year.

Impact

The programme has expanded rapidly since its inception in 1992. Crucially, most of the learners are literate (i.e. are able to read and write) after completing the adult basic learning programme. Between 1992 and 1995, for example, the number of learners increased from about 15,000 to 36,000, while the number of promoters (trainers) grew from 700 to 2,000. By 1999, about 46,000 learners had enrolled in and benefited from the programme. Around 40,000 learners benefit from the programme each year. In addition, by 2007, 23,323 adult learners had enrolled in all the three stages of the NLPN of which 13,352 (57%) were tested and 12,919 (55%) had successfully acquired basic literacy competencies.

The programme's literacy achievements are equally impressive: national literacy rates have risen from 65% in 1991 to 81.3% in 2001, while the total youth literacy rate rose to 92% between 1995 and 2004 and the adult literacy rate rose to 85% during the same period.

Many people have been empowered to participate actively in national developmental activities including entrepreneurial activities and democratic processes.

Poverty Eradication and Improvement in standard of life: Entrepreneurial skills have enabled a number of learners to establish income-generating projects. In addition, improvements in literacy have lead to changes in general life styles and behaviour of participants.

More people are now able to independently conduct their business including undertaking financial transactions during shopping,

More women are being trained and empowered; as a result, they are gaining the confidence to compete for community leadership positions.

CHALLENGES

The main challenge is to sustain the programme by improving the quality both of the services offered and the learning environment itself. This is a difficult task in view of the limited funds available for the programme. In order to ensure the sustainability of the programme, there is a need for sector-wide and cross-sectoral support, including support from political leaders at all levels, employers in the private and public sectors, government ministries at the central and regional levels, trade unions, churches, youth and women's organizations, donors and the media. Furthermore, the programme needs to forge working partnerships with international organizations to ensure a constant flow of technical and financial assistance for the programme.

A lack of formal employment opportunities has discouraged some learners, as most still prefer to be employees rather than support themselves through self-employment and income-generating activities.

There is also a need to improve the working conditions of trainers in order to motivate them to undertake their duties diligently.

LESSONS LEARNED

Some of the main lessons learned are as follows:

- Overall, the literacy programme has a very high turnout of women, both as learners and promoters. However, there are few male participants. This is partly due to the traditional labour demands for men (e.g. fishing, mining and labour migration into neighbouring countries).
- There is a need to gradually develop post-literacy programmes to a level equivalent to that of Grade 7 in the formal primary school system. This will enable learners to proceed to the secondary level.
- There is also a need to establish a mechanism for increasing awareness and support for adult skills development. Community empowerment through the development of skills and the promotion of income-generating enterprises is one strategy that would enable the country to address it social and economic challenges.
- The establishment of Community Learning and Development Centres has contributed towards sustaining the literacy skills that learners have acquired.

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NIGERIA

Mother and Child Education Programme (MCEP)

Implementing Organization
The Ecumenical Foundation for Africa (EFA)

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

Programme 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 lll Project)

Date of Inception
2005

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, 5,000 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.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION: APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

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 auspices 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.

PROGRAMME IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

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.

Monitoring Process

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).

Equity-based Monitoring and Evaluation

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 availably 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.

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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SOUTH AFRICA

The Family Literacy Project

Language of Instruction
mother-tongue, English

Date of Inception
2000

CONTEXT

In South Africa it is estimated that between 7.4 and 8.5 million adults are functionally illiterate and that between 2.9 and 4.2 million people have never attended school. One million children in South Africa live in a household where no adult can read. In a recent survey, it was found that just over 50% of South African families own no books for recreational or leisure time reading. It is perhaps not very surprising, given this information, that a national evaluation carried out by the Department of Education in 2003 found that the average Reading Comprehension and Writing score for Grade 3 children was only 39%.

The Family Literacy Project (FLP) is based in the southern Drakensberg area of KwaZulu-Natal with a population of 300,000. The majority of people have no access to electricity or proper sanitation and this has serious consequences in an area where it is estimated that 30% of the population is HIV positive.

PROGRAMME

The project is aimed at families as a means of addressing the low literacy achievement of many pre- and primary school children, and the lack of confidence of parents in their ability to provide support to these children. As the parents (or those who take on the role of parents) are the first and most important educators of children, the family literacy approach supports both adults and children.

The FLP was set up in 2000 in response to findings that showed that the literacy scores of pre-school children were not improving, despite government interventions in the early childhood sector. Initially, monthly meetings were held with the parents of pre-school children to work with them to strengthen their role in early literacy development. By the end of that year, the parents were more confident in their ability to support their children whatever their own levels of literacy. These parents, and others in the area, requested that the FLP provide adult literacy tuition. Each group chose a member of their community to take part in training organised by the FLP. These women have since been trained in adult literacy (mother tongue and English as a second language), early literacy, and the participatory Reflect approach. Participation by the group members is important as the FLP believes that local knowledge is significant and relevant and that any new information must be integrated into this knowledge.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME

The nine programme facilitators currently work in the following villages in Southern KwaZulu-Natal: Bethlehem, Come and See, Ncwadi (all near Bulwer), Lotheni, Stepmore, Makholweni and Mahwaqa (near Underberg), Mathendeni (near Donnybrook), Mpumlwane and Ndodeni (near Centocow). They use school classrooms, community halls, churches and community libraries for their meetings.

All the facilitators and group members are from the community in which the groups operate. The age of the group members ranges from 21 to 79, with the average age being 48. Since there is no defined end to the programme, group members do not have to leave the project until they choose to do so.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the programme are:

- to transform literacy into a shared pleasure and a valuable skill shared by the whole family;
- to help to develop a critical mass of community members of all ages who see literacy as important and enjoyable; and
- to stress the importance of the parent/caregiver as the children's first educator and support them in assuming this role.

SINGLE PROJECTS

To achieve these objectives the FLP has launched a number of individual projects.

As the Family Literacy Project is aware of the fact that literacy skills need to be used regularly in order to maintain them, group members are encouraged to contribute to the project newsletter, have pen friends, write for community notice boards and keep journals with their children:

Community notice boards These provide an opportunity for group members to display their literacy skills and share information gained from the topics covered in the sessions. One group member is responsible for organising the notice board and encouraging others to contribute to the displays.

Pen friends Each family literacy group member is encouraged to write to someone in a neighbouring group. These letters are exchanged when the facilitators meet. Pen friends meet at the end-of-year event.

Newsletters This initiative started when group members were asked to write to the FLP. Their letters were printed, followed by a few pages of news and photographs. The newsletter is now produced professionally. As it contains news from the different groups, it is very popular.

Journals The FLP supplies adults with a notebook so that they can keep a diary with a child. These journals are known as Umzali Nengane (Parent and Child) journals. The adults and children select a picture to paste into the book or draw one of their own. They then talk about these images, and the adults write down the ensuing conversation.

The problem of low levels of literacy in adults and children is exacerbated by the lack of books in the area. To address this challenge, the project established three community libraries and eight box libraries which are run by project facilitators with the assistance of group members.

Box libraries and book clubs Each group was given a box of books for women to borrow. At first, participants tended to borrow mainly children's books; this was encouraged so that the women could read with their children or at least look at the pictures. At Stepmore, the facilitator soon noticed that the group members were discussing books together. This led to the first of the book clubs, which have now been established in every group.

Community libraries The first community library was opened in Stepmore in November 2003. Library furniture was provided by the provincial library services, books by

Biblionef, Exclusive Books and other donors. Group members catalogued the books and set up the library. The library is open to anyone in Stepmore and is run by one of our group members, with support from the facilitator. The project now also has two brick libraries at Ndodeni and Mpumlwane, and a fourth library building at Lotheni is nearing completion.

The adult groups focus on building literacy skills, sharing local knowledge and introducing new information where necessary. Topics covered in the groups range from children's rights and protection to women's health, environmental issues, and committee and budgeting skills. The adult groups regularly discuss issues related to children, consider way of supporting their development, and have fun with them as they read or look at books together.

The groups made up of teenagers and primary school children explore a wide range of issues and relate these to the enjoyment of books and reading. Often, the topics will be the same as those covered in the adult groups, providing opportunities for families to discuss these issues together at home.

Family literacy groups These groups meet twice a week to discuss a range of issues as well as to improve language and literacy skills. The average length of attendance at the end of 2005 was 3.5 years, with some members having attended since the project started in 2000.

Child-to-child groups This programme is an important component of the FLP. About 350 primary school children meet once a week to read, draw and discuss different topics. These topics often mirror those of the family literacy groups, thus nurturing links between family members. The groups are multi-age, with Grades 3 and 4 children helping Grades R, 1 and 2 children. International research confirms that programmes like this build self-confidence in both the reader and the listeners.

Home visiting The group members' desire to spread the message of early literacy gave rise to the home visiting scheme. Women take books with them to read to children; they also talk to mothers about their role in their children's healthy development. Once a term, each site supports the women by running a workshop on activities that can be done at home. These workshops focus on story telling, reading books and other games and activities designed to support the development of early literacy skills.

Teenage sexuality groups These groups are divided according to gender so that boys and girls can discuss issues of sexuality, especially those related to HIV and AIDS.

Health support groups These began in 2004 as a response to the numbers of women caring for orphaned children. The facilitators are trained in the key messages of the international Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses project strategy. This information is passed on to others as part of the home visiting scheme.

MATERIALS

Project staff have developed learning materials and easy-to-read books that are available in both Zulu and English. The topics covered in these books include early literacy development, parenting, HIV/AIDS and resilience. The facilitators are provided with all units (lesson plans), as well as posters and leaflets where these are appropriate and available. The project supplies stationery for the adult, teenage and children's groups.

A facilitator's guide and learner's workbook were developed to share the projects approach to family literacy. The project offers the Introduciton to Family Literacy course to other NGOs and government departments.

CHALLENGES AND FUTURE PLANS

The main barrier to the smooth running of group sessions is posed by the members' workload. Women will miss sessions when they have to cut thatching grass, re-thatch their homes, or rebuild/plaster walls. If a government-funded initiative requires short-term workers, FLP group members are often the first to apply and as a result will be absent from the sessions for the duration of the contract.

Another challenge is the state of the roads in this remote rural area. The roads are bad even when the weather is good, often impassable when it rains or snows. This disrupts the support that the project offers by visiting each facilitator once a month.

As NGO work is dependent largely on donor funding, donors who change their priorities can pose a real challenge to the NGO because it then has to source new donors. For example, FLP's 2006 budget was R 1,600,000,(USD 160,000), but it is not possible to extract the cost per learner from this total, as the very small staff of 3 full timers and 7 part-timers is involved not only with group work but also materials development, outreach, fundraising and management. In addition, the project contracts a health specialist and external evaluators and these costs are included in the overall budget. As donors do not make long-term commitments and some do not let organizations know in advance when they are going to change their funding criteria, this poses a major challenge to the FLP.

Meantime, as many people – convinced of the importance of the intergenerational transfer of knowledge, skills and support – are working to raise the profile of family literacy in South Africa, as in many other countries, it is possible that resources, whether financial and technical, will be forthcoming.

The FLP must maintain the focus on families as new members join the project. The first members, many of whom are still in the project, joined because they were interested in learning more about how they could help their young children and at the same time develop their own literacy skills. It is important that women who now join this well-established and recognised project realise and

subscribe to its core mission and vision.

ACHIEVEMENTS

So far, the programme reaches 162 adults, 350 primary school children and 52 teenagers during group session. 500 children (under 18 years) are reached through adult members. 335 children are visited in 130 homes. Members are motivated to remain in the programme because they are treated with respect and the programme is relevant to them and their families. FLP experiences low drop-out rates and when members are absent they send apologies and give reasons.

The women who joined the project in the first years have not only become competent facilitators but are also able to speak at meetings/conferences and lead training courses outside their own area. Their confidence has grown and the main challenge now is how they are going to meet the different demands on their time.

Danisile Gladys Duma has been a regular member since the first family literacy meetings held in Lotheni. In 2003 she wrote:

"I was born in kwaNoguqa and grew up in Mpendle. I started school and went as far as Std 2. I stopped schooling because my home had nothing. I stayed at home, although I desired to learn, but I had to look after cattle. I was married when I was 15 years old … during the ninth year (of marriage), I had a baby girl …. She is the only child I have. My child grew up and went to school. I had wished that my child should be educated and not have to go through a similar experience to me, as I had a very sad experience because I was not educated. In 2001, an adult school was established, and I joined it. Now my life is interesting, and I am free. I thank this adult school."

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The project has been evaluated annually and the latest reports are available on the FLP website. The recommendations from the evaluations are taken seriously and followed up each year by the external evaluator. Different evaluation approaches have been used, including storytelling, photographs and stories, focus groups, interviews, and group members reflecting on their own practice.

Several prizes and awards underline the innovative character of the programme.

LESSONS LEARNED

The most important lesson learned has been that children who are supported by their parents usually do well at school, and that this motivates adults to continue offering this support. The FLP has also learned that well-supported facilitators are key to the successful implementation of the programme. Family literacy can be developed in different ways and benefit both adults and children. The FLP experience has shown that combining adult and early literacy in a participatory manner can work.

The exchange of experience is a rich source of ideas and input that helps to increase the quality and impact of the programme. It is for this reason that FLP staff have been meeting with other organizations and government departments to explore how to offer family literacy in a way most appropriate in the different contexts. To do this, FLP draws on its experience and shares the lessons learned with others.

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SOUTH AFRICA

Run Home to Read

Implementing Organization
Project Literacy (established in 1973)

Language of Instruction
mother tongue

Date of Inception
June 2006

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

One of the most entrenched and indeed indelible legacies of apartheid-era segregationist policies in South Africa has been the severe lack of quality educational opportunities for the majority non-white population. Concerted efforts by successive post-apartheid governments to address this anomaly and, in particular, to create equal educational opportunities for and thus to reduce high illiteracy rates among previously socio-economically disadvantaged groups through various educational programmes such as the Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) programme and the South African National Literacy Initiative (SANLI, 2000) have been partially successful. According to a recent study by the Ministerial Committee on Literacy (June 2006), about 9.6 million adults or 24% of the entire adult population is functionally illiterate. Of these, 4.7 million are totally illiterate (i.e. they cannot read or write because they never attended school) and 4.9 million are barely literate having dropped out of formal primary school before completing grade seven. Similarly, the State and other educational institutions have also failed to create adequate and sustainable Early Childhood Education (ECE) opportunities for children living in socio-economically disadvantaged communities.

Given that parents are every child's primary caregiver and first educator, the high prevalence of adult illiteracy coupled with the State's failure to institute broad-based, integrated and intergenerational educational programmes (including ECE) has negative impacts on children's early cognitive development not least because most parents are incapable of supporting them to gain pre-school literacy skills necessary for successful long-term learning. Indeed, it has been observed that many children in South Africa start school with poor pre-literacy skills (i.e. the reading, writing and numeracy) and low levels of psychosocial development (i.e. cognitive, emotional, personality etc.). Accordingly, the general poor performance and high drop-out rates of children at the primary school level has been, in part, attributed to the lack of access to quality pre-school education or Early Childhood Education (ECE) opportunities and parental learning support. Thus, in an effort to address the problem of adult illiteracy and its attendant negative impact on Early Childhood Development (ECD), Project Literacy – an NGO that was founded in 1973 to promote access to education among the poor – initiated the integrated and intergenerational Run Home to Read Literacy Programme.

THE RUN HOME TO READ LITERACY PROGRAMME (RHRLP)

The RHRLP is an integrated and intergenerational (family-based) early childhood and adult literacy programme which primarily aims to make education more accessible for all and thus to promote basic literacy (i.e. reading, writing and numeracy) skills development among children and adults living in socio-economically disadvantaged rural and semi-urban communities. Although the RHRLP is an inclusive family-based educational programme, it particularly targets women (mothers and caregivers) and pre-school children who, as noted above, have been marginalised from existing educational and literacy programmes:

The programme was officially launched by Project Literacy in June 2006 and is based on the experiences of a similar programme that had been implemented by the Department of Library and Information Science at UNISA as a pilot project. The RHRLP is currently being implemented in twenty-five (25) rural communities or villages in the Limpopo Province and five communities in the semi-urban areas of Soshanguve in Pretoria.

As noted above, the RHRLP primarily targets pre-school children and women in order to effectively and sustainably address the twin challenges of adult illiteracy (which is disproportionately high among women) and the lack of quality ECE opportunities for children living in marginalised rural and semi-urban communities. Targeting women not only arises from Project Literacy's quest to reduce the high female illiteracy rates in the country but also from the realisation that women, as the primary caregivers and children's first educators, play a critical role in shaping children's psychosocial (i.e. cognitive, personality, emotional etc.) development and thus their overall lives. As such, improving women's literacy skills invariably enhances their capacities to support their children to acquire basic literacy skills necessary for successful long-term learning. In addition, women's positive appreciation of the role of education in their lives also influences children to value education, thereby reducing the high school drop-out rates and general poor performance currently bedevilling South Africa's education system.

Programme Aims and Objectives

The fundamental goals of the RHRLP are to promote basic literacy skills development and a culture of family-based or intergenerational learning among socio-economically disadvantaged children and adults (i.e. to make "every home a reading home and every child and parent a reader"). Essentially therefore, the programme strives to improve adult literacy and to promote early childhood literacy skills development (i.e. Early Childhood Education) by actively encouraging parents, guardians / caregivers and children to learn or read together in order to support each other's literacy skills development. In addition but related to this, the programme also endeavours to:

- Promote intergenerational (family-based) learning;
- Empower women to participate actively in their children's education;
- Promote quality Early Childhood Development (ECD) practices in marginalised communities in order to enhance children's psychosocial skills development;
- Create sustainable home-based Early Childhood Education (ECE) opportunities for children living in marginalised rural and semi-urban areas in order to equip them with quality pre-school literacy skills necessary for successful long-term learning,
- Equip women with functional or livelihood skills necessary for improving their families' living standards; and
- Facilitate the socio-economic empowerment and advancement of people living marginalised rural and semi-urban areas.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION: APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

Design and Development of Teaching-Learning Materials

In order to facilitate the successful and sustainable implementation of the RHRLP, Project Literacy has developed various illustrative teaching and learning materials for use by learners and programme facilitators or trainers (known under the programme as reading champions). The teaching-learning package, which is available in several languages including English, TshiVenda, Sepedi, Xitsonga, isiZulu and Siswati and provided to participating families for home-based learning, is comprised of:

- Two Activity Books—designed by Project Literacy materials department,
- Six Readers-Stories published by Kagiso in four African languages,
- One Caregiver Guide developed by Project Literacy materials department in four African languages, plus English,
- One Pack of Crayons,
- One T-shirt, and
- One bag.

Recruitment and Training of Programme Facilitators (Reading Champions)

The implementation of the RHRLP, including the recruitment of new learners, is heavily dependent on a cadre of trained and committed community-based educators or facilitators (reading champions), caregivers and professional field workers working under the overall supervision of a project manager.

Programme facilitators or reading champions are normally recruited from and are entrusted to provide learning assistance or support to ten (10) families within their communities. In order to enable the reading champions to execute their teaching duties effectively and efficiently, Project Literacy provides them with on-going training and mentoring in:

- Adult and child-appropriate teaching-learning methods, (i.e. they are trained on how to read to a two-year-old and an adult as well as on how to help illiterate caregivers "read" to their children);
- Development and production of teaching-learning materials, and
- Assessment of learning processes and outcomes.

Reading Champions are also trained to, among other things, identify and recruit learners or families with 'acute' learning needs based on the objectives of the programme i.e;

- Is the caregiver at home?
- Does this family have children between the ages of 0- 7?
- Does the family have reading materials?
- Is there an interest from the family to participate on the programme?

Preference is always given to poor families with pre-school aged children not attending ECD.

Once qualified, the reading champions are paid a small stipend for twenty hours of work per week. They are also obliged to stay in regular contact with their fieldworker who provides them with ongoing technical teaching assistance.

In addition, Reading Champions and Fieldworkers also provides parents

and guardians / caregivers with technical training in early childhood education and on how to use their local libraries in order to enhance their child rearing skills as well as capacity to develop their children's literacy skills. The strategy of involving parents and caregivers (adults) as children's educators is not only intended to enable them to develop and enhance their literacy skills but also to create sustainable opportunities for home-based Early Childhood Education (ECE) for children living in difficult situations.

Teaching-Learning Approaches and Methods

Within the RHRLP, participating families are obliged to attend literacy classes for three months after which they are encouraged to make full use of their local libraries and family or community networks to continue learning. During the three-month period of 'formal' learning, classes are conducted by reading champions at participants' homes (i.e. through face-to-face family-based teaching / mentoring). Participating families are also encouraged to learn together and on their own using the learning packages provided by Project Literacy or books borrowed from local libraries. In either case, facilitators and learners are encouraged to employ participatory teaching-learning methods including group discussions (based on particular book readings and / or pictures), reading, writing and counting together and singing while reciting rhymes about, for example, bees, frogs and the colours of the robot. Colouring books are also used to promote the development of cognitive and writing skills among learners.

PROGRAMME IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

Monitoring and Evaluation

Programme monitoring and evaluation are central activities in the implementation of the RHRLP and as such, Project Literacy has developed the necessary tools and strategies in order to make these processes highly informative. Typically, monitoring and evaluation of the programme and, in particular, the learners' performance and learning outcomes is conducted on an on-going basis by both internal (i.e. Project Literacy) and external professionals. With regards to external evaluation, the RHRLP was evaluated by the Impumelelo Committee and awarded the Silver Award of the Impumelelo Innovations Award Trust (2010) and the Mail and Guardian Drivers of Change Award (2009) in recognition of its contribution to educational development in South Africa.

Internally, the monitoring and evaluation of the implementation progress of the RHRLP and learning outcomes is undertaken by Reading Champions, Fieldworkers and Project Manager on a weekly, monthly and quarterly basis. Weekly programme evaluation is conducted by Reading Champions during their visits to participating families. During this exercise, the Reading Champion makes use of the Reading Champion Resource Book, Reading Champion Log Sheet and Reading Champion Comments to record the caregiver and children's participation, performance and challenges encountered during the week. Caregivers are also given a Caregiver Manual (in Mother Tongue) that provides them with valuable information on how to assist their children with reading.

In the second phase of the internal evaluation process, a Fieldworker visits two families being assisted by Reading Champion every month. The Fieldworker makes use of the Monitoring Tool for Fieldworkers to undertake a pre-reading, during reading and post-reading observation / evaluation exercise. The Fieldworker also questions the caregiver on progress, use of reading materials, relationship with Reading Champion and any changes that have happened in the home. The fieldworker also scans the Reading Champion Log Sheet and comments made by the Reading Champion to identify any challenges so that he/she can assist where necessary. The fieldworker compiles all findings in a Monthly Report which is submitted to the Project Manager.

Finally, the quarterly evaluation process is conducted by the Project Manager. During this process, the

Project Manager conducts on-site or field monitoring visits accompanied by the Fieldworker and Reading Champion. The Project Manager also makes use of the Monitoring Tool for Fieldworkers and the Reading Champion Log Sheet to compile a report of his / her visit. Information regarding the performance of the Fieldworker and Reading Champion will be detailed in the Project Manager's Monthly Report, Fieldworker's Monthly Report, and Monthly monitoring tool for Fieldworkers and Reading Champion log-sheets. In addition, the Project Manager also convenes quarterly meetings or workshops with reading champions and fieldworkers working in different locations or communities. At these workshops, participants evaluate the overall successes and challenges which they encountered. They also use the occasions to share their field experiences and to assist each other to improve their teaching skills.

IMPACT

Despite being in its infancy, the RHRLP has quickly evolved into one of South Africa's most innovative and effective integrated and intergenerational early childhood and adult education programme as manifested by the number of nationally recognized educational awards it has won to date. The programme's key and easily discernible impacts include:

As of August 2009, the RHRLP had provided educational training services to 2,600 caregivers and 4 800 pre-school children. Overall, 3,400 families had benefitted from the programme by the end of 2010. In addition, the programme has also promoted a culture of reading within communities as manifested by field reports indicating improved use of community-based libraries;

I**mproved literacy skills among pre-school children:** According to reports by the most local primary school principals, RHRLP child-graduates have greater cognitive, literacy and social skills. They are also more creative than other children who did not participate in the programme. As a result, it has been noted that RHRLP child-graduates have greater capacities to quickly comprehend new and higher-level literacy as well as to adapt to the formal school system;

Improved adult literacy skills: Similarly, RHRLP adult-graduates are now better able to take control of their everyday lives through activities such as filling bank and hospital forms, reading work instructions and voting. Furthermore, adult caregivers, who previously did not perceive themselves as having a role to play in their children's early literacy development, now have a renewed sense of confidence in their abilities. Many of these caregivers had been illiterate but are now equipped with the skills to engage their children in reading and other stimulating learning activities. Armed with increased confidence some caregivers have sought further Adult Basic Education and Training. This positive change in their self-confidence levels has contributed to their increased involvement in their children's formal schooling experience, with parents questioning teaching methodology and requesting support for their children with special needs;

The programme has not only enabled adults to develop and enhance their literacy skills but also to proactively serve their children and communities as educators as one reading champion testified: "I like being a reading champion ... I feel I am helping my community and people really appreciate what I am doing."

In addition, the programme has also created modest employment opportunities for the reading champions, thereby helping them to improve their living standards. Essentially therefore, the programme has empowered previously semi-literate and illiterate adults into a new world where books are viewed as a key component in the progress of their children and they feel more confident when enquiring about the progress of their children at school. It has also fostered stronger relationships between parents and their children and between families in the communities.

Challenges

In common with all NGOs in the field of education, funding is a constant challenge. According to Project Literacy's Fundraising and Communications Manager, Ms Yvonne Eskell-Klagsbrun, "The credit crunch has unfortunately adversely affected donations made to our organisation and over the past two years, in particular, we have found it increasingly difficult to secure funding. The current donors have in many instances cut their funding to us and in some instances have been unable to support us at all because of the economic climate. This has made it difficult for us to plan for the future of our projects and give our volunteers and field staff the assurance that their jobs are stable."

SOURCES

- Project Literacy, (website)
- Lisa Steyn, Learning comes together, Mail & Guardian, South Africa, 15 October 2010

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UGANDA

Family Basic Education (FABE)

Implementing Organization
Literacy and Adult Education (LABE)

Language of Instruction
Local languages

Funding
COMIC Relief, Oxfam, DFID (UK) and NOVIB (Netherlands)

Date of Inception
2003

CONTEXTUAL OVERVIEW

In recent years, the government of Uganda has introduced programmes and critical policy instruments that seek to eradicate poverty and illiteracy and thus to promote national development and transformation by making education accessible to all. In 1997, for example, the government introduced Universal Primary Education (UPE) which provides free primary education. As a result of UPE, the national rate of enrolment in primary school education rose dramatically from 2.5 million in 1997 to 7.2 million in 2000. By 2005, the net intake rate (NIR) in primary education had risen to 66%. This enrolment expansion was not, however, accompanied by an increase in the provision of essential materials and teaching resources to schools or by the training of more teachers, an aspect which compromised the quality of education. Most critically, many primary school children failed to proceed to secondary level due to financial constraints. In 2004, for example, only 37.4% of primary school graduates made the transition from primary to secondary general education. In 2007, the government introduced Universal Secondary Education (USE) which seeks to make secondary education accessible to all children. However, challenges still remain with regard to the quality of and access to education, especially for rural-based children and those in the conflict-affected northern region.

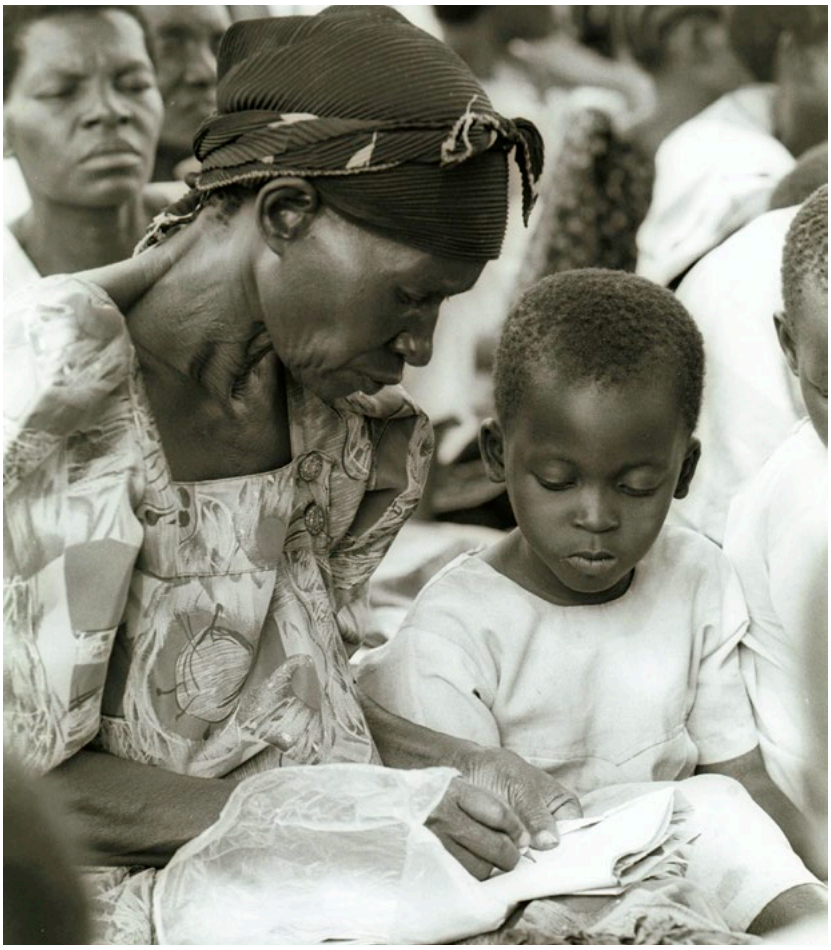
The government also introduced the Functional Adult Literacy Programme (FAL) as a component of the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP). The FAL programme endeavoured to improve literacy levels among adults as well as to empower people to demand access to quality basic social services. However, the FAL programme has managed to reach only some 5% of would-be learners and has thus not benefited many people. Implementation of the PEAP was hindered by the fact that information on available services is in printed form; consequently, for citizens to claim their rights, they must master literacy and numeracy – skills which adults do not necessarily possess. The shortcomings in the provision of education to children and basic literacy skills to adults made the implementation of the Family Basic Education (FABE) programme imperative.

FAMILY BASIC EDUCATION (FABE) PROGRAMME

Introduction

The FABE programme was initiated and is currently being implemented by LABE (Literacy and Adult Basic Education), a leading local NGO in the field of basic education. LABE's interest in family education projects began in the mid-1990s as a new dimension to its adult literacy work in rural areas. LABE piloted the programme in the Bugiri district of Eastern Uganda (one of the country's poorest districts) in 2000–2001, and by 2005 the programme was active in 18 schools and many adult literacy centres, reaching over 1,400 parents and more than 3,300 children. The programme has now been expanded to northern Uganda, a war-affected region, where it is being implemented in over 600 villages in 8 districts.

The expansion of the programme was, to a large extent, community demand driven. As parents realised the value of literacy, they were motivated to support their children to access education as well as to assist them in the learning process. However, they were constrained in these endeavours



by their lack of literacy skills. In response to the demand for adult learning and the enthusiasm for education generally, LABE felt the need to expand the pilot project as well as to support education plans that had been initiated by community school management committees, concerned parents, local governments and district education officials. In pursuit of this, LABE also negotiated with Comic Relief (UK) through Education Action International in order to secure financial and technical assistance for the project. FABE has continued to grow ever since. Additional resources to expand in northern Uganda have been received from DFID (UK) and NOVIB (Netherlands).

Programme Justification and Objectives

FABE targets rural families (out-of-school children/youth and adults), as well as school-going children, school teachers and adult literacy facilitators. Most rural primary schools perform well below the national average, while adult literacy levels (particularly for women) are among the lowest in the country as adults in rural locations have had limited access to formal school education. The programme works with teachers and adult educators whose capacities are built through training in adult/family literacy teaching methodologies and curriculum.

The programme aims to:

- improve literacy and numeracy skills among rural children and adults;
- improve the educational performance of children through effective parental/family literacy and educational support;
- strengthen parental support for children's educational needs and equip parents with basic knowledge;
- increase parents' inter-communication skills while interacting with children and their teachers;
- develop parenting skills;
- create a broad awareness on family learning;
- promote and strengthen community participation in primary school education and general community development; and
- enrich the abilities of teachers and adult educators in child-adult teaching/learning methods.

APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

The programme has five major thematic components:

- Train-the-Trainer (adults only)
- Classroom Based Learning (children only)
- Classroom Based Family Learning (adults and children)

- Home Based Family Learning (adults and children)
- Adult Basic Literacy Learning (adults only)

This structure informs the programme content, approaches and methodologies that are employed to satisfy the needs and abilities of each respective target group of learners/beneficiaries.

Train-the-Trainer

The programme combines the use of professional teachers (mostly primary school teachers) and para-professional adult educators (adult literacy educators). English and Lusoga (or other local languages) are the languages of instruction.

The Adult Literacy Educators (ALE) receive formal training in literacy, numeracy and adult teaching methods. The initial training for ALEs lasts for about 2 weeks, after which they attend refresher and mentoring training courses throughout the year. The training of adult educators is conducted by LABE professional trainers. School teachers (serving or retired) also receive orientation training. This, however is not as intensive as the training designed for ALEs because, unlike ALEs, teachers are already qualified, having received the full 12 years of formal school education plus 2 years of professional teacher training. ALEs tend to have an average of just 8 years of formal school education and may additionally have attended a number of short training courses. Apart from Family Literacy training, the train-the-trainer project also encompasses training courses in health (e.g. TB, HIV/AIDS, and nutrition), agriculture and other developmental issues. LABE has developed a teaching manual for adult educators and teachers and introduced various participatory techniques to complement teachers' existing materials.

Classroom Based Learning

The purpose is to enrich the government's centrally developed thematic approach to literacy and numeracy teaching. School teachers are introduced to various participatory approaches used in adult literacy sessions. As they learn relevant systematic approaches in teaching, reading, writing and numeracy, the adult literacy educators act as co-teachers of school teachers.

Adult Basic Literacy Learning

The curriculum for Adult Basic Literacy Learning is partly based on the school literacy and numeracy curriculum but is structured differently to suit and satisfy the broader needs and abilities of adult learners. The integration of the Adult Literacy curriculum into the school curriculum is intended to create linkages and continuity between the school and home learning processes and thereby enable parents and children to assist each other in the during the home-based learning process. However, as adults master basic literacy skills such as reading, counting and writing, their curriculum is further developed to focus on "life themes" and thus to use the learning process as a method of addressing or discussing issues that are more pertinent and relevant to their everyday lives. These themes include health, environment, good farming practices and HIV/AIDS. Such an approach has the added advantage of generating motivation among adult learners, as the learning process will be seen as a practical way of solving community challenges and and addressing cross-generational learning needs.

Classroom Based Family Learning

These are joint learning sessions which bring children and their parents together in formal classroom settings. These sessions combine activities from the formal school curriculum with "life themes" from the Adult Basic Education programme. Issues discussed include, amongst others, the environment, health, civic education, non-violent conflict resolution strategies, peace building, human rights and culture. The joint parent-child sessions are designed and structured to build shared learning experiences as well as to promote home learning activities which complement school learning. Learning methods during the joint parent-child sessions include: playing games, focus group discussions, debates and story telling. Children are also encouraged to write stories based on these activities. Hence, the programme genuinely facilitates intergenerational learning.

In addition, the sessions also enhance the process of relationship-building between children and their parents and between the school (teachers) and the wider community. This gives parents a sense of ownership and responsibility with regard to their children's learning process and the development and functioning of the schools. It also further motivates parents to promote and sustain the development of wider issues outside the school context e.g. the causes of domestic violence.

Home Based Family Learning

A variety of methods are used in home learning. These include: story telling, folklore, games, assisted learning and other activities. This is intended to extend school learning to children's homes while at the same time actively involving parents in the children's learning process above and beyond the narrow scope of the school curriculum.

CONCLUSION

By using this flexibly structured and inclusive approach to school education and adult literacy, the programme endeavours to establish favourable education practices that encourage and promote linkages between school learning and the wider community. An integrated approach of this kind makes it imperative that the various stakeholders be involved in the planning, implementation, monitoring and shaping of the family learning process. It is also important to encourage and transform "ordinary" events or facilities such as class visits, school open days and school compounds into effective learning opportunities. Furthermore, home visits are organized to help parents to create learning space at home as well as homemade teaching/learning materials. Each participating school receives a package of materials so that parents can make low-cost teaching/learning materials, either on their own, in the joint parent-child sessions or together with other families.

PROGRAMME IMPACT AND ACHIEVEMENTS

One of the challenges faced by the programme was how to enable parents (especially mothers) and children (especially girls) to play an active and informed role in community affairs, using the school as an entry point. As the programme progressed, diverse empowerment results emerged, some of which were initially unintended and unexpected. To be able to make broad generalisations and use these results for policy recommendations, it was necessary to obtain larger sample sizes and subject the results to greater qualitative analysis. Using control groups from neighbouring schools where no FABE activities had been implemented, the following results were recorded

Participants

A total of around 124,000 children and 76,000 adults have benefited from the programme. Over 95% of the beneficiaries live in rural areas and about 80% are women.

Train-the-Trainer: the programme has facilitated the training of 1,500 literacy trainers and 400 trainers of instructors.

Family level (household level)

- The number of children reporting domestic violence (especially slaps from their fathers) has dropped by 15%.
- The number of young girls married off (before they are 15) has dropped by 40%.
- The number of women presenting themselves for election in schools, churches and village committees has increased by 65%.
- The number of girls directly supported by their fathers as they attend primary school has increased by 17%.

School level

- Girls' average school attendance has increased by 67 days each year.
- The drop-out rate for girls has fallen by 15%.
- The number of women in school governance structures has increased by 68%.
- The number of parents who take part in developing School Development Plans has increased by 65%.

Community level

- The number of (previously non-literate) community members who took part in the last national elections by independently selecting a candidate of their choice has increased by 27%.
- The ratio of new community members who have joined local voluntary associations has risen to 3:5 (3 being the new members).
- The number of girls who report being shouted at/mocked as they walk to school has dropped by 32%.

Improved Parental Involvement in Child Learning

- Parents are now consciously interacting with and helping their children to reinforce reading, writing and numeracy skills.
- Parents are also increasingly helping their children to do their homework and checking their children's books as their improved literacy skills gives them the confidence to provide such assistance. Some parents are even gathering local learning materials for children, such as bottle tops and counting sticks.
- Improved communication with schools indicates that parents (especially mothers) are becoming increasingly engaged in their children's education. For example, some parents send written notes to school teachers concerning their children's learning progress or the challenges they face.
- Parents are regularly attending school activities, such as meetings and open days, or visiting the school informally to talk to their children's

teachers about their educational progress.

Adult Literacy Learning

- After more than 2 years of FABE literacy-related work, many parents/adults were able to: 1) correctly read sequences of numbers from 0 to 1,000 and calculate three-digit numbers in writing; and 2) record in writing short messages heard on the radio and copy details from a calendar, notice or other text.
- Men's involvement in and concern for girls' welfare has increased dramatically.
- The number of Adult Literacy Educators has increased and their skills have been enhanced.

In addition to the improved literacy results, FABE has also produced broader social, economic and political effects. These include:

- An increased resource allocation to adult learning by local governments.
- Increased donor interest.
- Community and parental involvement in basic education is now a government policy priority (although the emphasis is still on children's literacy).

CHALLENGES AND SOLUTIONS

- Different partners in family learning still view adults merely as a channel for improving children education.
- Adult Literacy Educators tend to downplay the participatory approaches and are overly influenced by school methods. There is need to retrain the facilitators.
- While Family Learning is aimed at promoting positive cultural values within the family as a basis for wider community development, the narrow school agenda prevails.
- There is a continuing need to foster the positive informal learning of children and adults: homes and other areas in the communities outside the school should be made into richer learning environments.
- There continue to be different and at times conflicting perceptions of what constitutes useful learning amongst school-based and adult education stakeholders.

LESSONS LEARNED

- For adult learners, follow-up work is as important as initial work, yet this is not always guaranteed within a restrictive project timeframe of 2–3 years.
- A strong focus on culturally relevant family learning methods and content should be established before and during the learning process.
- Initial intervention objectives should include a deliberate process of upgrading parents to family learning facilitators.
- Strengthening multilingual/bilingual education amongst children and adult literacy educators is an important objective.
- Advocacy to influence national policies to budget and possibly mainstream family learning in both school and adult education work is critical.

FUTURE PLANS: SUSTAINABILITY

In the future, FABE would like to:

- expand the content of family learning but emphasise literacy and contextualised basic education in a broad sense;
- present convincing evidence of the complementary roles of basic education for children and adults;
- diversify but at the same time retain the coherence and clarity of what constitutes family basic education in an African setting, while at the same time avoiding getting sidetracked by divergent interpretations and terminologies;
- develop an assessment framework for basic adult education competencies that can also be used to assess the qualifications system for basic children's education; and
- market FABE further to gain the support of local and central governmental institutions as well as international organizations.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

This continues to be a weak area overall. There is inadequate communication between school teacher supervisors and adult literacy educators. The two belong to different government ministries.

An attempt has been made to agree on key indicators against which both parties can measure themselves. The attempt to get parents and teachers to undertake peer assessment has just begun. Data on learning attainments is not being systematically analysed and is still being presented in a raw form (e.g. as scores of "rights" and "wrongs" like those used in the school marking system). Broader informal and lifelong learning processes for children, parents, school teachers and adult educators are not being adequately established.

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UGANDA

Integrated Intergenerational Literacy Project (IILP)

Programme Title
Integrated Intergenerational Literacy Project (IILP)

Implementing Organization
Uganda Rural Literacy and Community Development Association (URLCODA)

Language of Instruction
English and local languages (depending on the target group)

Funding
International Reading Association; contributions from members

Date of Inception
2004

INTRODUCTION

The Integrated Intergenerational Literacy Project (IILP) was initiated in 2003 by the Uganda Rural Literacy and Community Development Association (URLCODA), a community-based NGO which was formed in 2002 in response to the needs of the rural people in Arua district. In 2004, URLCODA was legally registered with the National NGO Board of Uganda and is also an affiliate member of the Reading Association of Uganda (RAU). Currently, URLCODA is implementing an intergenerational literacy programme in the Arua district of north-western Uganda.

URLCODA's vision is to promote the development of a literate, secure, healthy, gender-sensitive and peaceful society that fosters sustainable grassroots development. To this end, URLCODA's primary aim is to use literacy to promote socio-economic development and transformation in rural areas by addressing core community problems and challenges such as:

- high levels of illiteracy, poverty and unemployment;
- a deterioration in the quality of education;
- limited access to healthcare services in rural areas and rural people's limited ability to promote and maintain their own healthcare systems;
- the psychosocial and economic effects of HIV and AIDS on rural communities;
- the plight of orphans and vulnerable children who are unable to continue with their education;
- environmental degradation and declining soil productivity; and
- food insecurity and malnutrition.

In order to empower rural communities and achieve these goals, it was necessary to foster literacy skills across all age-groups, while paying particular attention to socially disadvantaged and vulnerable groups such as non-literate women and men, HIV-positive people, out-of-school youth, orphans, vulnerable children and primary school pupils with poor literacy skills. Hence, the Integrated Intergenerational Literacy Project (IILP) was conceived for the key purpose of promoting intergenerational literacy skills and socio-economic development.

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

In recent years, the government of Uganda has made concerted attempts to reduce the levels of illiteracy among its population through Universal Primary Education (UPE) for children and Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) for adults and out-of-school youth. However, the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of these programmes has been undermined by a lack of adequate resources, an acute shortage of trained manpower, a severe lack of educational and other instructional materials, a shortage of learning spaces and insufficient motivation for teachers and literacy facilitators due to poor working conditions. As a result, many needy people have failed to benefit from the UPE and FAL programmes, and the situation remains particularly dire for disadvantaged rural communities whose access to educational amenities such as libraries, proper educational infrastructure (buildings) and teachers continues to be limited. The situation is further aggravated by the ongoing armed conflict in northern Uganda.

As a result, the rural areas that are home to 80% of Uganda's population continue to suffer from high rates of illiteracy, poor health conditions and poverty. According to recent studies, 30 to 40% of Uganda's adult population is non-literate; the HIV infection rate stands at 6.2%; 30 to 38% of children living in rural areas drop out of school; and 35 to 38% of the population live below the poverty line.

The situation is even worse among the war-affected people of northern Uganda, including Arua district. A 2005 report on the socio-economic conditions in the district revealed that just 41% of those aged 6 to 24 eligible to attend school actually do so, while 3% are temporarily out of school, 28% have left school altogether and a further 28% have never attended school. Of the 135,000 children who had dropped out of school at the time of the study, 68% were girls and 32% were boys – a clear indication that girls' educational opportunities continue to be more limited than boys'.

In addition, the study further revealed that the quality of education in Arua district, as in other rural districts, is adversely affected by a severe lack of

resources and professional teachers, as well as high student-to-teacher ratios and large class sizes. As a result, most children graduate from the primary school level without having mastered basic literacy and numeracy skills, and many of them fail to proceed to secondary level. Similarly, the few adult literacy centres that exist in the rural areas face severe resource and manpower shortages, making the provision of efficient and effective literacy instruction extremely problematic. It was in response to these challenges and gaps in the rural education sector that IILP was conceived. IILP is currently the only literacy programme in the district and has attracted over 300 children and 500 adult learners. To date, the project has established a total of 15 intergenerational literacy learning centres in Arua district.

Project Objectives

As noted above, URLCODA's main objective is to foster literacy skills as a means of empowering rural communities and promoting socio-economic development and transformation. The underlying principle is therefore to promote literacy for sustainable local development. Hence, the IILP aims to:

- foster the development of literate, peaceful societies through intergenerational learning, lifelong learning and literacy skills development;
- empower rural families to engage in sustainable livelihood activities;
- foster the active participation of parents, pupils and local leaders in the development of the education system and schools in their communities,
- equip communities with the livelihood skills needed to improve agricultural productivity, generate income and overcome poverty,
- promote social empowerment, particularly that of women, in order to prevent domestic violence and to foster inclusive community participation in decision making, leadership and environmental conservation;
- provide mother-child health and nutritional education that equips mothers with the skills needed to improve both their own health and that of their children;
- promote community health education in order to prevent the spread of diseases, especially HIV/AIDS, and address the socio-economic and psychological consequences of poor health by establishing psychosocial support groups and income-generating activities for the infected and affected; and
- provide assistance to HIV and AIDS orphans and other vulnerable children, including girls, in the form of basic school materials that motivate them to remain in school and complete their education.

APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

The main focus of the project is to provide intergenerational literacy education that boosts people's ability to respond to the challenges confronting their communities. The aim is to build the literacy skills of all people, irrespective of age or economic status, so that each member of society can make a meaningful contribution to the process of social transformation. To this end, the IILP employs a unique approach which integrates livelihoods and life skills training into literacy learning, focusing on:

- health education;
- skills training for income-generation activities and poverty eradication;
- agricultural training;
- environmental conservation; and
- the production of relevant and cost-effective homemade/locally made learning materials to support the learning process.

Formal literacy classes are conducted twice a week from 2 to 6 p.m. Each literacy centre has an average of 50 - 80 learners and 3 volunteer educators at any given time. Most of the volunteer educators are primary school teachers or medical personnel who are recruited and trained in adult education by URLCODA. The educators are encouraged to employ a variety of teaching methods in order to motivate and capture the attention of learners. Key methods include: lectures; focus group discussions and debates; role play and field exchange visits which allow learners to learn from each others' experiences. In addition, informal literacy campaigns are also conducted by means of public lectures in churches, trading centres and market places, as well as through literacy based health competitions or peace-building activities.

Innovative strategies are being employed to increase the number of volunteer educators. For example, current volunteers are now developing a concept known as Virtual Rural Community Healthcare Volunteers (VRCHV) to handle community health literacy week activities. This approach will require just one person to be based at the centre, while the others can be accessed using a variety of ICTs.

Furthermore, URLCODA is working to improve the outreach and effectiveness of IILP through close collaboration with governmental and non-governmental organizations in the field of community development. One such organization is the Uganda Programme for Human and Holistic Development (UPHOLD) that facilitates dialogue and consensus-building between families, communities, teachers and other stakeholders. Similarly, URLCODA has developed a good partnership with the local government, non-governmental organizations and a missionary hospital in Arua and works with them on the implementation of community health literacy week activities. Such partnerships have proved to be an efficient and cost-effective means of providing health services and literacy education to a large proportion of the rural population.

PROJECT IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

Impact and Achievements

The following lists a number of the project's achievements:

Around 800 intergenerational literacy learners (300 children and 500 adults) were mobilised in 15 learning centres located in four sub-counties in Arua district. Most adults (about 450) were illiterate when they first joined the programme. However, by the time it had finished, most had acquired basic competencies, i.e. they were able to read a few pages of texts written in the vernacular, understand directions,

and read numbers and words written on sign posts and doors in hospitals and health units.

In February 2005, 800 intergenerational literacy learners demanded to sit an assessment test. 600 learners eventually took the test and 570 of them achieved the pass mark required by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development that oversees adult literacy provisions in Uganda.

80% of the women participating in IILP who claimed to have been unable to read their children's end-of-term report cards were able to do so after completing the programme. At least 250 mothers have reported that they are now able to check their children's homework. Furthermore, the goal of gender empowerment has been achieved, as demonstrated by the increasing number of female IILP participants taking an active role in community development activities, including politics, with at least 30 of the URLCODA programme's female participants having won positions in recent Local Council I and II elections.

Teaching adults together with children (intergenerational learning) has empowered parents to act both as social mentors (childcare givers) and teachers as they formally transmit their wisdom to children and youth during IILP classes. This is having a positive impact on the behaviour and performance of children at school and in the communities, while at the same time giving them a more optimistic outlook on the future.

URLCODA literacy learners participated in a series of book writers' workshops which resulted in the production of 600 copies of a book entitled: 'Buku 'Bani E'dozu Waraga Laza Onizuri', a pictorial reader for beginners. The book has been distributed to 15 learning centres in Arua district and is currently used as the principal resource book. The participation of learners' representatives in the production of the book was a motivational learning experience that also gave the communities a strong sense of project ownership, responsibility and control. The public and vibrant book launch furthermore inspired other learners to join the programme. It also attracted community and institutional support.

Encouraging collaborative linkages between the adult literacy programme and the formal school system has also encouraged local educational development cooperations. Teachers demonstrated their support for adult literacy by their active participation at the book launch.

URLCODA now provides guidance and counselling as well as uniforms and other scholastic materials to 664 HIV/AIDS orphans and other vulnerable children in 12 primary schools and 1 vocational school. This has gone a long way towards boosting the morale of HIV-positive parents and vulnerable children's guardians participating in URLCODA's literacy project, and has also improved pupil retention in primary schools.

URLCODA has succeeded in communicating adolescent reproductive health and HIV/AIDS prevention messages to over 10,000 adolescents in four primary schools and one secondary school in one sub-county.

Through URLCODA's literacy project, at least 50 HIV-positive people have come forward and a club known as the URLCODA HIV/AIDS Club has been formed to help them. This club now has a poultry project to generate income and help meet members' nutritional needs.

In the last three years, the community health literacy week has enabled over 40,000 people to receive general health and HIV/AIDS education and over 2,000 people to come forward to take an HIV test. Those who did so attributed their decision to take the test to the free and open interaction that they had experienced during the literacy classes.

Challenges

Despite the successes noted above, the effective implementation of this project is hampered by a number of challenges, which include:

- limited funding, which is preventing the project from producing adequate learning materials or paying stipends to volunteer educators to compensate them for lost productive time. The lack of instructional materials, particularly books for home-based reading practice, impacts negatively on learners' ability to master the literacy skills learned at the centres; and
- URLCODA is yet to develop a systematic programme monitoring and evaluation mechanism. The project currently depends on internal assessments carried out by volunteer educators, and comments from participants in community health literacy week activities and the family sanitation and hygiene competition. However, this does not yield objective results which could further strengthen the project.

LESSONS LEARNED

In the course of implementing this project, it has become clear that local people are self-motivated to learn but lack access to education or reading materials. Given this high level of motivation, it has also been realised that all that is needed to mobilise many learners is a little investment and an awareness campaign. However, IILP still lacks the capital needed to implement the programme effectively.

The project has benefited greatly from positive linkages between communities, members of URLCODA and nearby primary schools, as evidenced by the high turnout of primary school teachers and members of the local communities during the book launch.

The spirit of voluntarism can help rural communities to access services that would otherwise have been unavailable to them. This is something that needs to be promoted, particularly in the case of the young generation.

Meaningful partnerships and collaboration enable organizations with limited resources to carry out essential community-based activities that many other NGOs do not provide. Furthermore, effective partnerships prevent the duplication of efforts and therefore the wastage of limited resources.

Producing tangible results can transform negative attitudes towards voluntarism in community development programmes into positive ones. For instance, last year's community

health literacy week attracted 16 volunteer doctors compared to 3 in 2005 and 2006 respectively. The health week combines literacy with issues of treatment and rational drug use by the rural communities.

SUSTAINABILITY

In an attempt to address the challenges posed by a lack of adequate funding, URLCODA has established a grinding mill and poultry projects. The vision is to plough the income generated from these project into IILP in order to ensure its long-term sustainability.

Learners are also being encouraged and assisted to form loan and savings club, both to boost their livelihood skills and as a means of attracting and retaining more literacy learners. As membership grows, it is hoped that the members will contribute to the production of learning materials.

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BAHRAIN

The Mother-Child Home Education Programme (MOCEP)

Programme Title
The Mother-Child Home Education Programme (MOCEP)

Implementing Organization
MOCEP, Bahrain

Language of Instruction
Arabic

Programme Partners
Bahrain Red Crescent Society, private and public business companies

Date of Inception
2000

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The Kingdom of Bahrain is an archipelago of islands located in the Arabian Gulf and has a population of just over one million people. According to the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (2006), Bahrain is one of the fastest growing economies in the Arab World due to the growth of its oil industries (which accounts for 30% of the GDP and 60% of export receipts) and the financial (banking), construction and tourism sectors. Economic growth has resulted in high standards of living for many people since the government is able to fund social amenities as well as to provide social security services. For example, as of 2008, the unemployment rate was about 3.8% but jobless people receive unemployment benefits from the government. Attendance in primary and secondary school is high, due in part, to the fact that schooling is paid for by the government and is compulsory for all children under 15. Because of increased State support of education, the literacy rate in Bahrain rose from 45% in 1984 to 97% and 87% by 2005, for young people and adults, respectively.

Despite these impressive gains in primary and secondary education, most Bahraini children, particularly those from poor families, still have limited access to comprehensive and quality early childhood education (ECE) due to: poverty and limited State investment in or support of ECE programmes (in fact, comprehensive early education programmes are non-existent in the country) and the fact that child participation in pre-school classes is largely seen as a luxury. A study by Hadeed and Sylva (1994) covering the 1989 to 1994 period revealed that about 70% of children under six years old were not attending pre-primary school. Similarly, UNESCO noted that the net enrolment ratio (NER) in pre-primary education in 2005 for children aged 3 to 5 years was 46% which suggest that well over half the pre-school aged population has no access to ECE. Given that limited access to quality ECE has negative effects on child development which, in turn, undermines child performance at primary and post-primary school, The Mother-Child Home Education Programme (MOCEP) was initiated in 2000 to empower poor families to provide early childhood literacy training to their children through a home-based intergenerational literacy training approach.

THE MOTHER-CHILD HOME EDUCATION PROGRAMME (MOCEP)

The Mother-Child Home Education Programme (MOCEP) has its roots in Turkey where The Mother Child Education Foundation (AÇEV) was instituted over 20 years ago. AÇEV grew out of a research study conducted at Bogazi University that was designed to improve pre-school education for poor families throughout Turkey. AÇEV has been a huge success and is now operating under the auspices of Turkey's Ministry of Education.

Based on the AÇEV experiences, MOCEP was launched in Bahrain in 2000. Prior to its launch, MOCEP was translated into Arabic and adapted to the local social systems and familial norms in order to enhance its effectiveness. Currently, MOCEP is assisting 200 families per year throughout the country with support from the Bahrain Red Crescent Society and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The latter provides the social centres where MOCEP classes are held.

MOCEP has since evolved into an important regional ECE training centre and is now operating in other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries (i.e. Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates).

Aims and Objectives

MOCEP is an intergenerational educational empowerment programme for parents (especially mothers) and pre-school children living in poverty. The programme endeavours to:

- address the lack of pre-school/ECE educational opportunities for poor Bahrainis as well as the lack of awareness and knowledge about the importance of ECE in child development among these families
- foster the development of functional literacy skills among adults (mothers) as the primary care-givers in order to empower them to provide literacy skills training to their own children in preparation for their enrolment in primary school
- empower entire families, especially women, through the provision of comprehensive education in order to

enable them to venture into viable livelihood activities – currently, a significant percentage of MOCEP female graduates also pursue self- or formal employment activities
- improve child-rearing skills through educational training
- stimulate social and community networking through literacy programmes
- use educational training to empower communities to respond positively to their existing social needs and challenges.

Overall, the principal aim of MOCEP is to promote home-based pre-school literacy training for children because, as revealed in many studies, children who have access to quality ECE have greater capacity to reach their full educational potential. The use of an intergenerational approach to ECE training is not only intended to empower parents to be first teachers but also to develop positive parental attitudes about education as well as encouraging them to support their children through their education.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION: APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

In order to ensure successful and effective implementation, MOCEP is guided by the following key principles:

- Base literacy skills training programmes on research and use evidence to influence public policy.
- Base the programme on an intergenerational plan with long-term objectives.
- Provide professionally-trained staff with flexibility to change roles according to services provided. Offer staff opportunities for ongoing in-service training.
- Make frequent home visits to participants in order to ensure programme sustainability and to discourage participants from dropping out.
- Closely link intervention with community and government agencies (social services, personal support, food supplies, employment, prenatal care, etc.).
- Be flexible so as to adapt to changing circumstances as well as participants' changing needs.
- Adopt a contextual view of the child within the family and the family within the community.
- Provide for emergency backup resources and services (transport, visits, etc.) to ensure quality.
- Do not employ a hierarchical structure in the intervention; all staff members should have an equal voice in decision making. Teamwork makes for success.
- Ongoing evaluation and feedback from participants are central to successful programme implementation.

Recruitment and Training of Trainers

Programme facilitators or teachers are recruited from their respective Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states but are trained in Bahrain which is the headquarters and official training centre for MOCEP professionals. A published and certified training manual for facilitators has been developed. MOCEP strives to maintain high ECE standards and accordingly, only bilingual (English and Arabic) college graduates are recruited and trained as facilitators. Several facilitators have degrees in social work, psychology, education and business.

Facilitators undergo intensive training which is subsequently followed by an ongoing in-service training programme over a one-year period. Trained facilitators are encouraged to actively participate in the development, design, implementation and improvement of the MOCEP.

Enrolment of Participants

MOCEP targets entire families but participants should be from low-income, socially disadvantaged families who cannot afford to support their children through pre-school education. Particular focus is, however, on training mothers in literacy skills and in providing pre-school educational training opportunities to children aged between five and six years in preparation for their enrolment in primary school.

MOCEP provides incentives to attract participants. These include free training, transportation to training venues and free material packs. Each family is also assigned a personal professional mentor who not only assists in and guides the family learning process but also ensures that the family does not drop out of the programme.

Training of Participants

MOCEP is an intergenerational, six-month ECE and literacy training programme which primarily focuses on two key areas and components of action:

Mother Support Programme (MSP): A series of weekly discussions and lectures (including planned parenthood discussions) for mothers

Cognitive Training Programme (CTP): Provision of cognitive training materials/activities to mothers so that they can teach their own children literacy at home before their entry into primary school.

The MOCEP teaching approach for the parents (mostly mothers) is dynamic yet structured. Typically, adult participants follow a structured day-by-day programme of activities which they are encouraged to replicate at home with their children (MSP). Various teaching methodologies are used during literacy classes and these include lectures, question and answer sessions, practical group/cooperative activities and discussions on a variety of subjects in child development. Key focus topics include child discipline, health and safety, positive parenting, nutrition, planned parenthood and communication skills.

Apart from classroom-based learning, participants also receive specially designed material packs for home-based learning under the CTP. The packs are intended to promote continuous adult learning as well as to stimulate home-based literacy skills training for children. Home-based family learning is supported and reinforced by trained MOCEP professionals through ongoing weekly home visits to programme participants. The Home Visitation Scheme is the most strategic and powerful tool of the MOCEP because it leads to the establishment of supportive social structures and values for lifelong learning.

The overall goal of the MOCEP through the MSP and CTP strategies is therefore to promote comprehensive and intergenerational literacy skills training and lifelong learning for parents and their children. The ultimate intention is, on the one hand, to nurture functional literacy skills development for parents in order to enable them to have a constructive interest and input in promoting early childhood literacy skills development through home-based learning and care-giving. On the other hand, being intergenerational, the programme is also intended to empower families to improve their lives through the establishment of lifelong functional relationships.

PROGRAMME IMPACT AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Monitoring and Evaluation

The programme is highly flexible and provides no strict timeframes for participation and does not offer grades to participants at the end of the sessions. The main goal is to enable participants to gain, digest and make sense of the information shared and use it to improve their lives. In light of this, feedback for evaluation purposes is given at weekly meetings. In addition, programme teachers make weekly visits to encourage, support and guide mothers and children during home-based learning sessions. The visits are also used to monitor and assess the learning progress of participants. Generally, it has been observed that children show significant gains early in the programme intervention.

In addition, the programme has also been professionally evaluated, the results of which are contained in a published book: J. Hadeed (2004) Poverty Begins At Home: The Mother-Child Education Programme (MOCEP) In the Kingdom of Bahrain. The study critically examines the impact of MOCEP on child development and family relations as detailed below.

Impact and Achievements

The evaluation of MOCEP's impact (2001) was undertaken using a

random sample of 96 pre-school children and their families. Another set of 75 families served as a control group for comparison purposes. The study measured the effects of the programme on child development with regards to cognitive, social and emotional competencies as well as its impact on parental attitudes and beliefs regarding childrearing and development. The following were key findings:

Child Development

Cognitive abilities: Intervention children significantly outperformed control-group children, four to one, on verbal, reasoning and spatial ability measures.

Self-concept measure: Intervention children had significantly higher scores than control-group children on self-concept competency and acceptance measures.

Social skills and behaviour problems: As a result of the programme, intervention children had fewer behavioural problems than control-group children.

Quality of mother-child relationship: Mother-child relationships involved less over-dependency and conflict for intervention participants than for control-group participants.

Parent, Family and Home Influences on Child Development

Parental beliefs and practices (strategies) for disciplining children: The intervention predicted a significant reduction in the lax (permissive) parenting strategy, whereas harsh parenting was associated with lower cognitive abilities and firm parenting was associated with higher social skill scores.

Parental child-rearing orientations (beliefs and values): Progressive parenting beliefs were correlated with higher cognitive/social abilities and fewer behavioural problems, whereas traditional parenting beliefs reinforced less social competency and over-dependent parent-child relationships

Quality of home environment: In comparison with control group families, intervention families provided significantly more stimulation for learning, warmer, more affectionate relationships and less physical punishment at home.

In summary, the research findings provide clear evidence that MOCEP works effectively to improve children's skills and abilities before they enter primary school and it promotes positive changes in parenting skills and home environments for early learning.

CHALLENGES

Despite a huge demand and great need for literacy training by poor families across the country, to date MOCEP has only served a fraction of the families in need of educational intervention in Bahrain. Each year we are unable to serve all the families that register for the programme due to lack of funding support. There is therefore the need to secure long-term funding from donors and internal income generating activities by MOCEP.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Home-based learning is a cost-effective strategy of assisting socially, economically, and culturally disadvantaged families to attain literacy skills.
- ECE provides children with an essential academic foundation for long-term learning.
- Intergenerational literacy skills training programmes empower families with the appropriate skills and knowledge necessary to construct functional and positive relationships.
- Home-based family learning addresses the challenges faced by those with learning and physical disabilities, poor health conditions and abuse which can prevent children and their families from accessing education.
- Home-based learning makes it easy for learners to improve their literacy skills through feedback from their family members.
- Adult literacy training increases parental interest in and support of child education. This, in turn, leads to improved child attendance and performance in school.

SUSTAINABILITY

MOCEP's long-term survival depends on the reality that ECE programmes are in huge demand in Bahrain since the population is young and growing. Furthermore, State pre-school services remain largely under-developed and children in socially disadvantaged communities have to be taught by their families before enrolling in primary school. In addition, MOCEP has also launched a complimentary programme, the Father Support Programme (FSP) which will be piloted from 2009. The FSP is based on the basic principle that fathers like mothers, play a critical role in child upbringing and development. The FSP is therefore intended to develop the fathers' parenting skills in order to enhance their capacity to foster positive child development. In a nutshell, there are great opportunities for MOCEP to expand. As such, MOCEP has to secure sustainable funding in order to ensure the long-term survival of the project.

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PALESTINE

The Early Childhood, Family and Community Education Programme

Programme Title
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 Kiriat Yearim, the Harris Foundation (USA), the Stella and Charles Guttman Foundation (USA)

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The economy of Palestine (East Jerusalem, West Bank and Gaza Strip) 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: develop and maintain the Palestinian identity; improve the quality of life for the Palestinian people; and 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

Background

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 adequate 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.

PROJECT IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

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 progress 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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AUSTRALIA

Reading Together

Programme Title
Reading Together

Implementing Organization
State Library of Tasmania (Tasmanian Education Department)

Language of Instruction
Anglais

Date of Inception
2004

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Tasmania is an island State within the Australian Federation. As in mainland Australia, the State of Tasmania is obliged by the Education Act (1994) to provide free and compulsory public education to all persons below the age of 15. However, across the Australian Federation, Tasmania has the lowest adult literacy rates as well as the lowest school retention rates for young students after year 10. In addition, many children are not exposed to Early Childhood Education (ECE) and therefore commence their primary education with limited literacy skills. In order to address these challenges, the Tasmanian Education Department – through the Adult and Community Education Sector (ACES) and the State Library – initiated the Reading Together Literacy Programme (RTLP) in 2004. After being piloted in four locations, the programme grew rapidly and is currently being implemented at 22 centres across the State.

THE READING TOGETHER PROGRAMME (RTLP)

The RTLP is an intergenerational literacy programme that targets socially disadvantaged families and in particular, parents or care-givers with children aged between 3 and 4 years (i.e. pre-school children). Accordingly, the programme combines aspects of ECE and adult education in order to address the distinctive literacy needs of the targeted participants.

The programme is based on the underlying principle that the learners and particularly children's ability to effectively master literacy skills relies on:

- reading aloud (interpersonal reading) on a regular basis;
- progressive learning of the alphabet;
- the development of phonemic awareness through rhymes, song and games; and
- the development of sound – symbol relationships.

Aims and Objectives

The programme has five clear aims:

- Create learning opportunities for parents, care-givers and their children in order to combat illiteracy in the State.
- Nurture a culture of reading and learning within families.
- Empower parents and care-givers with appropriate literacy skills in order to enable them to effectively nurture the educational and psychosocial development of their children.
- Create ECE opportunities for all children in order to enhance their school performance as well as to improve the school retention rates for young students.
- Raise public awareness on the importance of literacy and education as a tool for socio-economic empowerment and development.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION: APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

The RTLP consists of two-hour weekly family sessions conducted by qualified ECE and adult education teachers over a period of three school terms. The teachers provide literacy skills training assistance to parents and their pre-school children through the use of a variety of interpersonal and participatory teaching-learning methods (such as songs, games, story telling and discussions) and various learning aides (picture books, local newspaper and magazine articles, arts and crafts). Furthermore, learning activities are usually tailored to children's levels of psychosocial development. These teaching strategies are intended to use the learners' everyday life experiences as the basis of learning and thus to promote and sustain their interest in the programme.

In addition, parents also receive specialized training or mentorship in appropriate ECE practices in order to enable them to effectively support their children's reading and literacy development through home or family-based teaching-learning activities. Adult participants are also allowed to borrow books for home-based family learning.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Internal evaluation of the programme is undertaken by both professional teachers and adult participants. This occurs at two distinctive levels:

Informal evaluation: teachers are encouraged to hold ongoing and open discussions with adult participants in order to gauge and incorporate their views and aspirations in the programme. Informal discussions also

allows teachers to assess the impact or lack thereof of the programme on individual participants.

Formal evaluation: the programme has developed feedback forms which allow participants to evaluate the programme anonymously. Questions addressed by the feedback forms include:

- How does your child feel about attending the Reading Together programme activities?
- What parts of the session do you think they enjoy most?
- Since they began attending Reading Together what changes have you noticed in regard to your child's competence the following areas: Books and Stories, Nursery Rhymes and the Alphabet?
- How do you feel about the Reading Together Sessions?
- What aspects of the programme do you feel are most valuable?

IMPACT

The programme has created learning opportunities for many families in Tasmania. Currently, the programme benefits more than 175 adults and 200 children per year.

Feedback received from individual participants and schools indicate that the RTLP is having a positive effect on learners and their families. Significantly, many kindergarten and pre-school teachers report that RTLP child-graduates have greater reading capacity and are therefore able to easily master new literacy skills than their classmates who never participated in the programme. Reports from kindergarten and preschool teachers further indicate that former RTLP participants often have more advanced interpersonal skills and are more enthusiastic to participate in learning activities than their peers. Hence, the provision of appropriate literacy training to children in their formative years has a long-term effect on their entire educational performance.

The programme has also empowered parents to play a critical role in the psychosocial development of their children as well as the development of their communities. In particular, parents who attend RTLP classes reported being better able to assist their children with their school work than before. At the personal level, parents also gained literacy skills which enhanced their confidence and self-esteem.

CHALLENGES

One of the major challenges in the implementation of the RTLP arises from the difficulties of engaging and encouraging adults with limited literacy skills to participate in the programme, as many may consider their situation as a normal aspect of life. In most such cases, the ability of the teacher to develop a relationship with the individual potential participants plays a critical role in sustaining their motivation in attending learning sessions.

SUSTAINABILITY

Although funding remains one of the major constraints limiting the effective implementation of the RTLP, the programme has received political support from the State as well as from political parties. The Tasmanian State Government pledged to fund the programme until 2010 at a rate of AUD150,000 per year in recurrent funding through the «Tasmania: A State of Learning» programme. Additionally, the Tasmanian Labour Party has made commitments to provide a total of AUD 400,000 to the RTP until 2012 under its «Learning for Life» educational policy.

Equally important, over the years, the State Library has also established strong functional relationships with various committed stakeholders who could ensure the sustainability of the programme in the long-term. These include members of the community, child health care centres, kindergartens and pre-schools.

LESSONS LEARNED

The following are critical factors which contribute to the success of family literacy programmes:

- Engagement of professional teachers.
- Learning activities are tailored to participants' (both children and adults) level of literacy development.
- Teachers establish strong functional and professional relationships with learners and other local stakeholders.
- Programme activities are based on the learners' life experiences and also address their distinctive needs.
- The individually designed programmes have a well-established structure and routine with which children become familiar with, in order to increase their potential for mastering the intended skills.

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NEPAL

Family Literacy Programme

Implementing organization
UNESCO Kathmandu Office

Language of instruction
Nepali

Date of inception
2013

Programme Partners
Shikharapur Community Learning Center (SCLC), the Non-Formal Education Centre (NFEC) of the Nepalese Ministry of Education, the Education Resource Development Centre Nepal (ERDCN, a national non-governmental organization), UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, and the Hamburg Institue of Teacher Training and School Development

Funding
The UNESCO Capacity Development for EFA (CapEFA) Programme (through its project 'Building Capacities for Strengthening Literacy and Lifelong Learning in Nepal), voluntary contributions from the governments of Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden, the national government of Nepal and Shikharapur CLC.

Annual programme Costs
USD 3,000

Annual programme cost per learner
USD 38.75

COUNTRY CONTEXT

Nepal has a population of about 27 million and an annual per capita income of USD 750 (World Bank, 2015). Since the introduction of democracy in 1990 Nepal has had twenty governments. Political instability has been a defining feature of life in the country. At present, the Nepali state is undergoing political transition following ten years of violent conflict that ended in 2006. This entails maintaining peace, power-sharing between the major parties and the development of a new constitution.

One challenge facing the country concerns access to secondary education (grades 9–12), which remains disturbingly low with a net enrollment rate of 24%. More than half of students leaving primary school do not enter secondary school, and only half of those who do begin secondary schooling complete it. As a result, despite improvements in the literacy rate of young people, the adult literacy rate in Nepal is low. According to the most recent Human Development Index (2014), Nepal has an adult literacy rate of little more than 50%, with a huge variation between men and women. In 2011, the literacy rate for men was 18 percentage points higher than that for women of the same age. Wide discrepancies exist also in literacy rates among various castes and ethnic groups.

To address this problem, the Nepalese Ministry of Education's Non-Formal Educational Centre has been delivering non-formal education services to various target groups, including people living in remote areas, people experiencing poverty, women, and marginalized castes and ethnic groups. Literacy has been a priority of various ministries and organizations, with a focus on information-sharing, literacy for empowerment, literacy as a support for income-generating activities and literacy in self-determination. Despite these efforts, a high adult illiteracy rate persists. With more than 7.6 million adult illiterates, Nepal needs to develop innovative approaches and improve current literacy programmes if it is to achieve the Education for All (EFA) goals.

IMPLEMENTING ORGANIZATION

Since its establishment in 1998, the UNESCO Office in Kathmandu has been working with the government, development partners and civil society organizations to support national efforts to achieve the Education for All (EFA) goals. Its main priorities have been literacy and teacher training, strengthening the education system,

and planning and managing education. In order to continue supporting the government of Nepal and the Literate Nepal Mission Campaign (LINEM) in their efforts to provide literacy for all, the Education Unit of UNESCO collaborates with the Non-Formal Education Centre (NFEC). Within the Capacity Development for Education for All (CapEFA) framework, an extra-budgetary funding mechanism, UNESCO and NFEC jointly organize activities to increase literacy in general and to strengthen capacities in the non-formal education sector in particular. The NFEC sets up centres across the country to reduce the high number of illiterate adults through non-formal education programmes.

The Shikharapur Community Learning Centre (SCLC), which runs the Family Literacy Programme, is a community-owned institution outside the formal education system. The centre is managed by locals under the guidance of the NFEC and it is part of the Ministry of Education in Nepal. Guided by an inspirational slogan – 'If not here, then where? If not now, then when? If not me, then who?' – the aim of the SCLC is to provide educational and lifelong learning opportunities to communities in order to develop and improve local people's lives. The SCLC believes in non-formal education where experiences are continuously shared by the community and literacy and lifelong learning are promoted. It plays an active role in the development of the community by carrying out health programmes, running non-formal classes for education-deprived people, and enhancing income-generating activities.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The Family Literacy Programme is a pilot initiative run by the Non-Formal Education Centre as part of UNESCO's CapEFA Programme. It benefits from the support of the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning and the Hamburg Teacher Training Institute. The programme's aims are to strengthen the capacities of the government at central, middle and local levels to efficiently plan, implement, monitor and evaluate literacy and non-formal education programmes from a lifelong learning perspective. It offers learning in a family environment, as mothers and their children sit together and share their experiences. Centre facilitators teach the women reading and writing skills and encourage children to support their mothers' learning process. Interviews with the beneficiaries of the pilot family literacy projects show that this methodology empowers both women and children and contributes to the creation of a lifelong learning environment at community level. This innovative approach is supplemented by various non-traditional literacy materials, such as popular folk songs and religious texts. In addition, sixteen newly developed and locally produced learning materials were provided by a national non-governmental organization, the Education Resource Development Centre Nepal (ERDCN). These materials allow learners to link the content of the lessons to their personal lives, which boosts their motivation and interest in developing writing and reading skills.

A second feature of the pilot family literacy project is the way the development of literacy skills is combined with recognition of the participants' prior knowledge. In communities, women, although illiterate, gain a great deal of knowledge in terms of household management and finance, raising children, cooking and family traditions. However, this knowledge often tends to go unnoticed and is not acknowledged by other community members. The learning approach of the programme, which involves cooperation and sharing, makes the knowledge gained more valuable and longstanding.

The Family Literacy Programme is a four-month pilot project which was first implemented in 2013 and is being repeated in 2015. So far, eighty women and children have benefited from the pilot phase of the project.

The plan is to reach out to hundreds of families in the near future.

Aims and Objectives

- To enable women to develop reading and writing skills.
- To provide gender-sensitive non-formal education programmes.
- To improve the life skills and livelihood components of the literacy programmes.
- To empower women by increasing their literacy capabilities and by recognizing how valuable their indigenous knowledge is for the rest of the community.
- To utilize local resources (e.g. schools, children and local organizations) in order to create a sustainable learning environment at the community level.
- To offer access to innovative literacy methods which are addressing the individual learning preferences of participants.
- To enable women to gain greater self-confidence by offering them new ways of interaction with other members of the community.

Programme Implementation

LEARNING APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

The Family Literacy Programme applies a participatory approach with a focus on literacy and building the confidence of participants. Traditionally, facilitators have done most of the talking in literacy classes. However, in this case, learners' participation is at the centre of the activities. The learners organize much of the learning activity themselves. The programme offers a literacy course based on the needs of the women and children. Children are taught during the classes how to teach reading and writing skills to members of their families. As they do not have experience of teaching, the facilitators help by showing them how to teach in easy ways. Interestingly, this new idea has been taken up by them and most of the children are helping their mothers with reading and writing at home. The mothers, in turn, join their children's classes and gain insights into the school experience of their children. This strengthens the relationship not only between mothers and children but also between teachers and families.

During the pilot phase, three classes took place in different community places: the bottle house of an eco-farm, Shikharapur School Centre and Child Care Day Centre. The facilitators taught, on average, between ten and fifteen women and their children twice a week in each of the three classes. The classes ran for around six hours each week. During the lessons, women developed their reading and writing skills together with their children and shared their knowledge of local traditions, rituals, customs and festivals. Each month, a field trip was undertaken to gain inside into different organizations, for instance the Educational Resource Development Center Nepal and the International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development. Moreover, weekly tours within the community were offered to learners, to illustrate the importance of local places. For example, participants were taken to a local water resource to teach them about climate change, to a local temple and monastery to illustrate the importance of religious places and to observe economic activities developed around these places. They were also taken to model community organizations to learn how women can develop themselves.

Programme Content and Teaching Material

The facilitators organized meetings with the villagers and worked with local teachers and politicians in order to develop the content of the course. As the programme took a participatory approach, students were given the opportunity to express their needs and interests, and these were integrated into the class content. This included themes such as traditions, festivals, agriculture and the caste

system. Certain topics, however, were predetermined and the government provided reading material to support teaching in these areas. Awareness sessions were organized beforehand with a focus on topics such as climate change, health, and children's and women's rights. The sessions used chart and paper presentations, with specialists from different organizations sometimes invited to talk about specific issues.

Learning materials such as story books, government literacy books, videos, pictures, song texts, religious texts, newspapers and sixteen family literacy booklets were provided by the Education Resource Development Centre Nepal. These learning materials were, for the most part, developed during the implementation of the pilot project. The team visited classes and interviewed facilitators, organizers and participants in order to develop practical texts and material for the lessons. The sixteen booklets were developed through in-depth analysis of literacy classes and an interactive teaching text development activity. The text development team visited the classes many times and interviewed facilitators, organizers and participants so that they could develop the practical text for that class and future sessions as well. The booklets cover a range of very practical topics, and are accessible to the learners, using big letters and pictures. The main topics featured in the programme were literacy, health and hygiene, rights of women and children, income-generating skills, public speaking, traditions, domestic violence, climate change, earthquakes, water, governmental services, marriage tradition, family, and gardening. During class, information and communication technologies, including videos and internet resources, were used to support the teaching process. Learners were also taught how to use a mobile phone.

Trainers and Facilitators

Since the facilitators are employed on a part-time basis, recruitment was internal, with candidates selected from among graduates of the Open School on the basis of interviews. The facilitators participated in training and workshops offered by the Institute for Teacher Training and School Development. This included exposure to community learning centres and feedback given during meetings and classes. The same facilitators accompanied all three learning groups. They were paid in part by the project with extra financial support from the SCLC.

Learners

People from the local community suggested potential participants who were interested in the programme. During implementation of the project, the facilitators visited the learners' homes and observed their progress and changes. Reading and writing competitions were sometimes organized but participants on the literacy course did not have to take exams. Facilitators noted that both the children and their fathers supported their mothers and wives in becoming literate. This demonstrates a major change in attitude within families.

Monitoring and Evaluation

An external consultant evaluated the pilot project and wrote a final report. The evaluation employed a set of methods and procedures to gather quantitative and qualitative data that formed the basis for the findings and, subsequently, the conclusions. Relevant material related to the overall programme, as well as background material used in project preparation, was reviewed, along with the approved project design, consultants' deliverables, progress reports, action plans and other available documents. A visit to one of the pilot districts in Shikharapur was conducted to facilitate in-depth interviews, site inspection, demonstrations and analysis of the project activities. Interviews were also carried out with staff from partner organizations

which participated in the design and execution of the programme, namely UNESCO, the NFEC, the SCLC and ERDCN. Focus group discussions were organized with project stakeholders and students filled out a questionnaire regarding the course content, methods and materials. Since this is a pilot project, the evaluation has been undertaken by a team of stakeholders.

IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

Impact and Achievements

The capacities of the Non-Formal Education Centre, community learning centres and other literacy providers to deliver an effective literacy service have been enhanced. The life skills and livelihood components of the literacy curricula and materials have also improved with the introduction of family literacy modules, training and workshops, and the development of sixteen literacy booklets. During the pilot project, forty women have learned how to read and write, with the majority of them now fluent readers. Additionally, the children and husbands of the women have benefited from the programme by developing better reading and writing skills. The women also had the chance to practice speaking in public and to learn how to support their children at school. Maya, a participant in the programme, said: 'I am much more confident in what I do and in what I need to do for my daughter.'

The programme also offered a platform to connect parents, children and teachers. Teachers gained insight into the circumstances of the families involved, while mothers with their children learned how better to support each other's learning needs. The platform also created a link between the formal and non-formal education institutions. Moreover, sixteen locally relevant materials were developed and disseminated to people from the community. An unintended outcome of the family literacy strategy, and the use of inter-generational dialogue, was that it fostered a sense of cultural identity among participants.

LESSONS LEARNED

It was noted in the course of the project that students enjoy a playful atmosphere and that the awarding of certificates has a positive effect on the learners. Organizing competitions and quizzes with (informal) certificates is fairly easy for facilitators and supports the learning process. Discussions about popular folk songs and other innovative reading material also supported students' literacy acquisition. The variety of the teaching material was also positively received. Another important lesson was that family literacy classes should be developed by motivating participants to engage on a voluntary basis, while the organization creates a platform for learning and provides a room to meet in and a facilitator to support their learning process. A graduation ceremony should be arranged as it encourages participants to continue their education.

CHALLENGES

There was a shortage of textbooks and other educational materials during the implementation of the project. When the pilot project started participants had no learning materials to work with as they were only developed while the pilot was running. The texts were only ready at the end of the project. The organisation of frequent field visits from respresentatives of stakeholders in order to provide advice to the facilitators also posed a challenge, as did the need to provide a good salary for facilitators. The project also faced a challenge in finding a suitable schedule for participants to attend programme activities. Since children follow their school curriculum, classes with mothers have to take place either early in the morning or late in the evening, or during holidays or weekends.

SUSTAINABILITY

Through the pilot project, Shikharapur CLC staff developed stronger project management skills and now have the opportunity to implement the newly learned approach and methods to the programme which began in February 2015. A plan for the future is to develop family literacy centres in villages to create a learning environment that can shared by interested participants.

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NEW ZEALAND

The Manukau Family Literacy Project

Programme Title
The Manukau Family Literacy Project

Implementing Organization
City of Manukau Education Trust (COMET)

Language of Instruction
English

Funding
Ministry of Education

Date of Inception
2002

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Family literacy programmes have been in circulation in countries such as the USA and England since the 1970s, but they are relatively new to New Zealand. The term "family literacy" is not universal, but generally refers to interactive literacy and learning activities between parents and their children, training for parents regarding how to be involved in the education of their children and parent literacy training that leads to economic self-sufficiency. The key component is the recognition of adult participants as learners in their own right.

In the wake of the 1996 International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) in New Zealand, concern regarding adult literacy increased. The survey's findings showed that a significant proportion of the New Zealand adult population, around one in five, had noticeable literacy difficulties and demonstrated that a need for literacy improvement was not confined to any particular socioeconomic group. The government then developed a national adult literacy strategy that emphasised the involvement of families and the diversification of adult literacy programmes in the workplace. Following this new government strategy, there has been a move towards increasing learning opportunities for adults with literacy needs in New Zealand. In recent years, a variety of organisations have developed family literacy programmes that incorporate both the parents and their children in learning together and individually. Since a large proportion of children having difficulties with literacy and numeracy come from families in which the parents have similar problems, family literacy programmes have proven to be a useful means to address literacy and bridge the intergenerational gap so as to curb perpetuation of the problem. Family literacy programmes are unique in the way that they break conventional moulds of education by incorporating both parents and their children in the learning process.

THE MANUKAU FAMILY LITERACY PROJECT

The Manukau Family Literacy Project (MFLP) grew out of an initiative by the Literacy Taskforce of the City of Manukau Education Trust (COMET). COMET is a non-profit organization located in southern Auckland's Manukau City, which is one of New Zealand's lowest socioeconomic areas with a culturally diverse population. The third largest city in Auckland is growing fast and home to more than 165 different ethnic groups, including a high concentration of indigenous Maori and Pacific Islanders. This region has a disproportionate number of adults and children who, according to IALS data, have had little formal schooling resulting in low literacy skills. Therefore, COMET mainly targets the Maori and Pacific Islander groups in this area to support and encourage educational opportunities in the city. Within the wider Manukau region, COMET works alongside 95 Primary schools and 40 Secondary schools, as well as business and community partners.

The programme was originally modelled and influenced by the work of the National Centre for Family Literacy (NCFL) in Louisville, Kentucky (USA) and programmes associated with this centre. The visit of an NCFL staff member in 2002 provided some initial stimulus for the project, for resource material and staff training. Funding was secured from the Ministry of Education to establish two pilot sites for the project. The two pilot sites ran their programme successfully from 2003 to 2004 so that a third and fourth site were added in 2004 and 2005 respectively. Although this support has been gratefully acknowledged, the MFLP has since evolved and developed its own methods that,are tailored, as the programme progesses, to the local environment and philosophy.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION: APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

The MFLP is an intergenerational programme. An adult family member such as a mother, father or grandparent enrols in an adult education class that is based at the same educational site as their child's. Both MFLP sites are located in primary school classrooms and entail three partner institutions – a kindergarten, a primary school and a tertiary provider. The kindergartens and the primary schools work with the children enrolled in the programme and link the child (one per parent) with their parent or family member for key parts of the programme such as Parents and Child Together Time (PACTT). Indeed, the experience so far has shown that the programmes will vary from site to site because of the particular characteristics and strengths of each location. Nevertheless, the same framework for family literacy is exhibited throughout all of the locations. In the overall context of educational

approaches in New Zealand, this programme marks a radical change: It works across age groups and has sought funding from a range of different agencies such as the Ministry of Social Development and the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC), so it does not fit conveniently into the conventional institutions.

Parent and Child Together Time (PACTT)

This model involves adults attending a tertiary programme in their children's school where an adult educator is employed and responsible for teaching the adult participants about child development, as well as some involvement in other components of the programme such as participation in the reading and numeracy aspect of their child's schoolwork. The parent and child have PACTT for roughly 20 minutes per day, four times a week. This method has proven to have an appeal for the participants who value getting involved in the education of their children.

Target Group

The main target groups of this programme are adult learners, mostly women, who have historically been underrepresented in New Zealand's schooling system. Low-skilled workers and those with literacy, numeracy and language difficulties are targeted in order to substantially increase literacy in the region. These adults have generally not finished school or left school early with few or no basic skills and gone on to work in low-skilled and low-status jobs. This not only affects the ambition and aspiration for the future of the parent but also his/her family, namely the children. Therefore, MFLP targets these families in order to build confidence through education in the parent and the child for their future.

Programme Objective

The MFLP's aim is to improve the basic skills of parents with poor education who want to support their children's learning. This model is based on a conventional model of family literacy of adult education, parent education, and child and parent time together. It is important to build up the literacy skills of adults to a level from which they can proceed to a higher education programme or employment while working on their children's skills so that they can face their children's schooling with confidence and see them achieve at or ahead of their age-group level.

Adult participants attend 30 hours of instruction per week, with classes ranging from reading, writing and computing skills to parenting skills, giving them knowledge that will help the family. All of the classes emphasise a strong basic skills component, early development studies, and a developmental education programme. The children who participate in this programme follow their conventional curriculum in their kindergarten or primary school and meet with their parents for 20 minutes every day for PACTT. Creating time for parents and children to work together on literacy and educational activities is a primary objective of the MFLP programme. The topics and activities are planned by the family literacy teacher and the parent together so as to involve the parent more in the education of their child.

IMPACT AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PROGRAMME

A 2005 evaluation of the MFLP showed that the programme has had considerable impact on the participants, their families, the participating institutions and the community. So far, the programme has involved around 100 families. More than 90% of adult participants have graduated from the programme, and three quarters have moved on to degree programmes. Nearly half of the adults have entered employment or some combination of employment and continuing study. It has concluded that for every dollar spent on the MFLP, the return to the community is worth nearly USD 10.

In another evaluation report in July 2003, all the participants in the survey felt that their enrolled children had benefited from being part of the programme; such as improved completion of homework, greater motivation to go to school, improved reading skills and better parent/child interaction and communication. They all also reported that they felt that the programme had helped them in their parenting skills and improved relationships with their children. Because of the inherent nature of this programme, the entire family is often affected but many of the participants reported that they still had strong support from their families for their involvement and that this support had steadily increased over the duration of the course.

CHALLENGES

As in the case of any new programme, the MFLP has been confronted with obstacles during its development. Nevertheless, tackling these issues head-on has enriched the programme and the lives of its participants.

In relation to adult learning, the assessment of literacy gain can be problematic. While there are specific literacy skill components taught and assessed in each of the pilot programmes, there is currently no valid, universal measurement tool available that can be used to measure adult literacy achievements.

The facilitators' salary for the adult education component has probably been the most difficult element to incorporate into the programme. It requires a tertiary provider to supply payment for a full-time teacher (approx. 25 hours per week) off-site for a minimum of 20 weeks, extending to 40 weeks over the full year.

Recruiting the appropriate professionals has not been easy. On the one hand, there is no precedent to the MFLP in New Zealand and so it is unclear what exactly is required of the teacher. On the other hand, finding people to work on a short-term basis, which is what this programme entails, is easier said than done.

LESSONS LEARNED

Family literacy breaks the mould, in the sense that it is not stratified by age like most educational systems. It requires early childhood, school and

adult educators to work together, and to understand each other's "language" and philosophies, in ways they have not done before. It takes time to learn and adapt to each of the parties and how they do things in order to work in collaboration with one another.

Since the PACTT is a one-on-one exercise, parents with more than one child have a hard time only registering one of their children for the PACTT project.

Developing and running a family literacy programme is a complex undertaking which is particularly true of a pilot project. Because there are a number of institutions (kindergarten, primary school and tertiary providers) participating in the overall programme, it is not clear who "owns" the project and therefore who has the final say in making the decisions. Establishing the importance of a lead agency such as COMET has helped in resolving some of these concerns.

When it comes to family literacy, it is important that each member of the programme is constantly communicating with the teacher, child and parent to make sure that all participants are meeting their goals and expectations of the programme.

SUSTAINABILITY

The long-term sustainability of the MFLP is based on the support received from the Ministry of Education and the tertiary organisations involved. It is vital to sustain strong relationships between the different organisations in order to continue carrying out the programme in an effective manner. The MFLP has been very successful in improving participants' academic skills and raising their long-term objectives. There is evidence that many participants who have now finished the programme are going on to achieve these ambitions such as continuing their education or are working in some form of gainful employment.

The programme provides a positive example of lifelong learning in action for the adult and children in the community. The two pilot programmes launched in 2002 and 2003 have proved to be a success and therefore more projects have been underway. The MFLP has expanded in 2004 and 2005 and hopes that this growth will continue with the support of the community and the government.

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VANUATU

Vanuatu Literacy Education Programme (VANLEP)

Programme Title
Vanuatu Literacy Education Project (VANLEP, also known as the Book Flood Project). VANLEP has a constituent (sub-)project, the Family Literacy Programme (FLP), which targets parents as educators

Implementing Organization
Polytechnic of New Zealand Company (PINZ) in partnership with the Ministry of Education; Vanuatu in partnership with the Institute of Education, University of the South Pacific (USP)

Language of Instruction
English for teachers and trainers; Bislama for trainees/participants (parents, care givers and youth)

Funding
New Zealand International Aid Development Programme (NZAid) under its Education Assistance Programme for Vanuatu (NZEAP)

Annual Programme Costs
approx. USD 30,000

Date of Inception
2005

INTRODUCTION: CONTEXTUAL ISSUES

Vanuatu is an island state in the South Pacific. Its developing economy is primarily based on agriculture and tourism. Investment in education is low, particularly in the remote rural areas where the majority of the nation's population resides. This explains the poor literacy rates among the rural population. A base-line national survey commissioned by the Ministry of Education (in 2003) with funding and technical assistance from New Zealand International Development Aid (NZAid) estimated that literacy levels in rural schools/areas totalled just 30%. According to the survey, this was due to low governmental investment in education and limited family support and participation in the education system. The results of the survey underscored the need for all national stakeholders, particularly the Government, to prioritise educational investment as well as to use education as a principal strategy for promoting national development. Adult literacy programmes were seen as vital for the empowerment of adults and the national workforce. It is in this context that the Vanuatu Literacy Education Project (VANLEP) was developed and continues to be implemented.

THE VANUATU LITERACY EDUCATION PROJECT (VANLEP)

In light of the education sector challenges identified by the survey, an education turn-around strategy was initiated. This strategy is the Vanuatu Literacy Education Project (VANLEP - also commonly known as the Book Flood Project). VANLEP is a book-based campaign against illiteracy that is being implemented by PINZ in partnership with the Institute of Education (USP). The programme is part of New Zealand's NZEAP to Vanuatu which endeavours to promote and enhance current efforts in upgrading education in the country and, particularly, in increasing literacy levels among children living in rural areas. To achieve this, the project mainly targets primary school children in the lower grades (classes 3 and 4) who are, on average, aged between 8 and 9 years. The aim of to combat illiteracy among young children at an age when they are still self-motivated to learn and more receptive to internalising new ideas. To enhance its effectiveness and sustainability, the programme also works in close partnership with parents. Such links are seen as vital to the development and promotion of parental education and learning at home (i.e. parents as "first teachers"). Thus, VANLEP both promotes the 'traditional' parental roles of nurturing and socialising children through the provision of basic livelihood needs (such as food and housing) and fosters parental involvement in the cognitive development of children by allowing parents to participate formally in the educational process. As a result, the project encourages parents to spend more time with their children and help them to learn by offering reading and writing assistance and through story telling. In order for parents to be able to offer their children this assistance, it is crucial for adult literacy programmes to be implemented that ensure that parents are equipped with the necessary skills.

Aims and Objectives

The project aims to:

- promote literacy and improve literacy learning outcomes (rates) among children living in (remote) rural areas within the context of and in order to achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals (UN MDGs);
- create a stimulating learning environment by equipping schools and classrooms with the best children's books available (Book Flood), as well as stationery and steel cabinets for the safe-keeping of books. This project component also involves the production and printing of context-specific and relevant Vanua books such as the Vanuatu School Journal for 8 -12 year-olds (primary level);
- promote capacity-building among parents and teachers so that they can act as effective educators. Measures include: the training of teachers (in educational methodologies, classroom management and organization);

and the training of parents and community trainers/educators (train-the-trainer strategy) in order to develop important literacy skills which enable them to be effective home teachers/educators;
- update the school curriculum with the assistance of the Curriculum Development Centre, so that it reflects national priorities and needs, as well as the specific needs of rural people;
- forge effective partnerships and cooperation between the communities and schools (parents and teachers) in order to make the programme sustainable in the long term; and
- encourage parents to play a practical and proactive role in developing education in their communities and in assisting their children with the learning process.

APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

To implement the project, a number of strategies and methodologies have been adopted. These include:

Schools development: A key strategic component of the project is the 'Book Flood' concept which involves 'flooding' schools with high-quality educational books, stationery and other learning materials. Books are made available to learners for everyday use through the creation of Reading Corners in classrooms (classroom libraries), which in turn further encourage learners to read. This is a necessary (and inevitable) strategy, as most schools lack the basic resources needed in order for effective and sustainable learning to take place.

Capacity-building: This involves the provision of ongoing professional training assistance that enables teachers to be effective educators as well as equipping them to nurture the development of critical and analytical minds, humane attitudes and behaviours among learners. Here, the project focuses on teaching methodologies, classroom management and organization skills.

Bridging the gap between schools and homes: One of the project's essential components and strategies has been the inclusion of parents as educators (parent education). This involves training parents to participate proactively in their children's education by acting as 'first teachers' at home as well as participating in school settings. To this end, the project organizes community meetings and advocacy campaigns to facilitate intergenerational social networking and public awareness on the importance of education in children's lives. Parents are furthermore actively encouraged to assist their children in learning as well as to participate in developing the schools in their communities. As a result, parents and teachers work together to create a stimulating literate classroom environment and atmosphere through, for example, the provision of classroom curtains and furniture. Parents are also encouraged to attend classroom sessions where they can witness/assess the learning process in person. Activities and parental support of this kind encourage children to attend school. Overall, the strategy emphasises the fact that the role that parents play in the development of children extends beyond child-rearing (or social education) to encompass the development of literacy, moral and cognitive skills. It also creates an understanding and awareness of the complementary roles of home learning and school development.

The parent education strategy also entailed the provision of adult literacy classes/projects since most parents in the rural areas had received little or no formal education and thus lacked literacy skills. The strategy also provides parents with an opportunity to improve the literacy skills that they have gained to date.

Curriculum Development: VANLEP operates a Curriculum Development Unit (CDC) which enables it improve the learning process.

THE FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAMME (FLP)

The FLP (also known as the The Family Literacy and Intergenerational Learning Programme) was initiated in 2006 as part of VANLEP's ongoing efforts to combat illiteracy in rural areas (i.e. to improve literacy) by promoting the role of parents and parenting in children's educational development.

Objectives and Justification

The FLP's principal objectives are to:

- **Empower and involve parents actively in efforts to improve literacy and learning outcomes in schools.** The project is centred on the basic premise that parents - as primary care givers and first teachers - play a crucial role in their children's psychosocial development. The nature of parenting is thus instrumental in shaping the development and learning abilities of individual children. In light of this, the FLP primarily endeavours to promote the positive and ongoing parental mentoring of children as underscored by its guiding theme: You and Your Child: The greatest gift you can give to your child is your time. It also aims to empower and involve parents as partners in their children's learning process;
- **Empower parents through adult literacy programmes.** As illiterate parents are unlikely to value or support their children's quest for education, it is vital for parents to be equipped with adult literacy skills that enable them to complement teacher efforts during the learning process;
- **Harness parents' social networking strengths.** The FLP is a holistic, child-centred and naturalistic programme that seeks to build on the social networking skills and strengths of communities (i.e. parents live and work together in their villages) for the benefit of the education sector. This entails the promotion of strong linkages between the school system and the communities in order to achieve profound and sustainable results.

Programme Components

The FLP has three main components:

- Multilingualism
- Parental Roles
- Literacy and the Home

These three components emphasise and promote the following:

Multilingualism: Multilingualism is part and parcel of the communicative fabric of Vanuatu society. About 100 languages are spoken within the archipelago. Multilingualism is a social reality and has therefore been

incorporated as an essential pillar of learning in order to promote peaceful co-existence and relationships as well as to enhance learning and understanding. Nevertheless, the learning system continues to prioritise three main languages: English, French and Bislama.

Role of Parenting: Parenting is and should be exercised as a professional responsibility involving nurturing and mentoring in order to:

- provide children with a firm foundation for lifelong learning, identity formation and development;
- help children to develop psychosocially (i.e. morally, emotionally, cognitively, physically, linguistically, etc.);
- assist children in establishing positive and functional social relationships;
- foster high-quality and effective lifelong learning in children (parents should be able to complement the role of teachers by reading books to their children and teaching them to read and write);

Teacher-Parents Visitation Strategy: Parents and teachers are encouraged to visit schools and the communities, respectively, in order to forge close cooperations with regard to children's education. This strategy plays a crucial role in fostering social inclusiveness within the learning process;

Home-based Learning: Parents should be able to assist their children in reading and writing while at home. This strategy is also designed to ensure that parents help their children to appreciate the richness of their language and develop critical thinking skills.

PROGRAMME IMPACT AND ACHIEVEMENTS

VANLEP has helped Vanuatu fight illiteracy in rural areas and promote the development of education in general. The following are key indicators of its success:

Change in children's reading and writing skills. After 3-4 months, many children in VANLEP classes had managed to improve their reading and writing skills and were enthusiastic about attending school. This led to a rise in literacy rates among rural children. Surveys undertaken in 2005 and June 2007 revealed a 10% rise in rural children's literacy levels and achievements. The 2007 mid-year survey ´revealed that the literacy skills of children who attended VANLEP classes had improved more than those of children who had not attended such classes.

Changes in teachers' attitudes and teaching methods. The availability of teaching materials enabled teachers to employ child-centred and participatory methods effectively. Classroom management and organization improved appreciably. Teachers developed positive attitudes towards parental involvement in school affairs and are now more inclined to engage in team work with parents for the good of the children.

Changes in parental attitudes towards supporting children's learning and participating in school settings. The teacher-parent visitation programme played a crucial role in allowing parents to collaborate proactively with teachers and school authorities in order to promote the development of education in their communities. The visitation programme also strengthened the collaboration between teachers and parents in mentoring and monitoring the progress of children in their school work. The parents' visits to 'new-look' classrooms or learning environments had a profound effect in that it deepened their commitment to the community and the further development of their schools.

Concerted efforts to equip schools with adequate resources encouraged and motivated teachers and children alike to focus on school work. Most importantly of all, the improved supply of educational materials to schools has motivated teachers to teach.

CHALLENGES FOR DEVELOPMENT

Despite its success in promoting literacy and the development of education in rural areas, the programme faces a number of challenges and constraints, including:

- **A lack of adequate funding.** If VANLEP is to continue as a viable project, there is a compelling need for the government and non-governmental organizations to increase their financial contributions;
- **Familial/parental constraints.** Low levels of literacy among schoolchildren reflects equally low levels of literacy among parents. The solution is not merely to provide schools with institutional support, but also to target the children's families through the provision of adult literacy programmes. At the same time, parents should be allowed to act as partners in their children's education; and
- **Policy constraints.** There is a need to link the programme to a clear national literacy policy.

CONCLUSION

Rural literacy development is not dependent on class; it is a right which must be accorded to every citizen for the greater good of the nation and its future. Current programmes in Vanuatu have already demonstrated that literacy campaigns are more successful and sustainable when they involve the active participation of members of the community.

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CANADA

Family Literacy Programmes, Training, and Services

Programme Title
Family Literacy Programmes, Training, and Services

Implementing Organization
Centre for Family Literacy (CFL)

Language of Instruction
multilingual (context specific)

Funding
95% of funding from provincial and federal governments, 5% from NGOs

Date of Inception
1980

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Canada is one of the world's wealthiest and ethnically diverse countries. With its huge economy, the country has managed to develop a strong social service industry to cater for its citizens. In particular, Canada's educational system is highly developed and the State, through provincial and territorial governments, offers free and compulsory education to all persons under the age of 19. As a result, a majority of people have access to education as indicated by the high rate of enrolment in primary (99,5%) and secondary school (97,9%) as of 2000 to 2007; high completion rate of secondary education (74% as of 2002/2003) and near universal adult and youth literacy rates.

However, these impressive educational gains disguise some fundamental variations. Firstly, access to education and therefore literacy rates vary significantly across ethnic and regional lines. According to the International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey (IALSS, 2003), the proportion of Aboriginal and migrant people with lower literacy skills is generally higher than other cultural groups. The IALSS also indicated that the rate of illiteracy is higher among Francophone people (with the exception of those in Quebec) than Anglophones. Secondly, most people loose their literacy skills with age due to lack of appropriate ongoing practice, with some studies suggesting that, "the proportion of Canadian adults with high literacy skills fell from 24% to 20%" between 1994 and 2003. In light of this, the IALSS revealed that, overall, 48% of Canadians aged 16 years and above performed at levels I and 2 on the prose literacy scale whereas experts view level 3 as the minimum literacy skill level necessary for everyday social functionality. Essentially therefore, millions of adult Canadians struggle to deal with or comprehend basic literacy material and are in need of further training.

In order to address these challenges, a wide range of integrated and multi-faceted literacy programmes has been initiated and implemented at the national and provincial levels by both governmental and non-governmental organisations. The Centre for Family Literacy (CFL) is one of the leading organisations that is currently implementing innovative family literacy programmes in the country.

THE CENTER FOR FAMILY LITERACY: A BRIEF HISTORY

The CFL owes its origins to the spirit of volunteerism and devotion to national or community service that has pervaded Canadian society in the last few decades. During the early 1980s a group of concerned and self-motivated Canadians from Alberta established the Prospects Literacy Association (PLA), a voluntary organisation that provided free individualized and / or group-based family literacy training programmes in the province. In order to effectively implement the emerging family literacy programme, the PLA trained literacy skills trainers and also established strategic partnerships with community libraries, schools and institutional organizations such as University of Alberta, United Way of the Alberta Capital Region and Alberta Learning.

By the mid-1990s, more than 2,500 families had benefited from the programme and because of this early success, the PLA received substantial funding from the National Literacy Secretariat (NLS), Human Resources Development Canada, to establish the CFL which later replaced the PLA as the lead organisation in the implementation of integrated family literacy programmes. Apart from developing and implementing literacy training programmes, the CFL was also mandated to spearhead research in and documentation and dissemination of family literacy information for people from diverse ethnic backgrounds in order to raise public awareness on the importance of literacy to development. It is against this background that the CFL developed the Family Literacy Training Programmes (FLTP).

THE FAMILY LITERACY TRAINING PROGRAMMES (FLTP)

The FLTP is an intergenerational and integrated family literacy programme which is currently being implemented by the CFL in the province of Alberta with funding from 20 government and non-governmental organisations and corporations. The FLTP was particularly developed for and therefore targets children, youth and adults from disadvantaged social backgrounds such as ethnic minorities. As such, the programme is often tailored to and builds on the

participants' specific socio-cultural contexts and needs. Additionally, in order to implement the programme effectively, the CFL works in conjunction with over 60 community-based and professional organizations schools and a network of trained literacy facilitators.

Aims and Objectives

The FLTP programme endeavours to:

- assist parents (adults) to develop and maintain their literacy skills in order to enable them to effectively support their children's psychosocial and literacy development,
- to provide a range of language and literacy development opportunities for adults and families in Edmonton
- promote inter-generational learning within the family and community context in order to strengthen social relationships and cohesion,
- promote individual and / or community development citizens through training in functional (work-based) literacy and,
- raise public awareness on the importance of family literacy to national development through advocacy, training, research, documentation and publication of relevant materials.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

Recruitment and Training of Facilitators

The CFL provides programme facilitators with comprehensive training in conducting family literacy teaching sessions. The CFL conducts two or three training workshops for new facilitators per year. After the initial formal training, facilitators receive ongoing mentoring through individual meetings with CFL field coordinators and through the Tutors Club, an organisation which brings facilitators together from time-time in order to share field experiences. Literacy facilitators are trained to employ learner-centred (participatory) and culturally and contextually based teaching-learning methods in order to assist learners to easily grasp relevant literacy skills as well as to motivate them to learn. These methods, which include group / family discussions; story telling; art and simulation, are also critical in empowering learners to find solutions to their context specific needs or problems as well as in fostering harmony and social cohesion.

Enrolment of Learners

Various strategies and approaches are used to enroll and motivate learners to participate in the FLTP. These include: community-based family literacy advocacy or sensitization campaigns (e.g. through public conferences and fairs; training workshops and home-based mentoring), capacity building (e.g. training of adults as literacy mentors), establishment of community drop-in centres and libraries, and working in conjunction with schools and community-based organisations. In most cases, CFL encourages communities or schools to play a leading role in the implementation of family literacy programmes. This approach is not only intended to motivate individuals and communities to participate in the programme but also ensures that the programmes effectively address the particular needs of the participants and their communities.

PROGRAMME COMPONENTS AND IMPLEMENTATION

The FLTP encompasses a number of inter-related and mutually reinforcing constituent programmes which address the intergenerational needs of learners and their families and communities. These include:

- Books for Babies (BfB)
- Book Buddies Literacy Programme (BBLP)
- Books Offer Our Kids Success (B.O.O.K.S.)
- Adult Tutor Programme (ATP)
- Classroom on Wheels (COW)
- Rhymes that Bind
- Learning Together
- Storysacks
- Workplace Family Literacy

In order to highlight the interconnectedness and contribution of the constituent programmes to the development of family literacy, this report briefly explores some of these programmes in greater detail.

Books for Babies (BfB)

The BfB is a four-week drop-in and child-centred literacy programme which is currently funded by the Edmonton Journal's Raise-a-Reader campaign and the United Way of the Alberta Capital Region. The programme provides families with children's books and encourages parents with children aged below 12 months to read out books to their babies either during group sessions or during home-based learning sessions. Trained CFL facilitators assist parents with skills on how to effectively conduct home-based learning sessions. The programme is primarily intended to foster early language and literacy skills development among infants which is central to their overall psychosocial development as well as to promote and strengthen parent-child bonding. Furthermore, the programme endeavours to encourage parents to be more proactive in the development, growth and education of their children. The programme has been widely accepted and supported by many communities and local organisations. In 2008, for example, 28 Books for Babies programmes were implemented in Edmonton involving a total of 311 adults and 292 children.

Book Buddies Literacy Programme (BBLP)

The BBLP is an eight-week school and home-based literacy programme which aims to enhance literacy skills development among pre-school and school going children (up to grade 6) from disadvantaged communities. To this end, the programme provides books to schools and families in order to foster a reading culture among children and within families. The programme also promotes the integration of school and home-based learning activities by training parents and caregivers as literacy facilitators. In 2008, the programme benefited a number of schools in Edmonton involving a total of 679 children and 286 adults.

Books Offer Our Kids' Success (B.O.O.K.S)

B.O.O.K.S. is an intergenerational programme which encourages parents, grandparents, and caregivers to learn (read, write, talk) and interact with preschool-aged children in ways that will prepare them for the learning activities they will encounter in future schooling. The programme is implemented through group workshops which are held once a week over a four to eight week period. Trained facilitators are responsible for mediating the learning process and therefore guide participants through a variety of literacy activities such as reading, discussions, creation of crafts and illustrations. In addition, adults are also encouraged to write stories for their children. Collectively, these learner-centred teaching methodologies are intended to support the development of literacy skills among adults and children as well as to foster parents' confidence to bring literacy activities into the home. The programme also provides culturally relevant reading material to respective ethnic groups in order to motivate both parents and children to learn as well as to promote inter-group understanding and harmony.

Adult Tutor Programme (ATP)

The ATP is a six-month individualized literacy training programme for adults with below grade nine level reading or writing skills. The programme aims to improve participants' literacy skills in order to enable them to effectively participate in the development of their families and communities. Following their enrolment, the learners' needs are assessed by the CFL before being matched with a voluntary but trained literacy training facilitator. For example, in 2008, 174 students were matched with 95 volunteers. Afterwards, learners meet with their teachers once every week for a two-hour learning session. In addition to individualized literacy mentoring, the CFL also offers small group workshops tailored to the needs of students with common goals, including adults facing multiple barriers to learning, such as developmental delays, and English Language Learners (ELL).

Classroom on Wheels (COW)

Classrooms on Wheels (C.O.W.) are housed on two 38 ft buses. The programme offers mobile literacy skills training and library services to communities in Alberta. The bus attracts many families every week who are assisted with reading materials and literacy instruction from on-board facilitators. Apart from this, the COW approach is also a community-based advocacy campaign which is intended to raise public awareness on the importance of family literacy (e.g. due to the bus' visibility) as well as to foster social interaction between community members including parents and their children within a learning context. One of the greatest advantages of the COW approach is its ability to reach out to and serve communities with limited access to literacy training opportunities and library services (such rural communities on the Prairie). For example, in 2008, COW programme assisted 2,057 adults and 4,109 children through once-off visits to 83 Prairie communities.

Learning Together

Learning Together is a free, intensive family literacy programme that runs twice a week for 9 months, and is attended by parents and children together. Throughout Learning Together, parents improve their own reading and writing skills and learn how to support their pre-school children's literacy and language development, while the children benefit from an enriched early childhood programme that promotes acquisition of the skills necessary for future learning success. Parents and children either attend learning sessions together or separately depending on the nature of learning activities. The adult-focused component of the programme covers a wide range of topics including: learning styles and multiple intelligences, the value of creative play, self-esteem, positive parenting and health education. To build on the strengths and draw from the interests of its adult learners, the content of the programme is shaped by the questions, suggestions, and abilities of parents.

The Centre provides subsidies for transportation and childcare to enable full participation. In 2008, 10 families completed the programme, and though the programme is taught in English, participants' primary languages included Vietnamese, Chinese, Cantonese, Filipino, and Tagalog. Learning Together is funded by Alberta Advanced Education and Technology, Community Programs, and delivered in partnership with an existing elementary school.

Rhymes that Bind

'Rhymes that Bind' is an oral language development programme that targets parents with children below the age of 3 years. It aims to promote positive parenting skills through dances, songs, and simple movement games involving parents and their children. The programme runs once a week for ten weeks, introducing parents to the various ways in which they can foster their children's early literacy and language skills development.

Facilitators model positive parenting throughout the programme and offer practical and social support to participants when possible; parents with more extensive needs are encouraged to access other community supports. In 2008, 28 programmes were delivered to a total of 1004 adults and 1,203 children, in partnership with 13 community agencies.

Storysacks

The concept of a Storysack as a learning tool was first popularized by British educator and author, Neil Griffiths. A Storysack is a large cloth bag with a good quality children's book and accompanying activities that bring the book to life. When used in the family context, Storysacks are an excellent way to support the early literacy and language development of children. The included activities are enjoyable for both parent and child.

Aboriginal Storysacks programmes offered by the CFL are attended by parents, elders and other community members who participate in the creation of props, scenery, and characters

that enhance a selected children's book over the course of four to ten weekly sessions. Programme length varies according to the interest and enthusiasm of participants. Once completed, the Storysack is housed in a central location and loaned to parents or used by a community organization. In 2008, CFL offered 2 Storysacks programs and used Storysacks within the Aboriginal community in Edmonton to build relationships, facilitate storytelling and tap into interest in crafting and creating props.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The CFL employs an outcome-based approach for evaluating the impact and challenges of the programme as well as the participants' learning progress. In general, CFL employs formal and informal monitoring and evaluation methods, encompassing the use of evaluation surveys (questionnaires) and group discussions between learners, facilitators and CFL officials. Internal official evaluation is conducted by facilitators (by submitting reports on their field activities as well as by assessing the participants' ability to write, read and comprehend literature) and by programme coordinators and CFL management team through field observation visits.

Besides these internal monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, the FLTP is also evaluated by external experts on an annual basis in line with CFL's contractual obligations with its funding partners. The external evaluation process provides qualitative and quantitative data on programme impact, challenges and makes recommendations for programme improvement. These annual reports are available to the public: http://www.famlit.ca/about/annual.html

LESSONS LEARNED

- Partnerships: It is critical to establish functional partnerships with academics and other organisations not only to expand the scope and reach of family literacy programmes but also to facilitate the economic and efficient implementation of the programme. In addition, communities often have established functional relationships with community-based organisations (CBOs) which could be used as a foundation for the implementation of family literacy programmes. Accordingly and in order for family literacy programmes to be effective and sustainable, it is critical to build on existing local capacity through, for example, providing CBOs with material and technical assistance,
- Collaboration with governments to reinforce credibility and capacity,
- Community agencies or organisations are more effective in raising awareness and delivering services,
- Facilitators: for family literacy programmes to be successful and sustainable, it is crucial to build a network of well-trained, knowledgeable and experienced literacy practitioners. It is for this reason that CFL has created a regional family literacy network in Alberta which offers training services to potential facilitators.

PROGRAMME SUSTAINABILITY

Several factors suggest that the long-term sustainability of the FLTP is not in doubt. Firstly, since its initiation in the mid-1990s, the FLTPs continue to grow in popularity and demand. Secondly, the CFL has also expanded the reach and scope of its literacy programmes by establishing functional relationships with communities, CBOs and other institutional partners. In particular, because the CFL has encouraged strong community participation, most people support its activities and often volunteer to facilitate the implementation of the programmes.

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GERMANY

Family Literacy Project (FLY)

Programme Title
Family Literacy Project (FLY)

Implementing Organization
State Institute for Teacher Training and School Development (Landesinstitut für Lehrerbildung und Schulentwicklung) of the Ministry of Education, Hamburg. In its initial phase, the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) supported the conceptualisation and implementation of the project.

Language of Instruction
German

Funding
During the pilot phase (2004–2009), the project was being equally funded by the Bund-Länder-Commission for Educational Planning and Research Promotion (BLK) and the City-State of Hamburg. Since 2009, the Hamburg Ministry for Education took over the upscaling of the programme involving 25 new schools each year.

Date of Inception
2004

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Hamburg – Germany's second largest city – has a significant proportion of resident migrants or citizens of foreign descent. As of 2006, for example, 15% (258,225) of Hamburg's total resident population of 1,754,182 were non-Germans while 26.8% had migration backgrounds. In addition, 48% of people aged six years and under had migration backgrounds. Examples of key migrant groups include those from Turkey (23%); Poland (22.6%); Afghanistan (5.3%); Iran (3.4%); Russia (3%) and Ghana (2.1%). Hamburg's ethnic diversity is also manifested in the world's major religions with Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Hinduism, all having adherents in the city. The city's ethnic and religious diversity creates challenges with regards to the provision of appropriate educational services. These challenges are compounded by the fact that many parents lack viable literacy skills to support their children's learning. In particular many adult migrants are functionally illiterate and are therefore unable to actively and effectively participate in the educational development of their children. As a result, children from migrant families are more likely to underperform in school compared with other students.

In order to address the educational challenges faced by children (especially those from deprived social backgrounds and from migrant families), the UNESCO Institute of Education (UIE) and the State Institute for Teacher Training and School Development in Hamburg (Landesinstitut für Lehrerbildung und Schulentwicklung) initiated the Family Literacy Project (FLY) in 2004. The project was funded by the Bund-Länder-Commission for Educational Planning and Research Promotion (BLK) and the city of Hamburg as an integral component of the Promotion of Children and Young Adults with Migrant Backgrounds programme (FörMig: Förderung von Kindern und Jugendlichen mit Migrationshintergrund).

In 2010, the project was awarded the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize.

THE FAMILY LITERACY PROJECT (FLY)

FLY is an intergenerational family literacy programme that targets parents, children at pre-school, kindergarten and early primary school, as well as children with special learning needs. Many of the targeted people are from socially disadvantaged communities. The project endeavours to develop the literacy skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening, and creativity) of parents and their children. It also seeks to promote strong linkages between the kindergarten or school and home-based learning processes by:

- supporting parents to increase literacy activities at home and enabling them to help with their children's schoolwork
- training school teachers how to deal with and instruct children from diverse cultural backgrounds. In addition, the programme also encourages and supports strong interaction and cooperation between parents and kindergarten or school teachers, in order to enhance children's learning capacities.

The project was first piloted in collaboration with seven schools and two kindergartens located in the deprived and mostly migrant-populated districts of Hamburg. However, due to increased demand from other schools, the project has since been introduced to 25 other schools. The expansion of the project was also facilitated by effective networking with other organisations such as the adult education centres which had similar or related mandates. The FLY curriculum, which is primarily produced by the facilitators on an ongoing basis, emphasises the following themes:

- language development
- listening and comprehension (e.g. through story telling)
- reading, writing and comprehension (reading aloud and discussions)
- letters and phonological awareness (initial sounds, rhymes, working with syllables)
- cultural awareness.

Aims and objectives

The project aims to:

- improve children's early literacy and language skills development by training and empowering parents to take an active role in their children's psychosocial and learning development
- improve the literacy skills of parents and children from migrant backgrounds
- promote home-based learning through the provision of learning materials and training of parents as educators
- create strong links and cooperation between school or kindergarten and home-based learning
- use literacy training to foster effective and sustainable integration of migrant communities into mainstream German society
- enhance the effectiveness of schools and kindergartens by training teachers and educators.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the programme is based on the effective training of school or kindergarten teachers, who are the principal programme facilitators, as well as on the active participation and involvement of adults in their twin roles as parents and child educators. The programme provides teachers and parents with specialised training to ensure project effectiveness and sustainability. After the end of the pilot project in 2009, the city of Hamburg (Behörde für Schule und Berufsbildung) provided 25 schools per year, situated in deprived areas, with additional resources to run family literacy as well as teacher training.

Teacher training

The programme requires two facilitators per school. The State Institute for Teacher Training and School Development in Hamburg provides monthly training sessions to school and kindergarten teachers, most of whom are language development educators. As the primary implementers of an intergenerational programme, teachers receive training in a wide range of subjects or themes relevant to children and adults, as well as in family literacy teaching methodologies. Furthermore, the

training also emphasises cultural awareness or sensitivity in order to empower teachers to appropriately cater for and address the needs of children and adults from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds. The State Institute also creates opportunities for teachers from various schools to share experiences and in doing so, improve their teaching skills.

Community involvement: Parental training and participation

The project is built on the basic principle that the family constitutes the fundamental springboard for children's sustainable learning and education. Within the framework of FLY, parents are treated as equal partners and are therefore encouraged to play an active role in the planning and implementation of programme activities. This occurs at three different levels:

Active involvement of mothers in the class Mothers participate in class on a particular day of the week – mainly after bringing their children to (pre-)school. They participate in literacy-related activities, such as looking at books together with the children or playing simple literacy games. The participation of parents in children's classes is intended to familiarise parents with how their children learn and to evaluate their learning progress, as well as to empower them to be educators in their own right. Beyond this, it is also intended to create opportunities for parents and their children to interact within a learning context (for example, through selecting, reading and discussing a book together). Overall, it is important to note that parent-child activities foster strong bonds between children and their parents and build the foundation upon which the long-term success of family literacy programmes is based.

Working with parents (without children) in parallel sessions Parents participate in literacy classes without their children present, under the guidance of an experienced educator. During these sessions, parents learn about how to support their children and produce learning materials (such as story telling bags, word cards, written stories and pictures) on various topics which they can use for home-based learning with their children. These sessions also create opportunities for parents to learn or improve their German skills, to focus on topics that are more relevant to adults such as child-rearing, health and nutrition and more importantly, to learn about other cultures.

Joint-out-of-school activities Joint-out-of-school activities involve the participation of children, parents and facilitators in joint outdoor activities such as excursions to museums and libraries or a trip to a market near the school, 'literacy walks' and participation in special celebrations. These activities are intended to promote social networking among parents and parent-child bonding as well as action-oriented learning.

Teaching–learning methods

The teaching concept adapts to the circumstances of the school and programme participants. In general, action-oriented and process-oriented participatory teaching–learning methods are emphasised. During joint parent-child classes, participants are actively encouraged to work together in the learning process as well as in the production of learning materials. For example, parents write, read and discuss personal family stories with their children while children participate in singing and dance sessions.

Teaching and learning materials

In order to promote sustainable literacy development within a multilingual context, the FLY programme employs a variety of action-oriented, simple and contextually relevant teaching and learning materials. These materials are mostly produced by the participants with support from the facilitators and are made available for both home- and school-based learning. The key teaching and learning materials include:

Multilingual 'mini-books': the mini story books are based on family photographs and biographies and are produced by the parents in several languages in order to promote intercultural and multilingual learning. The mini-books play a critical role in motivating parents and their children to learn, not only because the books capture and reflect the families' biographical histories, but also because they create an opportunity to learn about other people's lives, cultures and traditions. Overall, this tool can play a central role in intercultural education and in promoting social integration among diverse ethnic groups.

Family literacy development packs: these comprise of learning materials such as children's books and CDs or tapes containing language games, stories, rhymes and songs. The packs can be borrowed by the parents for use at home.

Story-telling bags: working with story-telling bags is a method of exploring picture books in a holistic, action-oriented and creative way. The main characters and objects in a picture book are manufactured and kept in a bag. Once the picture book has been read (or during the first reading), the objects may be touched by the children, used interactively (in role play) or explored using the senses (smelling, tasting, listening).

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The FLY project has been evaluated by the State Institute for Teacher Training and School Development. The evaluation process sought to determine programme benefits using quantitative and qualitative methods, which included:

- structured interviews (questionnaires) with parents from different ethnic and social groups, educators from schools and day care centres, and headmasters
- parental observation of their children's formal classes.

In addition, children were systematically assessed or tested on non-verbal intelligence and language competence at the beginning and end of the course in order to determine their learning progress and/or needs. This also involved testing in pre-schools and grades 1 and 2 (in language, reading and writing), as well as

teachers' assessments of children's educational development. In addition, parents were interviewed before and after the course in order to get their independent assessment of their children's literacy skills development.

IMPACT

The project has enhanced adults' communication abilities or skills, self-esteem and potential for greater social interaction with people from other ethnic or cultural groups as well as integration into German society in general. Hence, the programme has been a key instrument for social networking among adults and families from different socio-cultural backgrounds and between schools and communities.

Since its inception, the programme has benefited about 1000 parents and 1000 children annually. It has fostered strong relationships between schools and parents and as a result, many schools have established family literacy rooms where parents meet each time they visit the schools.

Parental involvement in their children's education has strengthened family relationships as well as improved children's literacy skills.

Given that many teachers had no experience in teaching learners from different cultural backgrounds, the programme provided them with these opportunities which in turn improved their intercultural teaching skills. Most critically, the programme empowered teachers to understand, appreciate and better handle the dynamics relating to the cultural diversity that exists among children in their classes.

CHALLENGES

Perhaps the main challenge that has emerged to date, relates to the inexperience of primary school and kindergarten teachers in the field of family literacy and adult education. Furthermore, most of the teachers had little experience with working with parents from different socio-cultural backgrounds. Hence, intensive training of teachers in family literacy, adult and intercultural education was required during the initial stages of the project to ameliorate these challenges.

Other challenges emerged from the inconsistent participation of parents in the programme due to pressing family commitments. Also, it was difficult to reach the parents most in need because they were often the most socially isolated. Thus, in order to promote consistent parental participation, a lot of resources and creativity were needed.

LESSONS LEARNED

As parental participation is voluntary, schools need to constantly remind and encourage parents to fulfill their obligation to support their children's development. To this end, schools are encouraged to maintain a register of parents as well as attendance lists. As the programme has a strong adult education component, parental involvement could also be enhanced through the certification of participants upon completion of a course. This strategy will certainly boost parents' morale, commitment and cooperation, all of which are necessary ingredients for the success of the programme.

Parental involvement in school activities improves cooperation and communication between teachers and parents and between schools and their communities. These relationships are mutually beneficial as, for example, parents have easy access to lifelong learning opportunities while the schools and children benefit from the support the children get at home from their parents. Parents bring into the learning process rich ideas born from their lived experiences. Furthermore, the opening of the schools to parents could gradually lead to the development of schools into community learning centres with increased networks with other institutions in the community

such as social centres and libraries. Therefore, in order for family literacy programmes to be effective, parents should be treated as equal partners.

Family literacy is a flexible learning model that can easily be adapted to different social environments as well as to the needs of the specific learners' groups.

SUSTAINABILITY

Due to the success of the project since its inception, parents in cooperation with schools, have undertaken extensive and concerted advocacy activities in an effort to secure institutional funding beyond the initial funding period (2004–2009). However, perhaps the most important indicator of the project's sustainability is manifested by the strengthened cooperation between parents and schools as well as the resultant active involvement of parents in school activities and in the education of their children. It is thus hoped that since the programme is not very expensive to implement, strong parental commitment will ensure its long-term existence.

Equally important, the incorporation of the FLY project into the city's integration programmes for migrants, indicates the potential of key partners to remain committed to the implementation of the project as an effective method to address challenges within migrant and socially disadvantaged communities. Indeed, the city of Hamburg acknowledged the FLY project as a 'central element in the framework of possible action approaches' for dealing with migrants. As a result, the City-State of Hamburg is upscaling the programme to include 25 more schools per year until 2013, as well as integrating the approach into the existing cooperation project 'Kita und Schule' (kindergarten and school).

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IRELAND

Clare Family Learning

Implementing organization
Clare Adult Basic Education Service

Language of instruction
English

Date of inception
1994

Programme partners
Schools, community centres, libraries, adult education centres and family resource centres

Funding
Department of Education, Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board (LCETB)

Annual programme costs
Less than €200,000 (approximately $220,000)

Annual programme cost per learner
€500 (approximately $550)

COUNTRY CONTEXT

There is significant scope to improve adult literacy in Ireland. The OECD's 2012/13 Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) survey ranked Ireland 17th for literacy and 19th for numeracy attainment out of 24 participating countries. Eighteen per cent of adults had a literacy level below Level 1 (on a five-point scale), which suggests that around one in six Irish adults may have difficulties in understanding written texts. On numeracy, one in four adults scored below Level 1, indicating that they struggle with simple mathematical calculations (National Adult Literacy Agency 2012). One important reason for the relatively low literacy and numeracy levels in Ireland is 'poverty and lack of access to educational resources' (National Adult Literacy Agency 2012). This makes families with a migrant background especially likely to have low literacy levels because they have less access to education and work than other communities within Ireland. This is especially true for migrants from non-English speaking countries and European Union new member states, who face a wage disadvantage of 20 per cent and 32 per cent respectively, compared to Irish workers. The Clare Family Learning project plays an important role in raising adult literacy rates in Ireland because it specifically serves populations such as these, which are often neglected by the mainstream educational and occupational sectors.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Clare Family Learning works with parents to develop their interests, abilities and knowledge in order to help them better support and encourage their children's educational attainment. This approach improves the literacy and numeracy of both parents and their children because it creates a bridge between home and school, and between home and adult learning opportunities. Many parents need support to take that first step into learning. Helping their children is strong motivation for parents to take part in education. Once in the classroom, they become aware of other areas where they may need to upskill, thus encouraging them to continue as lifelong learners.

The programme's main target groups are families from migrant, low-income and Traveller backgrounds who have fewer educational and occupational opportunities than other communities. The programme plays an important role in Ireland as a leading contributor to the development of family learning. It is one of the main family learning providers in the country, while also contributing substantially to research and training in the field.

In 2014, Clare Family Learning had 400 participants, taught by 13 part-time tutors and one full-time tutor. Since 1998, one full-time coordinator has managed the project, greatly improving the reach of the programme and increasing the provision of services to learners. As a result, in 2014, Clare Family Learning provided 52 courses, on 26 different topics, in 23 locations across Clare County.

Aims and Objectives

The main aim of the Clare Family Learning project is to encourage parents to get involved in their children's education. The programme affirms parents in their role as 'first teacher', supporting them in helping their children in their literacy and numeracy development. This process is beneficial to both parents and children because parents also have the chance to improve their literacy and numeracy skills through participation in the programme. Children function as the programme's 'hook' in raising the educational attainment of parents because, of course, all parents want the best for their children. Through this structure, the programme tries to build a friendly and positive learning environment tailored towards the educational needs of families. is the programme's use of the term 'family learning', rather than 'family literacy', is deliberate, as it has a more holistic meaning and fewer negative connotations than 'literacy'.

In addition, Clare Family Learning has established partnerships between families, schools and the wider community to build a broader support network for parents who have limited opportunities to access education and employment. Priority participants are single-parent families, teenage/young parents, Travellers, refugees and asylum seekers, and migrant workers, as well as carers and foster parents. Travellers make up 0.6% of the Irish

population (Central Statistics Office Census 2011) and have traditionally moved in a nomadic way around the country seeking seasonal work. Education may not be valued highly by some families and there is strong discrimination against this community (Mac Gréil 1996).

The programme's specific goals are to:

- Improve the literacy, numeracy and language skills of participants;
- Teach parents about the Irish educational system;
- Equip parents with the skills necessary to communicate with school staff;
- Teach parents how to help with their children's school work;
- Promote parent/child interactions and learning activities (Carpentieri, Fairfax-Cholmeley, Litster, Vorhaus 2011)..

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

Enrolling Learners and Identifying their Needs

Clare Family Learning engages new learners through partnerships with 'link agencies', such as schools, social services, libraries and community groups, which connect the project with groups of parents with learning needs. To engage learners from Roma and Traveller communities, the project uses a learning champion. Clare Adult Basic Education Service has identified a need to improve outreach efforts to priority groups and young adults and to use social media to recruit new families.

As learners are enrolled, facilitators, agency staff and parents discuss which learning needs participants would like to address. This, in turn, enables the project to adjust its teaching methodologies and develop courses suited to the needs of participants. Listening to parents is essential in developing courses that address topics of interest to participants.

Category	Course	Content
Books and stories	Digital stories	Create a story with art work, photographs, images and music
	Family stories in a box	Create an individual mini-museum in a decorated shoe box
	Storybags	Develop props and games to use with a storybook
Early years 0–7	Family learning	Identify learning opportunities; talking and listening to children; spelling, reading and writing; maths
	Family learning through play, rhymes and songs	Incorporate play, rhymes and songs into children's learning
	My baby and me	Improve interaction between mothers, fathers and their babies
Learning in the home and community	Dads and lads	Bonding between fathers and sons through games and activities
	Family cooking on a budget	Teaches inexpensive ways to prepare healthy food
	Family health	How to prepare for meetings with health care providers, learning the vocabulary of health
	Family learning and active citizenship	Gives an overview of the political system and how to make your voice heard
	Fun things to do with your child	Joint activities in which parents and children try cooking and crafts in ways that improve literacy and numeracy skills
	Money wise ideas	Help families with budgeting
Homework and study skills	Family learning and Irish	Teaches Irish to parents with children in primary school to help them with their homework
	Number games to make and play	Parents and children work together on school and everyday maths
How school works: primary/secondary	Learning the language of school	Parents learn about schools and how to interact with school staff
	Settling into second-level school	Ideas and tips for parents to support their children's progression (advancement) to second level

The programme's tutors also recognize that listening and being responsive to parents' needs is key. As there is the flexibility to pilot courses, learners' feedback throughout the learning process is fundamental. Pilots can be rolled out nationally if the need arises, as it has, for example, in the case of Fun Science for Dads and Children and Learning about Project Maths, and there is no 'off the shelf' course, as the programme must be adjusted to the educational levels of parents and reflect their needs and interests.

Clare Family Learning develops resources in response to learners' requests for support. The project shares its resources online, including a DVD and publications such as Family Learning in Action, which features outline plans for 20 courses with a sample plan that facilitators can develop to suit their own group's needs.

Teaching and Learning: Approaches and Methodologies

The programme's teaching approach incorporates a variety of methodologies, which jointly provide a vivid learning experience for participants. Teaching methodologies include small-group and paired work, and interactive sessions involving visuals, audios, clips and DVDs. Other learning methods, such as presentations, discussions, walking debates, hands-on activities and role-playing, are also useds.

Teaching Content

Clare Family Learning structures its course content into five categories: Books and stories: Early years 0–7; Learning in the home; Homework and study skills; and How school works: primary/secondary. The table on page 72 lists some of the courses the programme offers (a complete list of courses can be found at http://www.clarefamilylearning.org/)

Teaching Materials

Parents and children learn on courses with everyday materials families have at home. These can include items such as envelopes, supermarket advertisements and other reading materials. Materials used in class also include utensils and other household items. Matching socks, for example, can become a numeracy learning activity. Resources for both parents and tutors are available online.

The Clare Family Learning project embeds information and communication technologies (ICT) in every class. The organization possesses a suite of laptops that are available for venues if needed. Smartphones also play a role during class as many participants own them and want to learn how to use them better.

Programme Structure and Process

The project operates family literacy courses in schools, community centres, libraries, adult education centres and family resource centres, as well as in other locations throughout communities. The organization partners with these institutions to offer classes close to where participants live. The programme runs in approximately 20 different locations in County Clare each year. Classes take place from September to June. The table below provides an overview of the length of each type of course.

The average number of participants is kept small, at between eight and 10 parents per class, in order to allow all participants to learn at their own pace. The majority of courses are 'parent-only courses'. However, 'parent and child together' courses are also available. Priority is given to parents who have not obtained a full second-level education to Level 5 or below in our National Qualifications Standard.

After taking part in family learning courses, parents have the opportunity to progress onto accredited courses offering certificates at Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) levels 1 to 3. These courses teach content at a level equivalent to the halfway point of secondary school and last between 20 and 25 weeks. Parents can progress to QQI Level 4 or Level 5 through the organization's further education services. QQI courses focus on specific areas, such as catering, childcare, healthcare, business and art, and are portfolio-based at levels 1–4, with exams at Level 5.

Monitoring and Evaluation

To date, Clare Adult Basic Education Service (within which Clare Family Learning is based) has been required to provide quantitative data to the government Department of Education and Skills. Currently, at national level, the further education and training sector is looking at ways of measuring the wider benefits of learning. The organization conducts mid-course evaluation of participants to gather feedback on their progress. Tutors also use 'progression forms', which help keep track of participants' progress in terms of educational, economic, personal, social and family terms.

Course type	Class meetings per week	Hours per week	Total duration
Standard course	1	2	6 to 10 weeks
Accredited Quality Qualifications Ireland courses	1	2	Up to 20 weeks
Intensive courses I	2	3	6 weeks
Intensive course II	3	2	14 weeks

Facilitators

The facilitators who work for Clare Family Learning are either full-time or part-time employees. Every facilitator teaches between six and 10 learners, which means a small ratio of learners to facilitators. All facilitators are well qualified, with many holding an advanced degree in their area of expertise. Before they start working with participants, every teacher is required to complete a two-day family learning training course as well as an adult literacy course. The average remuneration for facilitators is €45.25 (equivalent to US $51) per hour.

Since 2000, the organization has trained 763 family learning tutors on the basis of its Clare Family Learning Resource Pack. This has developed to include a wide range of programmes. The focus of the programe's tutor training is on the practical implementation of family learning programmes suited to the specific needs of learners in a locality. As a result, many family learning courses emerged from Clare's work with parents and partners.

IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

Impact and Achievements

Clare Family Learning has made a substantial impact at local, national and international levels. Locally, Clare Adult Basic Education Service increased its outreach to parents by connecting with agencies which promoted the services to their clients (learners). Over time, the organization developed and improved resources and training to maximize the benefits to learners, while increasing cost-efficiency at the same time.

At national level, the organization has helped achieve recognition for family learning methodologies at government level. In addition, it has developed an extensive national network of trained staff. Both nationally and internationally, Clare Family Learning disseminates knowledge and resources obtained and developed from the programme, through publications and participation in European Union (EU) funded projects and other international exchanges. For example, project staff showed participants from Norway, Sweden, Spain, Italy, Germany, Luxembourg, Estonia, Romania, Slovenia, France, England and Turkey how to implement similar family literacy projects by sharing knowledge and resources. The organization has also presented the Clare Family Learning project at international events such as the National Families Learning Summit in Houston, Texas, USA. Through these outreach efforts, the programme has been adapted for use in Sweden, Norway, Germany and other parts of Europe.

Participants improve their literacy, build their confidence, find new talents and discover a passion for learning when they participate in the programme. They also benefit from meeting new people and experiencing new cultures. Since some participants are migrants or have a Traveller community background, the classroom is a unique opportunity to form new relationships and learn about other cultures. These aspects of the programme empower participants who primarily come from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Several research abstracts on the Clare Family Learning website discuss the effect of the Clare Family Learning project on participants. For example, researchers have found that the programme increases parents' 'understanding and knowledge about how children learn and develop cognitively, socially and emotionally'. Parents also became aware that they need to be a role model for children and create an environment at home that is conducive to learning. In addition, participants gained the confidence to take ownership of their children's literacy attainment and to interact with school staff. The programme also has a positive effect on the mental health of participants because it gives them a reason to get out of the house, enables them to meet new people, and provides them with new experiences (Webb 2007).

Figures on learner retention show how parents progress from informal learning to QQI Level 1, up to Level 3. In 2014, 45 per cent of the learners were new, 19 per cent had stayed for one or two years, 16 per cent for between three and five years, and 20 per cent for five years or more.

LESSONS LEARNED

Clare Family Learning has found family learning to be a successful methodology in engaging hard-to-reach parents. Confidence is one of the key foundation skills parents need if they are to believe in their own ability to learn and be able to support their child's learning. Family learning allows parents to become successful in small, easy-to-achieve tasks which encourage further participation (McGivney 2002).

Family learning highlights the important role of parental involvement. Many parents do not realise they play such an important role in their child's education, especially parents of children aged up to three. The amount of oral communication and reading happening in and around the home impacts hugely on the child's later achievements in school (Shiel, Cregan, McGough, Archer 2012 and Hart 2003).

The majority of parents who complete a family learning class continue onto other learning opportunities. This positive role-modelling of learning impacts on children (and other family members), leading to increased parental involvement in children's learning, a key factor in ensuring higher achievement (Desforges, Abouchaar 2003 and National Institute of Adult Continuing Education 2013).

Parents value the social aspects of classes where they meet people, make new friends and create networks. Classes provide opportunities for cultural integration, as Irish, migrant and Traveller parents learn together.

The element of fun is important. Parents enjoy completing a task or making something in each class. There is a sense of achievement and completion. Many vulnerable parents did not have the experience of playing with their own parents and do not know how to pass this skill on to their children.

Clare Family Learning project, conscious of the dangers of providing an overly feminised curriculum, developed its programme in order to reach fathers Courses such as Games, Gadgets and Machines and Weekend Action for Dads and Children were offered.

It is necessary to pilot courses on a smaller scale to see if they work. After piloting, courses can be scaled up to national level.

Clare Family Learning partners with local schools, agencies and community groups when implementing a new course. Such a partnership approach has been proven to maximize outreach to under-served families and to make the best use of limited funding.

The programme's focus on helping children learn is the 'hook' which makes learning attractive to parents. This approach is useful because parents usually want to do what is best for their children.

Operating the programme in various changing locations has proven to be more efficient and cost-effective way to operate since it increases outreach and is less expensive than a centre-based model. Providing classes close to where parents live avoids the need for transport, which can be a problem in rural parts of the county.

CHALLENGES

Keeping up to date with the fast pace of change in the world of technology is difficult for parents. It can be hard to provide answers to complex issues such as online safety and bullying. As internet and smartphones are widely available, the issue of parental supervision and understanding (possible implications of the use of new online possibilities) is something that providers need to keep in mind.

Ways of capturing evidence of outcomes and impact within family learning nationally, without a dedicated focus on this specific area, can be difficult, with implications for future funding. International findings in this field show there is scope for better research (Brooks, Cara 2012).

In order to reach a younger cohort of parents, the programme needs to use new rather than traditional forms of media.

SUSTAINABILITY

Clare Adult Basic Education Service has struggled ro secure financial resources for the programme. National funding for literacy programmes has stagnated since 2009 due to the economic climate in Ireland. The programme has addressed financial hardship in various creative ways, including through the numerous partnerships established over the years.

The learning materials used by parents and their children are everyday objects that can be found in learners' homes. This brings two positive results: learners are more likely to replicate educational activities outside the classroom if these items are already in the home (they are not required to purchase new items); and the costs of programme implementation are not as high as they would be if new material had to be bought.

The use of technologies also supports the sustainability of the programme. Clare Family Learning has developed and made available online several resources that are accessible to facilitators. Additionally, by including technologies that programme participants already own, such as smartphones, in the teaching-learning process, the programme not only increases learners' participation, but takes advantage of an existing resource at no cost.

CONCLUSION

Clare Family Learning has been creative and innovative in reaching parents who are among the most isolated and disadvantaged. This non-threatening first step back into education is vital in engaging parents and can make a long-term difference both to the parents and their children.

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MALTA

Hilti Family Literacy Programme

Programme Title
Hilti Family Literacy Programme

Implementing Organization
Foundation for Educational Services (FES)

Language of Instruction
Maltese or English

Programme Partners
State (through the Ministry of Education), European Union and the HSBC Cares for Children Fund

Date of Inception
2001

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Malta has one of the most developed and extensive public and private education systems in Europe. Pre-school, primary, secondary and post-secondary/tertiary education is free for all up to graduate degree level. Primary and secondary education for children aged 5 to 16 years has been compulsory since 1946 and 1971 respectively. The private sector, particularly the Catholic Church, has played an equally critical role in providing education opportunities to all Maltese with substantial subsidises from the government. As a result of these policies and programmes, educational participation rates and, by extension, literacy rates are very high in Malta. As of 2006, the net enrolment ratio (NER) in pre-primary (early childhood), primary and post-secondary/tertiary education had risen to near-universal rates of 95%, 91% and 70% respectively. Similarly, the total literacy rate had reached near-universal levels for youth (97%) and adults (92%) by 2006. The decrease in the illiteracy rate thus indicates a marked increase in the provision of access to education opportunities across all age groups, with particular emphasis on adult and lifelong learning.

Yet in spite of these achievements, much remains to be done to consolidate and build on the educational gains achieved to date. In particular, special attention is needed to eradicate regional and socio-economic disparities with regards to educational access and achievement. For example, a National Literacy Survey (NLS, 1999), which tested the phonological, literacy, reading and writing skills of state-school pupils aged 6 to 7 years revealed that children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds experienced difficulties learning and acquiring skills. In addition, their parents were not strongly involved in either the education of their children or school affairs.

One of the most important implications of the NLS results was that, in order to assist children with learning difficulties and/or literacy needs, it was critical to simultaneously promote parental involvement in both child learning and the operation of schools. The former entailed strong support for home-based learning initiatives through parental empowerment. The National Minimum Curriculum (1999) underlined the importance of parental involvement in the national education system thus:

An effective educational system recognises the link between the home environment and variations in pupil achievement. When possible, the education of children should be linked to educational and participatory programmes for their parents or guardians. Students who are denied a support system outside the school should be given special attention.

The increasing recognition of the centrality of parental involvement in education and school life laid the foundations for the Family Literacy Programmes (FLPs) in Malta, which were set up by the Foundation for Educational Services (FES). The FES is a statutory body founded in 2001 to provide a range of innovative educational programmes including family literacy, parental empowerment and parental involvement in the education sector. These programmes were designed not only to complement the formal system but also to promote lifelong learning. The FES is largely

funded by the state but receives some supplementary funding from the HSBC Cares for Children Fund and various Grundtvig projects.

FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAMMES

Family literacy programmes are a relatively new phenomenon in Malta, having been formally piloted by the University of Malta (Faculty of Education) in the year 2000. However, the initiative gained added momentum when it was formally adopted by the FES and, as a result, FLPs are now recognised as an integral tool for family learning and a key component of the mainstream national education system.

To date, the FES has developed four core family literacy/education support programmes:

The Ħilti Programme (My Ability): As described below, the Ħilti programme is an after-school, family-oriented educational project that endeavours to complement and reinforce school-based teaching and learning.

The NWAR (Late Blossoms) Programme: This programme was initiated in 2002 as a variation of the Ħilti programme. It was designed for parents with children with severe reading and writing (learning) difficulties and, as a result, parental participation in the programme is obligatory to ensure continuity between home and school-based learning. Participation in the programme is limited to two families per tutor and lasts for a minimum of four months (or one semester). This period can, however, be extended according to the learning needs of the child. Each learner has an individual learning programme (ILP) which facilitates the provision of intensive and appropriate literacy assistance to children. The ILP is based on a multi-sensory, synthetic, phonics-based methodology in which the parent is trained to emulate the teacher, repeating the strategies used in the classroom at home in order to enhance children's mastery of literacy skills.

The Parents-in-Education Programme (Programme Id f' Id) and the Parent Empowerment for Family Literacy Project (PEFaL): These are parent capacity-building and empowerment initiatives. They include the following key components:

- Parents' Sessions in Ħilti Clubs: Parents with children participating in the Ħilti programme are encouraged to learn and use practical tools that stimulate their children to learn more effectively. They also participate in child learning activities and discuss educational strategies with teachers.
- Parent-to-Parent Initiatives: Parents, in collaboration with FES personnel, engage in various parent-to-parent empowerment initiatives. A team of parent leaders has been set up and trained to provide, under teacher supervision and guidance, courses to other parents. This programme was short-listed for the European Parents' Association's Alcuin Award in both 2002 and 2003, and received a special mention.
- Community Literacy Outreach Projects: The initiative involves the participation of the family in community-focused literacy programmes executed in popular open-air spaces.

The Malta Writing Programme: This is a two-month programme which endeavours to teach basic reading and creative writing skills with a view to contributing towards language learning and teaching in Malta. In addition, the programme aims to promote action-based research and lifelong learning. To achieve these goals, FES organizes separate creative training workshops for Young Writers (children aged 8 to 13) and parents, as well as collective Family Writing Clubs (FWC). Parents enrol in the FWCs so that they can learn both to nurture their children's writing skills and to develop their own reading and writing skills.

Aims and Objectives

The FLPs aims to:

- enhance both community development and parental empowerment through learning and active involvement in the learning process of children;
- promote intergenerational, home-based, lifelong learning;
- empower parents as co-educators, learners and parent leaders in order to promote intergenerational lifelong learning as well as to facilitate their socio-economic integration into mainstream society;
- help children to develop literacy skills in a holistic, play-to-learn context;
- improve parents' literacy skills in order to enhance the provision of early childhood education; and
- create strong links between home and school learning processes in order to promote lifelong learning.

The Ħilti Programme is examined in greater detail below in order to fully appreciate the role of family education initiatives in simultaneously promoting children's educational development and intergenerational lifelong learning.

THE ĦILTI PROGRAMME

The Ħilti Programme was initiated in 2001 as an after-school and community-based family literacy/educational initiative targeting early primary school children aged between 6 and 7 years (grades 1, 2 and 3), parents and teachers. The programme emerged from an increased awareness of the positive role of after-school learning activities and parental involvement in the educational development of children. To this end, the programme has facilitated the formation of school-based Ħilti Clubs (family literacy clubs) which brings together parents and their children to participate in family-oriented learning activities. The Clubs meet twice a week for about three months.

The Ħilti Programme was first piloted in six state primary schools, but quickly spread across the entire nation with strong collaboration and support from participating school administrations and parent councils. A number of primary schools have participated in the programme since its inception; for example, 38 schools and communities involving 2,534 children and 2,240 parents participated in the programme between late 2001 and mid-2005. Currently, Ħilti Clubs operate in 26 community-based primary schools and reach around 400 children and their parents per scholastic term. In addition, more than 50 «parent leaders» from Ħilti Clubs have been selected to spearhead other FLP activities.

Ħilti Programme Aims and Objectives

The Ħilti Programme aims to:

- complement and strengthen school-based teaching and learning activities through the provision of after-school assistance to children;
- help children to develop literacy skills in a holistic, play-to-learn context;
- empower parents by equipping them to act as community leaders and effective first educators for their children;
- improve the efficiency of the education system through active parental involvement in child education;
- harness children's eagerness to work and learn with parents in order to enhance their ability to acquire literacy skills;
- assist schools in capacity-building in order to foster a family literacy ethos and develop resources and tools (practices); and
nurture and entrench the development of a family-based, lifelong learning ethos within Maltese families.

■ Essentially, therefore, the programme is being used as a vehicle to foster the transformation of the education system as a whole through the infusion of new teaching-learning practices (as such as learning through play and differentiated learning), and through increased parental involvement in learning and in supporting their children's educational development. The latter principle emerged from the recognition that the parents of children with low literacy skills tend to display similar learning needs, hence such needs can often be effectively addressed by triggering parents' interest in assisting their children's educational development.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION: APPROACHES AND METHODS

Recruitment and Training of Facilitators

The programme is implemented through school-based Ħilti Clubs with assistance from professional teachers employed by the Education Division and volunteer assistants who have received an equivalent level of training. However, in order to ensure the provision of high quality family literacy training and thereby enhance the effectiveness of the programme, all teachers and volunteers employed by the FES are required to participate in an intensive 112-hour training programme in family literacy teaching-learning approaches, as well as teaching methods designed for learners with mixed abilities. Thereafter, professional development is facilitated through ongoing refresher courses. Each teacher/tutor is responsible for a single Ħilti Club comprising, on average, 8 to 12 families (children and their parents). The low learner-to-tutor ratio is strategically intended to enhance programme effectiveness by enabling teachers to pay particular attention to individual literacy and psycho-social development needs.

Enrolment of Learners

Host schools identify and select children in need of extra literacy training or social development assistance. The parents of participating children are obliged to attend and take part in Ħilti Club activities. The schools also decide whether to focus on literacy (Maltese or English) or numeracy, in addition to other skills such as health (personal hygiene, nutrition) and inter-personal relations. However, on principle, all Ħilti Club activities contain in-built literacy and/or numeracy concepts and skills.

Teaching-Learning Approaches and Methodologies

The programme predominantly employs interactive teaching-learning methodologies such as play-to-learn approaches that involve games, drama, sports and group activities. These are supported by «joint» child-parent learning sessions, which are mediated by the tutors, and further reinforced through repetition in the home environment. The parents do not participate in Ħilti Club activities solely as learners; they are also there to influence their children's learning development and learn to fulfil their own potential as co-teachers, lifelong learners and, ultimately, leaders of other parents.

The programme relies on a number of teaching-learning materials based on key FES publications in both Maltese and English. These include two bilingual reading packs targeting children aged 6–7 and 7–8, as well as a guidebook for parents which focuses on how they can base a range of activities in the home on the themes contained in the children's books.

PROGRAMME IMPACT AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Since its inception, the Ħilti Programme has been evaluated

extensively by senior FES (internal) and external professionals, with the former undertaking assessment visits on an ongoing basis. In both cases, however, qualitative and quantitative methods were employed to assess and evaluate the participants' (children, parents, teachers and schools) perceptions of the programme's impact on educational development and lifelong learning. In particular, parents, Ħilti Club tutors, day-school teachers and school administration authorities were asked to evaluate criteria such as classroom participation, attainment, motivation and psycho-social development. The results of these evaluation processes indicate that the programme has major benefits for all participating parties. These benefits include:

- **Improved psycho-social development:** Child assessments before and after participating in Ħilti Club activities indicate that the programme promotes holistic, psycho-social development. Children exhibited improved self-esteem, self-confidence and inter-personal (social, communication) skills after participating in the programme. Most importantly, the programme has had major benefits on children's educational development, showing improvements in the acquisition of literacy skills, the development of creative and critical thinking skills, educational attainment and the ability to learn. For example, most children admitted during interviews that the programme has stimulated their interest in learning in order to achieve better results. These results are particularly important in view of the fact the Ħilti programme primarily aims to assist children with literacy and social development needs.
- **Impact of parental participation on children's educational development:** Evaluation results indicate a strong correlation between parental participation in their children's education and the children's educational progress in terms of literacy, participation in classroom activities, and personal and social skills. Data collected from day-school teachers showed statistically significant correlations ($p<0.005$) between a) children's increase in literacy development and parents' rate of participation, and b) children's participation in the programme and improvements in their literacy, personal and social skills.
- **Social Impacts:** Parents and children strongly feel that participation in family literacy programmes is beneficial both for education and for the development of personal and social skills. Hence, approximately 90% of parents believe that the programme has improved their parenting capabilities as manifested by, for example, improved relations and communication with their children; an increased capacity and willingness to assist their children with their school work; and higher involvement in school affairs. According to one parent: «I was impressed by how the parents, including myself, worked with our children. My daughter was very happy that I was with her, helping her along. She used to wait for me to show me her work because she knows I like it that she does that.»

The programme has also had positive and enriching benefits on participating teachers and their schools, and thus the education system in general. Teachers participating in Ħilti Club activities have adopted a range of teaching-learning tools and strategies to enrich their classroom practices, including: the use of phonics and individualised learning plans for students with literacy difficulties; and inter-personal and participatory methods. Additionally, these teachers are more inclined to cooperate actively with parents, thereby creating strong links between children's school and home learning, and, by extension, opening up possibilities for the institutionalisation of intergenerational lifelong learning in Malta. Accordingly, about 90% of school heads stated that programme is effective in terms of children's and adults' learning experiences and actively encouraged parental participation in the school.

In a nutshell, the Ħilti programme has played a critical role in:

- enhancing children's social and literacy development even in a severe literacy needs context;
- enhancing lifelong learning among parents;
- empowering parents to become parent leaders (i.e. significant resource persons in their educational community); and
- enhancing home-school links and the school's perceptions of the potential for parental involvement.

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NETHERLANDS

VoorleesExpress

Implementing Organization
SodaProducties foundation

Language of Instruction
Dutch

Funding
Government Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment: Ruimte voor Contact programme, until August 2010; Ministry of Youth and Family: Vrijwillige Inzet voor en door Jeugd en Gezin (Voluntary Commitment by and for Youth and Families) programme, until December 2011; VSBfonds; OranjeFonds.

Programme Partners
Ministry of Housing, Spatial Planning and the Environment; Ministry of Youth and Family; housing corporation Mitros; Evident Interactive; publisher Gottmer; Stichting Lezen (Reading Foundation); Stichting Lezen and Schrijven (Reading and Writing Foundation); Sectorinstituut voor Openbare Bibliotheken (Sector Institute for Public Libraries); CINOP; Oranje Fonds; Sardes; Gottmer ; Entoenentoen; Pica Educatief; Peuter TV; Eenvoudig communiceren; Unieboek; MultiCopy, national housing corporation Aedes; national speech therapists oganisation NVLF; Landelijk Netwerk Thuislesorganisaties (home learning organisation); Stichting Actief Ouderschap (Active Parents Foundation); and numerous elementry schools.

Annual Programme Costs
National organisation, Platform VoorleesExpress €100,000. Local organisations: depending on the number of participants, varying from around € 40,000 to € 200,000.

Annual programme cost per learner
Between €500 and €800

Date of Inception
2006

COUNTRY CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The education system in the Netherlands is one of the most advanced in the world. The country invests 6% of its GDP in education. It is the leading country on UNICEF's children's well-being classification. Education was one of the features evaluated on this list, and the Netherlands got the highest score. However, the reading abilities of many primary school children fall short of the required level. One in seven pupils has an inadequate reading level when they finish Year 3 of primary education. On finishing Year 4, the reading levels of one in three pupils are inadequate, while a quarter of pupils finish Year 8 at the reading level of a Year 6 pupil.

Many young students who do not acquire the required level of literacy nevertheless continue with their studies. Among adults, 35% of illiterate people graduated from primary education, while 26% have a secondary school diploma. Almost a third (30%) have a vocational degree and the rest (9%) have a pre-university education qualification or higher.

The risk of illiteracy is higher among women, low-skilled workers, older adults, first-generation immigrants and people who are unemployed. Reading problems are therefore disproportionately found among children from socio-economically and/or educationally disadvantaged families. Socio-economic status is a strong predictor of children's school performance. What children learn about written language depends on how it is used in daily routines and rituals and the interactions that take place around those activities. It was in response to this problem that the SodaProducties organisation initiated the VoorleesExpress programme.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The 'VoorleesExpress' (ReadingExpress) programme started as an initiative of two sisters in the Kanaleneiland district of Utrecht, an area with many immigrants, low social cohesion and high crime rates. The sisters wanted to change this, and started the foundation SodaProducties in December 2005. Their first programme, the 'VoorleesExpress', started in January 2006. SodaProducties develops projects that facilitate the exchange of knowledge between organisations in the field of volunteering and social entrepreneurship. One of the concerns of the foundation was with the language and literacy skills of Dutch children. In order to improve them, they created the VoorleesExpress programme. VoorleesExpress was initiated with 10 volunteers and 10 families from Kanaleneiland. The programme succeeded, and, from 2007, it was extended to other Dutch cities.

Today VoorleesExpress aims its programme at both immigrant and native families with low literacy levels. Franchises of VoorleesExpress were established in 59 locations in total. By the beginning of 2014 the programme had reached 3,314 families and had about 3,791 volunteers.

Aims and Objectives

- Enhance children's reading habits;
- Stimulate children to enjoy books;
- Enrich the home literacy environment by involving all family members;
- Promote children's language and pre-literacy skills;
- Enable parents to encourage their children's language acquisition in their own way; and

Strengthen the relationship between parents and schools so they share responsibility for the child's development, supporting and augmenting each other's efforts

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION: APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

The VoorleesExpress stimulates language and pre-literacy skills development and the joy in reading of children from families with low literacy by reading books to them. The programme enhances children's language development at an early age and encourages parents to have an active role in their children's early development.

Reading to Children in the Home

For a period of 20 weeks, a reader pays weekly visits to the family. The reader stays for an hour, familiarising the children and their parents with the nightly ritual of reading to the kids. The reader gives the parents the tools they need to take over the reading in due course and tells the parents about other ways to encourage their children's language acquisition.

Use of Voluntary Workers

VoorleesExpress is driven by a group of voluntary workers who are all carefully selected, trained and supported by a paid worker employed by a quality organisation such as a public library or a social welfare association.

Strong Local Networks

The programme aims for a network-based approach. VoorleesExpress works with partners in the fields of reading promotion, parental involvement and volunteer work and participates in several nationwide and local projects and programmes, such as BoekStart (BookStart), Taal voor het Leven (Language for Life) and Bibliotheek op School (Library at School). This helps offer families a number of ways to encourage reading and improve language development. Cooperation also enables us to refer people to other guidance organisations if need be.

Dialogic Reading

The readers of the VoorleesExpress use the so-called 'dialogic reading style'. They implement this method by talking about what happens in a book with the children, encouraging them to predict what will happen next and matching the story to the child's interests, personal experiences and knowledge. The volunteers like reading, especially to children, and their objective is to transmit their passion for reading to the children and their families.

The Importance of the Parents

Parents have a central role in the process of helping children enjoy reading. Often, they have their own difficulties with reading and lack the self-confidence to inspire the children to read. The programme aims to provide them with tools and tricks to help their children. Parents have to be present during the reading sessions, and have to define what they want to accomplish and reflect on the difficulties they encounter. At the end, each family decides the approach they are going to take in the future.

VoorleesExpress also acknowledges the importance of strengthening the contact between parents and schools. Greater involvement of the parents has a positive influence on children's in-school development. This gives children a head start in their education, an effect that lasts throughout their time in primary school.

Therefore, families are encouraged to give voice to their questions and to actively engage in their children's further development.

Material

The books used in the reading sessions are borrowed from local libraries. The parents receive a free library card, through which they have access to the books. In addition to the library card, the other most relevant resource is the "reading diary". This book is a personal reading journal for each child. It rotates between the family, the volunteer reader and the teacher, so all of them add something to it.

The reading diary shows the number of reading sessions, the day and time of the session, and the contact details of the reader and the coordinator. After every visit the child ticks a reading session, making it clear when the reader has visited and when the project ends. The diary helps make reading a ritual.

The readers note the books that have been read to the children, which methods worked better and any other relevant considerations. It is useful also as a means of communicating information to the parents and the coordinator.

Additionally, it contains information about dialogic reading, books, linguistic games and libraries for the parents. It also gives suggestions for enhancing the language and pre-literacy development of their children.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Usage

The VoorleesExpress has a partnership with BereSlim, a provider of pedagogical computer games for young children aged between three and seven years and their parents and educators. Children can play educational games and see picture books. The products of BereSlim can be used at home, by schools, kindergartens and libraries. While it is very important to encourage children to use real books, digital/animated picture books can be a good support in promoting reading and language development. These picture book stories have been digitised and brought to life with moving images, voices, sound and music. Children comprehend the story significantly better and learn new words and sentence structures as a result. The VoorleesExpress also makes use of ICTs for public relations purposes. The programme website (www.voorleesexpress.nl) is a source of

information on the programme to which volunteers and families can add. In addition, there is an online community for the volunteers to share their experiences, ask questions and get information. There are also Facebook and Twitter accounts for the programme, while project managers can access the VoorleesExpress intranet to order material, purchase documents and be in contact with each other. The programme is also working to develop a mobile phone application that will give parents the possibility of sharing their experiences from home.

Selection and Training of Volunteers

The volunteer readers are selected, trained and supported by a paid worker employed by an organisation such as a public library or a social welfare association. The volunteers come from vocational schools, universities and volunteer centres. The local VoorleesExpress offers training aimed at equipping volunteers with an understanding of how they can approach parents and make them more actively engaged in the development of the children.

Identification and Recruitment of Families

A family is eligible for the programme if their children are aged between two and eight years and have insufficient Dutch language proficiency, are at risk of developing a language delay, or dislike books and reading. Cases in which parents have difficulty reading to their children because they have low literacy skills, or because they do not know how to do it, also receive the assistance of VoorleesExpress.

The parents have to be willing to learn to read, be at home when the reader comes, help their children and, eventually, take over the reading themselves.

The children's teacher, or a VoorleesExpress employee, decide – via an intake conversation with the parent - whether the project is suitable for the family, and they determine the specific needs of the family. Sometimes the children's grades are considered or the children are asked to read a little to inform a judgment about vocabulary knowledge, comprehension level or the interest they show in reading. The parents are also observed to see if they are engaged in learning which books are suitable for their children and in thinking about how can they use dialogic reading to make books more fun. Nursery schools, primary schools, speech therapists, Centra voor Jeugd en Gezin (Centres for Children and Family) and infant welfare centres all collaborate on the recruitment of target families.

Organisational Structure

VoorleesExpress started in Utrecht but expanded to other locations using a franchise-based system. In each district of the country, one self-contained organisation, for instance a welfare or volunteer organisation or a public library, delivers the VoorleesExpress programme. SodaProducties supports the franchisees through training events and materials and the exchange of knowledge and tips. The organisation also enlists the help of nationwide networks.

At a local level, there are three fundamental roles: the project managers, the coordinators and the readers. The last two are volunteer positions. The project managers administer the VoorleesExpress franchise locally and can employ interns or project staff. Many project managers take care of several locations. The coordinators support five readers and their reading families and act as links between readers and project managers.

Monitoring and Evaluation of the Programme

VoorleesExpress monitors the implementation of the programme by conducting surveys of readers and coordinators on the activities of the VoorleesExpress. University students regularly conduct surveys about the programme. In addition, VoorleesExpress collaborates with knowledge centres that specialise in literacy and parental involvement, such as Sardes, Stichting Lezen and Schrijven (Reading and Writing Foundation), Stichting Actief Ouderschap (Active Parents Foundation), Stichting Lezen (Reading Foundation), SIOB (Netherlands Institute for Public Libraries), CINOP and CPNB (Collective Promotion for the Dutch Book).

PROGRAMME IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

Impact and Achievements

The effectiveness of the VoorleesExpress programme has been assessed by an independent committee of experts. In 2012 the project was included in the Databank Effectieve Jeugdinterventies (Effective Youth Interventions) of the Nederlands Jeugdinstituut (Dutch Youth Institute) (NJI) as an approved intervention programme. NJI said of VoorleesExpress that:

- Children who participated in the VoorleesExpress programme later showed better language skills, understanding of the story, reading comprehension and vocabulary. They also enjoyed reading more. In the family home, the children have a richer language experience. Their parents enjoy reading to them more and appreciate the importance of it; visits to the library increase and there are more books around the home for the children to read; children look at books longer and more often.
- VoorleesExpress has received the recognition of many organisations that emphasise its contribution to society. Among the awards received are the Meer dan handen vrijwilligersprijs 2012 (Over Hands Volunteers Prize), the Nationale Alfabetiseringsprijs 2010 (National Literacy Prize), the Achmea Publieksprijs 2010 (Achmea Public Price) and the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and Europees Platform Prize 2010.

Testimonials

"I was read to a lot as a child and now I'm a proper book lover. Reading and being read to broadens your horizons and teaches you so much. I wanted to share that feeling

with my reading family!" Volunteer Reader Mirjam

"Before enrolling in the project, Ryan showed no interest in books at all. Last week at playtime he suddenly marched over to the bookcase, grabbed a book, sat himself down and started to read!" Teacher

Challenges

Many of the participating families experience difficulty with the Dutch language. The children have insufficient language proficiency to develop proper literacy skills and to perform well in an educational environment.

However, many native children also have difficulties as they grow up in a poor home literacy environment. It is not easy to reach out to them, as there is a lot of shame associated with low literacy skills among native families.

The VoorleesExpress is often confronted with families facing multiple problems. Many of them ask for additional support, before, during, and after participating in the project. They want additional help to enhance the language skills of their children or have other requests for help (like learning how to ride a bike, homework counselling, Dutch language courses for father/mother).

LESSONS LEARNED

VoorleesExpress supported an increase in shared roles between parents and schools. For years, the school's responsibility and that of the parents were kept separate. Increasingly, now, parents and schools are seen as having an equal responsibility. Greater involvement of the parents has a positive influence on children's in-school development. Parental involvement at home proves especially effective in giving children a head start in their education and has a continuing impact throughout their time in primary school. Aware of this phenomenon, the VoorleesExpress has worked to increase collaboration between schools and families. It aims to become an expert in how to involve parents more actively in their children's education.

In order to succeed a project needs external support. VoorleesExpress created a network of donors and collaborators that made it possible to expand to different cities in the country and reach many families. A good public relations strategy is fundamental to get the attention and the support of the governments and organisations.

SUSTAINABILITY

The continuity and growth of the VoorleesExpress depends on it being embedded in local and national structures. It has to have strong collaboration with local and national organisations. The VoorleesExpress also invests intensively in public relations by appearing at conferences and in the media, and by collecting donations to get financial support.

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ROMANIA

Parent Empowerment for Family Literacy Project (PEFaL)

Programme Title
Parent Empowerment for Family Literacy Project (PEFaL)

Implementing Organization
Club Europa

Language of Instruction
Romanian

Funding
European Union through the Grundtvig programme, the Romanian Ministry of Education and local government councils

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Romania's constitution provides legal guarantees for citizens to have access to basic social services, including education which are free and compulsory up to the age of 16. However, because the transition from socialism to a market economy (since 1990) has been marred by major challenges epitomised by restrained economic development, poverty and unemployment remain endemic, particularly among the poor and socially marginalised groups such as the Roma. As a result, socially-disadvantaged groups have limited access to quality education, while some among them fail to attend school at all. Thus, while Romania had achieved a near-universal youth and adult literacy rate (98%) and access to primary school for children aged 15 and below (93%) as of 2006, ethnic, gender and regional literacy disparities remain evidently sharp. Of the 1,083,935 illiterate people, 688,803 were women and 760,432 lived in rural areas. Ethnically, while the level of illiteracy was high among socially-disadvantaged minorities (25.6% and 23.7% for the Roma and Turks respectively), it was significantly low for privileged social groups (e.g. 0.9%, 2.1% and 1.4% for Germans, Romanians and Hungarians respectively). Reports also indicate that about 50% of the children from the Roma communities are not going to school, many of them because they do not have birth certificates – necessary for school registration – while many more drop out before completing primary or secondary education due to poverty, lack of educational facilities in minority communities and the use of child labour to supplement family income. As a result, it is estimated that 30% of Roma adults (aged 45 years and above) are illiterate and have never attended school. The educational deprivations faced by the Roma are also peculiar to other social groups but especially minorities: a study by the League for the Protection of Human Rights in Ploiesti, for example, revealed that 11% of the rural population does not have a primary education; 29% of the rural population failed to complete secondary education; and 8.2% of children aged between 7 and 14 years do not attend school at all.

Yet, despite Romania's progressive integration into the knowledge-based European Union social system, illiteracy and lack of access to education and training opportunities create barriers to the socio-economic integration and inclusion of socially-disadvantaged groups into mainstream society. This not only perpetuates their marginalisation but could also stimulate political instability within the country. Recognising the challenges that illiteracy portends to Romania and regionally, Club Europa (CE), a local NGO founded in 1995, initiated the Parent Empowerment for Family Literacy Project (PEFaL).

The PEFaL project – which was led and coordinated by Malta – is an EU-funded transnational family literacy training initiative which has been implemented in Malta, Belgium, Romania, Italy, Lithuania, Spain and

UK within the framework of the Grundtvig programme (2001–2004). The primary goal of PEFaL projects is to promote the social inclusion and empowerment of marginalised social groups through the provision of lifelong learning and education opportunities.

THE PARENT EMPOWERMENT FOR FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAMME (PEFAL)

Until the initiation of the PEFaL project by Club Europa in 2001, family literacy or the active participation of parents in the schools system was not very common in Romania as the notion and practice of education was exclusively associated with the school context. However, since the initiation of the PEFaL project, family literacy has progressively evolved into a critical instrument of advancing and achieving national educational policies and goals.

The PEFaL project was implemented in collaboration with a number of kindergartens and primary schools, most of which were located in marginalised communities. The programme primarily targeted marginalised and vulnerable families (parents with children in primary school, aged 7 to 11 years) with limited educational training opportunities and therefore the lacking basic skills necessary for active participation in a modern transnational society. It focuses on various theme-based modules including health, citizenship, customs and tourism. The principal aim of the PEFaL project is to empower and promote the social inclusion of disadvantaged families through the provision of quality learning opportunities. More specifically, as an 'out-of-school' home and community-based learning project, the PEFaL project has endeavoured to:

- enhance children and parents' literacy skills and competencies;
- develop and strengthen parents' literacy and social skills in order to enhance their capacity to effectively support their children's education as co-educators and thus to complement school-based learning processes;
- create synergies between home and school-based learning;
- enable parents to participate meaningfully in school activities;
- promote inter-generational lifelong learning in Romania; and
- facilitate the development of positive parent-child relationships.

Essentially therefore, the programme has endeavoured to boost the literacy skills of primary schoolchildren through home-based learning facilitated by trained and competent parents and thus introduce effective inter-generational lifelong learning.

In order to achieve these goals, the PEFaL programme focuses on the following learning modules and activities:

Discovering Books and Exploring Feelings through Reading. The aim here is to stimulate children's curiosity about books and interest in reading, as well as to build parents' skills in identifying and acquiring appealing reading material.

Playing with Words and Storytelling. This module aims to develop children's vocabulary and reading comprehension, as well as a reading environment at home, through nursery rhymes, children's songs, puppet shows and story bags, while doing drama, role-playing and playing games.

Making My Own Story aims to raise children's interest in the written word by exploring and making comics, fun puzzles, playing with writing and drawing letters and words.

Making Family Story Bags. In this module, children and parents assemble and present to the group a family literacy resource for future reading and writing family experiences.

Visits to the Neighbourhood Library. Children and parents go to the library to register as readers.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION: APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

Training of Tutors

Club Europa recruits qualified primary schoolteachers (who also teach in the formal system) to facilitate the PEFaL programme. Most such teachers are recommended for recruitment by the participating schools. Despite being qualified, Club Europa provides teachers with module-based professional training in family literacy teaching-learning methods, adult education, management of learning processes involving parents and their children and needs-based family literacy curricula planning. Tutor training is conducted over a period of three months through workshops/seminars, individual (often ICT-based) study and practical teaching practice. Thereafter, the tutors are certified and accredited as family and adult literacy tutors. Additionally, Club Europa also trains parents to be effective child co-educators by building on their previous educational and parental experiences. The programme therefore works in two ways: on the one hand, it empowers schools; and on the other, it promotes community-based family learning.

Teaching-Learning Methods and Approaches

Literacy training under the PEFaL project is undertaken over a period of three months. Learning sessions (each lasting for about one and a half hours and involving between 10 and 12 families) is structured in two parts. The first session introduces parents and children separately to a joint learning activity. This is followed by a joint session of parents and their children in which they reflect on the assigned learning activity. Lastly, learners are given homework which is not only designed to provide the basis of the learning activity in the next session but also to involve other family members in learning through home-based activities.

As indicated above, the programme employs participatory and interactive teaching-learning approaches and strategies such as learn-by-play (games), group discussions, story-telling and simulations / drama. These strategies endeavour to stimulate learning through self-discovery, creativity, reflection and critical thinking. To enhance programme effectiveness, teaching and learning are also rooted in the participants' educational experiences with a view to building and thus reinforcing their acquired literacy skills. In addition, learners are also actively involved in developing teaching-learning materials (resources) including story bags, role play, games and puzzles. Involving learners in developing teaching-learning aids is instrumental not only in sustaining the learners' motivation to continue participating in the programme but also facilitates the internalisation of literacy skills by stimulating their creativity.

PROGRAMME IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

Impact / Achievements

Programme evaluations have revealed the following key achievements:

- the PEFaL programme benefited 450 families during the first three years of its implementation. 30% of the participating parents, most of whom were barely literate when they joined the programme, enrolled for advanced studies such as English, ICT and vocational training courses.
- the PEFaL family literacy project enables parents and children to become well acquainted with each other and therefore to improve their communication and social relation-

ships. The programme also improved the self-confidence, belief and esteem of adult learners.

- the involvement of learners in the development and production of teaching-learning materials imbued them with satisfaction in their abilities and contribution to the learning process. This provided parents with further motivation to continue participating in the programme as well as in school activities. On the other hand, it improved the behaviour and discipline of schoolchildren as demonstrated by the improved tendency to do homework.
- the programme has also empowered teachers to use diverse teaching methodologies as well as to support effectively learners with different learning needs.

Challenges

At its inception, the PEFaL programme had only a lukewarmly reception from both the schools and parents, primarily because family literacy was a new concept and approach to education and training. Thus, on the one hand, parents felt ashamed to admit and expose their illiteracy by joining the programme and by learning together with their children. On the other hand, schools (teachers) were also reticent to accept parental involvement in the educational processes because they doubted their capacity to function effectively due to their limited educational skills. Accordingly, parents were viewed as an obstruction to learning rather than as an asset, indicating entrenched perceptions of regarding school and home-based learning as separate endeavours and processes. The teachers also felt that the programme increased their workloads albeit in an area which was 'completely' different from the professional work.

In order to ameliorate these challenges, Club Europa adopted the following strategies:

- schools were convinced to participate in the programme by being awarded greater recognition and support to benefit from other EU projects.
- teachers were paid a stipend from the programme. The support of the Ministry of Education also enabled teachers to realise that participation in the programme could lead to promotion and a higher salary.
- concerted sensitisation campaigns were instituted to convince parents of their critical role in the education of their children as well as in the functioning of the schools in their communities.

SUSTAINABILITY

The long-term sustainability of the PEFaL programme is based on the support received from the EU, Ministry of Education and local councils. For example, in 2005, the Ministry of Education and Club Europa agreed to enhance family literacy programmes and thus home-school linkages by training 200 teachers in family literacy.

These institutions are convinced of the capacity of the programme to promote access to education for disadvantaged people and thus its capacity to empower them in order to break out of the cycle of poverty and social exclusion. Similarly, schools have also realised the programme's capacity to stimulate children's interest in learning and parents' critical role in child education as manifested by the request from four high schools (in 2007) in Braila to be included in a family learning programme tailored to their specific needs (this is already being implemented). The inclusion of secondary schools is noteworthy because it demonstrates the expansion of the PEFaL beyond the initial primary targets (parents and primary schoolchildren).

Furthermore, the project has trained and certified teachers/tutors as well as developed and produced teaching-learning modules and materials

which schools and kindergartens could continue to use independently. Parents have also been empowered and will continue to support the education of their children. Additionally, since 2007, Club Europa has initiated other programmes complementary to PEFaL, including the Parent Training Programme, the Child Training Programme and the Teacher Training Course, which have been approved by the National Council for Adult Education and Training. These programmes are also provided to Teacher Training Centres, a process which is empowering future generations of teachers to integrate family literacy into the formal education system.

Since 2006, Club Europa has also collaborated with other institutions and organisations such as Centre Educatia 2000+ in providing family literacy training to isolated communities. Collaboration with other organisations has enabled the PEFaL programme to integrate subjects like eco-civics and entrepreneurship into family literacy training for both parents and primary and secondary school children. This project is now being funded by The Soros Foundation (since 2007).

LESSONS LEARNED

The following are the key lessons which emerged from programme implementation:

- for family literacy programmes to succeed and to be effective, there is need to create strong synergies, integration and compliance with the national regulations governing school management, in-service teacher training and curricular development.
- parents should not only be well-informed about the programme but should also be actively involved in its development and implementation because this gives them confidence and enhances their interest to support their children's education.
- joint learning sessions gives all participants the feeling that they have similar challenges and each has something to contribute towards solving group learning problems.

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TURKEY

Family Literacy Programmes (FLPs)

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 coopera-

tions 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,

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 (see below) have been undertaken to see 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 /A chievements 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. Additionally, 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 were 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 initiatives, AÇEV has been able to reduce its operational costs without compromising programme quality.

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UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

Bookstart Educational Programme

Programme Title
Bookstart Educational Programme

Implementing Organization
Booktrust

Language of Instruction
English

Funding
The Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland , Local Authorities and sponsorship from various private stakeholders such as book publishers and book sellers

Date of Inception
1992 –

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

As a result of the systematic institutionalisation of an environment conducive for sustainable educational development in the country over many decades (e.g. through increased public spending on education, extensive teacher training and retention programmes etc), the United Kingdom (UK) now has one of the most developed and advanced educational systems in the world. The government is currently investing about 5,5% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) into the educational sector and is thus able to fulfil one of its primary statutory obligations of providing free and compulsory education to all children aged between 5 and 16 years. Consequently, the UK's educational system has been expanding rapidly at all levels over the years as manifested by the high net enrolment or attendance rates at pre-primary (81%), primary (100%) and secondary (100%) school levels as well as the near universal youth and adult literacy rates.

However, while governmental support for educational development in the UK has generally been increasing in recent years, support for pre-primary or early childhood education (ECE) continues to lag behind other sectors. Indeed, it has been observed that while the country has achieved universal enrolment rates at primary and secondary school levels, only about 81% of children aged 5 years and below are currently enrolled in pre-primary schools (compared to 100% in other European countries such as the Netherlands, France and Germany). There are numerous challenges which impede the provision and expansion of ECE in the UK. These include: the reductions in State childcare support and the fact that "pre-primary school places are only free for four-year olds [while] funding for three-year olds is at the discretion of local education authorities (LEAs), which are the responsible bodies for providing state education to pupils in their areas." These challenges have, in turn, created national inequalities with regards to access to ECE, with children living in poor municipalities and from poor and disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds (such as migrant families) having limited access to quality pre-school education. Hence, in an effort to address these fundamental challenges and create quality ECE opportunities for all children as well as to empower parents and caregivers to be proactive and effective educators, Booktrust UK – an independent educational NGO which was founded in 1921 – initiated the Bookstart Educational Programme (BEP) in 1992.

THE BOOKSTART EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME (BEP)

The BEP is an integrated home-based ECE and early childhood development (ECD) programme which is currently being implemented across the UK. The programme targets both pre-school children and their parents and / or caregivers and therefore primarily strives to enhance access to pre-school education for all children in the UK and to nurture a culture of home-based learning by encouraging parents and / or caregivers to share (read) books, stories and rhymes with their children from as early an age as possible.

The institutionalisation of the BEP was premised on the long-established fact that parents, as children's primary caregivers and educators, play a critical role in shaping children's psychosocial (i.e. cognitive, emotional, personality, language etc) development and thus their overall lives as well as on scientific (mostly psychological) evidence which attest that access to quality ECE positively impacts children's cognitive development which, in turn, enhances their potential for successful long-term learning. In light of this and as detailed below, Booktrust provides participating families with a variety of age-specific thematic learning resources, including books and interactive games, which seek to enhance children's psychosocial and literacy skills development by capturing their imaginative curiosity about the world around them.

Programme Aims and Objectives

As an integrated and intergenerational educational programme, the BEP has numerous goals. Most importantly, however, the programme endeavours to:

- Create sustainable home-based ECE opportunities for all children in the UK, particularly for those living in socio-economically disadvantaged communities (i.e. promote universal access to ECE);
- Promote appropriate and quality ECD practices in the country;

- Nurture in every child a lifelong love of books and reading;
- Nurture children's psychosocial and literacy skills development from an early age;
- Cultivate a culture of home or family-based (intergenerational) learning;
- Empower parents and caregivers to be effective educators and;
- Promote social inclusion and empowerment of all persons through access to education.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION: APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

Funding

The BEP is currently being implemented with assistance and sponsorship from the government (including local authorities) and private sector (e.g. book publishers, libraries and book sellers). Through this innovative public and private partnership, Booktrust is able to use relatively small amounts of public money as a catalyst for releasing a much larger contribution from the private sector. For example, for every £1 invested by the Department for Education, Booktrust generates an additional £4 in support from its private sector partners. In addition to financial support, Booktrust also receives significant material contributions, such as free book gifts, from its private partners.

Technical Support

The implementation of the BEP is heavily dependant on parents and / or caregivers who act as the principal facilitators and educators. However, given that most parents and caregivers are not trained ECE and ECD practitioners while some may be semi-literate or even functionally illiterate, Booktrust works closely with local library staff, health visiting teams and local ECE and ECD practitioners to support parents and caregivers in executing their duties. Such technical support has been invaluable in ensuring the effective and efficient implementation of the programme since its inception in 1992.

Mobilisation of Participants

Booktrust employs several strategies and mechanisms to mobilise families to participate in the BEP and, in particular, to encourage parents and caregivers to proactively participate in their children's formative learning process and development. Noteworthy, the Trust routinely flights informative advertisements in the public media (i.e. community and national newspapers, magazines and television and radio stations) and holds regular community-based advocacy campaigns (e.g. through its rhyme week programme) imploring parents and caregivers not only to enlist with the programme but also to regularly read books with their children. Pamphlets and educational blogs on its website and on popular social networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook are also regularly produced for the same purpose. In addition, these platforms are also used to inform and update the public, programme participants, potential participants and other stakeholders about the Trust's programme activities within their communities. Booktrust also hosts downloadable resources on its website including, for example, book reviews and interactive games, which are available for free use by learners and readers of all ages and abilities. Such a strategy plays a critical role not only in promoting intergenerational learning by making learning resources easily available to all but also in motivating families to join and continue to participating in the BEP.

Procurement and Distribution of Teaching-Learning Materials

In order to ensure the successful and sustainable implementation of the BEP, Booktrust provides participating families with free book packs for use by children of different age-groups and abilities as well as ECE

teaching-guidance modules for use by parents and / or caregivers who act as the programme's primary facilitators or educators. Children's reading or learning packages are carefully selected by a panel of ECE and ECD experts and often cover a wide spectrum of themes including fiction, rhymes and illustrated short stories etc. Although these book packages are mostly procured at a low cost or as gifts from Booktrust's long-standing private partners such as public libraries, book-sellers, and book publishing houses, Booktrust is solely responsible for selecting books and other learning resources without undue influence from the government or publishers. This ensures that the programme is not usurped for commercial or political purposes.

Furthermore, in order to ensure that the programme remains relevant to all, the teaching-learning resources are often selected to reflect and satisfy the differing needs of individual communities and their families. In general, however, a BEP teaching-learning package includes one or more of the following items:

- Dual language books and guidance to encourage every family to share books;
- Specialised packs for children who are blind / partially sighted or deaf / hearing impaired;
- Resources and support for teenage pregnancy practitioners and projects including the Family Nurse Partnership;
- Resources for charities and voluntary organisations who engage with families and children from a range of backgrounds, including: Home-Start, Prisoners Advice & Care Trust & Action for Prisoners Families and KidsVIP;
- Resources for children's centres and Early Years settings to help practitioners promote speech and language development;
- Opportunities for targeted work with Gypsy, Roma Travellers;
- Resources for children's hospital schools and children's hospices, and
- Resources to promote library joining and regular access to many more books for free

Monitoring and Evaluation

In addition to internal programme impact assessment reviews which are undertaken by the Trust on an ongoing basis (e.g. the Booktrust National Impact Evaluation, 2009), Booktrust has also commissioned several external evaluation studies such as the Bookstart: The First Five Years by Moore, M & Wade, B: 1993, 1998 and 2000; the Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis of Bookstart by Just Economics LLP and Booktrust: Family Reading Activity Survey, 2010 by Fatherhood Institute & ICM Research to delineate the impact of the programme in the UK. Noteworthy, most recently, Booktrust commissioned Just Economics LLP to conduct a forecasted Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis in order to quantify the social, environmental and economic value created by Bookstart in England for the 2009/10 financial year. As detailed below, these studies revealed that the BEP has had a positive impact not only children and their families but also on the wider society.

IMPACT

The BEP has had a significant impact on the development and expansion of ECE in the UK since its inception in 1992. Most significantly, the programme reaches more than 2 million children every year and has been the main conduit through which Booktrust procures and distributes about 2,155,000 book packs annually to families across the country (i.e. 2,010,000 in England, 70,000 in Wales and 75,000 in Northern Ireland). Qualitatively, several evaluation reports have highlighted the following key programme impacts:

- Like other related ECE or early learning intervention programmes, impact assessment or evaluation studies have revealed that by expos-

ing children to books and a culture of home-based learning at an early age, the BEP critically helps to nurture children's formative psychosocial, language and literacy skills development as well as a sustained love of books, all of which provides a critical foundation for successful long-term learning. Indeed, interviews with some primary school teachers in the UK have revealed that children who participated in the BEP demonstrate greater learning aptitudes and language and literacy skills competencies than their peers who were not extensively exposed to books at an early age. According to Wade and Moore, (2000), for example, mean scores for a range of literacy and numeracy tests among primary school children indicates that Bookstart children outperforms their non-Bookstart counterparts by between 1 and 5%. Essentially therefore, by positively influencing children's formative psychosocial development, the BEP enhances children's learning capacities;

- The programme also fosters the development of important social skills among children as well as strong emotional bonds between parents and their children, primarily by increasing quality time that children and their parents/carers spend and work together. This not only enhances familial cohesion and thus reduces the likelihood of deviant behaviour among children but also provides children with an essential foundation for engaging with the wider community;
- A recent cost-benefit and Social Return on Investment (SROI) analysis of the BEP which was conducted by Just Economics LLP revealed that the BEP is a low-cost (cost-effective) early learning intervention which creates significant social value for parents, children and the state. In particular, the programme helps to save the nation millions of tax-dollars per year (e.g. through a reduction in the provision of institutionalised pre-school services and remedial educational services in primary and secondary schools as well as reduced procurement costs for book packages for ECE) as well as to effectively nurture the country's human resource capital. Furthermore, the books and guidance materials included in the Bookstart book packages allow parents to engage with the children themselves, therefore eliminating the high cost of professional involvement. Thus, in financial terms, the SROI analysis revealed that:
- For every £1 the state invests, Bookstart returns a total £25 of value to society, and
- £614m of social value is generated by using £9m of Department for Education funding to leverage support from private sector partners, local authorities & Primary Care Trusts.

In light of its significant impact in the UK, the BEP has now been adopted by more than twenty-four (24) countries across the world and Booktrust provides these affiliates with technical support in the implementation of the BEP.

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UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND NORTHERN IRELAND

Prison Family Learning Programme

Programme Title
Prison Family Learning Programme (PFLP)

Implementing Organization
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 due, in large part, to strong State support of education over many decades, 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.

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 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 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.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION: APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

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; and
- 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 intergenerational 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.

PROGRAMME IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

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 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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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Students and Parents In Cooperative Education (SPICE) Family Literacy Programme

Programme Title
Students and Parents In Cooperative Education (SPICE) Family Literacy Programme

Implementing Organization
Maine School Administrative District (MSAD) No. 3 (under the Adult and Community Education Programme)

Language of Instruction
English

Programme Partners
Broadreach, MSAD No. 3, National Even Start – No Child Left Behind, the Barbara Bush Foundation For Family Literacy (through the Maine Family Literacy Initiative (MEFLI Lighthouse grant) and the State (through the Adult Education and Family Literacy grant)

Date of Inception
2000 –

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

School attendance rates in the USA have nearly reached universal levels and as a result, youth and adult literacy rates are also high. Despite these significant developments, illiteracy remains a major challenge in the country. The National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) revealed that 14% of adults – about 30 million – were functionally illiterate as of 2003. Furthermore, disparities still exist between regions/location (urban, suburban or rural) and ethnic groups with regards to access to education, therefore hindering educational attainment and levels of literacy competence.

Studies indicate that communities in impoverished and isolated rural districts such as western Waldo County in Maine have limited access to quality education. Population census data for Waldo County indicates that between 15.4 and 16.3% of the total adult population (aged 25 and above) failed to complete secondary (high) school while the average school drop-out rate is estimated to be between 2.71 and 4.46%. Consequently, the NALS estimates that about 42% (400,000) of Maine's total adult population is functionally illiterate with limited capacity to perform numeric calculations, read and comprehend written text, to complete an application form or to ‹integrate easily identifiable pieces of information›. Thus, overall, ‹one in five adults in Maine lacks the literacy skills required to effectively function› in a modern society.

High levels of functional illiteracy among adults have engendered various socioeconomic challenges for Maine including poverty and homelessness. The 2003 poverty report, for example, reveals that only 18% of the adult population in Waldo County were gainfully and permanently employed while 46.1% worked part-time and 39% were unemployed. As a result, about of 13.3% of the families in Maine School Administrative District No. 3 (MSAD No. 3) lived below the federally established poverty level. These social-economic problems – particularly a lack of parental educational support and poverty – had a negative effect on children's educational attainment/achievement. Recognising the need to break the cycle of illiteracy and the attendant social challenges, the MSADistrict No. 3 initiated the Students and Parents In Cooperative Education (SPICE) family literacy programme (SPICE-FLP). The SPICE-FLP principally endeavours to create sufficient educational opportunities for Maine's disadvantaged families and therefore to empower them

to function effectively in a modern society.

THE SPICE FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAMME (SPICE-FLP)

The SPICE-FLP is a comprehensive, home-based and intergenerational programme which, primarily, provides professional and technical-based literacy training to disadvantaged families in Maine's western Waldo County. In addition, the programme also assists other learners with college placement examination preparation classes, citizenship test training, work-based literacy training and high school classes, as well as GED (General Educational Development) preparation and testing.

The programme was initiated by the MSAD No. 3 under the Adult and Community Education Programme. It specifically targets families (parents and their children) ‹most-in-need› of educational training due to their socio-economic status as indicated by low literacy skills competence and educational attainment, low employment status and income. In addition, the programme targets families who are at-risk of failing to access education such as teen-parents and children with special needs and their parents.

Aims and Objectives

The aims and objectives of the SPICE-FLP are to:

- combat illiteracy in a rural Maine school district through the provision of adult and early childhood education to disadvantaged (most-in-need) families
- assist low-income families to overcome the barriers which prevent them from participating in education and adult literacy classes
- assist teen-parents to resume formal education
- empower adults with functional literacy skills to enable them to effectively perform their basic social roles as parents and workers
- improve parents' literacy skills in order to enhance their capacity as child educators as well as to support their children to attain an education
- promote optimal child psychosocial development through the provision of early childhood education
- strengthen familial relations through intergenerational literacy learning activities.

Programme Curriculum

In order to achieve these goals, the SPICE-FLP has developed a broad and scientifically-based literacy curriculum which encompasses basic literacy and numeracy (reading, comprehension and writing), adult education, early childhood education, parent education, and intergenerational literacy activities. Besides literacy skills, the comprehensive and integrated curriculum is also intended to foster the development of a broad range of social skills among learners including:

- critical thinking
- interpersonal (effective communication, group relations, problem solving)
- conflict resolution
- responsibility for learning.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION: APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

The SPICE-FLP works through the collaboration of local communities, institutions and organisations including Broadreach, Parents Are Teachers, Too! (PATT), the University of Maine in Augusta and MSAD No. 3, with the latter providing educational services to all students up to high (secondary) school. On the other hand, through PATT, expectant or young mothers' reproductive health and childcare education needs are met.

Mobilisation and Enrolment of Learners

Because the SPICE-FLP employs a comprehensive case management model for family literacy – a model which is designed to provide families with individualised literacy training at their homes – programme participants are recruited throughout the year. This policy has, in turn, provided learners with the flexibility to integrate literacy learning into their everyday activities and thus acts as an essential motivation for participation. In order to optimise the recruitment of learners, the SPICE-FLP has formed a community-based advisory board comprising of members of the local communities and local schools. The advisory board plays a critical role in programme implementation. They are, for example, actively involved in the development of the curriculum, in promoting community awareness of literacy training and education as well as in mobilising programme participants. In addition, SPICE also relies on community outreach or advocacy campaigns including press releases, various websites, distribution of flyers and SPICE booklet through public/community centres (e.g. libraries, shops, post offices, town offices and local schools), workshops and public functions such as the Maine family literacy conference in order to build public awareness of and to recruit participants into the programme and to build community trust. SPICE staff also conduct the intake process in the home. This process identifies existing services and gathers pertinent information on educational attainment. This information assists the team to identify the most in-need families, to undertake family literacy needs assessment, to assess the developmental level of each target child and develop a comprehensive curriculum which best addresses the needs of participating families.

Teaching-Learning Approaches and Methods

The SPICE-FLP employs innovative and multi-faceted teaching-learning approaches, which include individual tutoring, small group classes, and computerised learning assistance. However, students' personal learning styles and educational needs are the primary factors which determine instructional strategies. Students are encouraged and challenged by their instructors to reach higher levels of achievement.

The SPICE adult education instructor supplemented computer assisted instruction with regular home instruction for parents getting their GED certification as well as those who needed adult basic reading, writing and maths. Using PLATO, a self-based learning technology, with adults who were at a higher level, it is possible for the instructor to spend more time with those at a lower level which need more direct instruction. Authentic materials such as newspapers, parenting materials, magazines, videos, internet sites, cookbooks and parent-chosen materials were used as the basis of instruction. All adult education instruction utilised research and scientifically-based methodologies. The focus of the early childhood education curriculum is to improve the pre-literacy and literacy skills of the target children in the programme. The pre-literacy and literacy skills taught by the SPICE staff to children are: sensory skills, fine motor skills, creative skills, gross motor skills, language skills, social skills and thinking and problem solving skills. The premise is that all children learn with their whole being and, therefore, pre-literacy, pre-reading and literacy information are most effectively taught through a wide variety of learning experiences. The primary goal of early childhood literacy is to prepare target children for success in school.

The programme has an extensive library of age-appropriate books, toys and games that are borrowed by the children to build their developmental, pre-literacy and literacy skills which are necessary for success in school. During home visits, the children also receive books and toys to contribute

to their own library of learning. SPICE instructors help parents learn important skills such as advocacy, role modelling and teaching.

OUTCOMES

SPICE Speaks is the programme's colourful, bound publication printed two to three times per programme year. Included are student-generated works such as children's stories and drawings, and parents' poetry, essays, and journal entries. Issues of SPICE Speaks is distributed to every family, shared with collaborators, legislators and the school board.

PROGRAMME IMPACT

Since its inception in 2000, the SPICE-FLP has supported an average of 20 families per year. Comparing this data to the proposed indicators to serve 15 families in order to receive funding from the federal Even Start Programme, SPICE has overreached its original goal.

LESSONS LEARNED

The link between the literacy activities and brain development became a focus of the in-home visits. The early childhood instructor reported that some new mothers were not talking to their infant because they did not think it was necessary or important.

The intensity of instruction has resulted in an increase in student educational goal attainment. In addition, research indicates that the more intensive the student hours, the greater the likelihood they will understand, retain and use the concepts and techniques learned.

Working with the birth to three populations supports a proactive approach to literacy issues, rather than waiting for issues and challenges to arise and reacting to the illiteracy challenge with special education services or having the learner drop out of school. Ultimately, this process will help break the cycle of reacting to illiteracy issues, and helping before the challenges become an issue.

Communication among all interested parties in developing family literacy programming from the national level legislation to the individual participants in the family literacy programme is key to continued success. Without pertinent data, knowledge and understanding of why supporting the entire family through education to self-sufficiency is the goal of all family literacy programming, communication breaks down and can lead to misinformed decisions regarding resources, and can have dire consequences.

Barriers to literacy are varied. All family literacy programmes must have a varied, multiple intelligence curriculum. Learners do not all learn the same way, and instructors must be versed at multi-faceted teaching methodologies.

SPICE staff will increase the use of technology with participants. This teaching technique increases intensity of instruction, supports the twenty-first century workforce with required technology skills, and connects our isolated learners to the world.

Parents that have had negative experiences in school do not attend school functions very often with their children. SPICE staff actively teach parents to advocate for themselves and their children in school events and activities. Parents showing an interest in the school environment support the child's ultimate success in school.

SOURCES

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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The Family and Child Education Programme (FACE)

Programme Title
The Family and Child Education Programme (FACE)

Implementing Organization
Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), National Centre for Family Literacy (NCFL) and Parents as Teachers National Centre (PATNC)

Language of Instruction
English, Navajo, and other American Indian languages

Date of Inception
1992 –

OVERVIEW

The Family and Child Education (FACE) programme of early childhood/parental involvement was initiated by the Bureau of Indian Education (BIE) in collaboration with the National Centre for Family Literacy (NCFL) and Parents as Teachers National Centre (PATNC) in 1990. It has over the years been implemented at 54 BIE-funded schools and served more than 10,000 American Indian families with prenatal to grade 3 children by providing adult education, early childhood education and parenting education. Home-based and centre-based services that integrate indigenous/native languages and cultures are offered. The emphasis has been on school readiness and reducing achievement gaps through culturally responsive education, resources and support. Continuing professional development and technical assistance provided by BIE, NCFL and PATNC are crucial elements of FACE.

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The National Adult Assessment of Literacy (NAAL) survey in 2003 showed that nearly 14 percent of adults in the USA had low levels of basic prose literacy (ability to search, comprehend and use information from brochures, instruction booklets) and nearly 12 percent displayed low levels of basic document literacy (ability to search, comprehend and use information from job application forms, payroll forms, maps). Studies have shown that the drop-out rate of American Indians is almost twice the national average – the highest compared to all other ethnic groups. The US National Centre for Education Statistics (IES) estimated the national drop-out rate in 2008 to be 8 percent; the drop-out rate for American Indians was estimated to be 14.6 percent. Out of 300 million degrees awarded in 2008 only 3.5 percent and 4.6 percent of Associate's and Bachelor's degrees are awarded to American Indians. It was found that 35 percent of American Indians had completed high school but had not enrolled for postsecondary school and nearly 23 percent had dropped out before completing high school. Furthermore, the unemployment rate for American Indians has repeatedly been found to be greater than that of the general population – the American Indian unemployment rate in 2003 was estimated at 15 percent by the IES, 9 percent points more than the general population's unemployment rate. Research suggests that Children born to parents, especially mothers with less than high school education are much more likely to be found lacking in respect of school readiness (for example, counting to 10, recognition of basic shapes, letter recognition). This also applies to American Indian children, whose

Stanford Achievement Test (SAT) 10 scores (standard achievement test in areas of reading, math and science administered through kindergarten to secondary grade levels across schools in the USA) are well below the national average. Furthermore, literacy-related resources, for example children's books, and literacy-related parent-child interactions (significant predictors of school success) in American Indian families are also not at par with national averages. FACE aims to break this intergenerational cycle of low literacy through its home- and centre-based programmes.

THE FAMILY AND CHILD EDUCATION PROGRAM (FACE)

The BIE, in 1990 developed the early childhood/parental involvement pilot programme based on three distinct early childhood and family education models, namely, National Centre for Family Literacy (NCFL), Parents as Teachers (PAT), and High/Scope preschool curriculum for Early Childhood and the High/Scope Educational Approach for K-3 (kindergarten to grade 3). The programme was implemented in five sites using all three models and the sixth site, known as the 'single initiative' used only the High/Scope Preschool and K-3 model. In 1992, the pilot project was renamed as the Family and Child Education (FACE) programme. As a result of its success as experienced in the initial years 48 FACE programmes are now operational in 11 states, mainly on reservations in Arizona and New Mexico (land managed by American Indian Tribes falling under the jurisdiction of tribal councils and not the local or federal government). FACE serves American Indian families in areas of adult, child and parenting education through centre- and/or home-based approaches.

Aims and Objectives

The overall aims of FACE are to:

- Support parents/primary caregivers in their role as their child's first and most influential teacher.
- Strengthen family-school-community connections.
- Increase parent participation in their children's learning and expectations for academic achievement.
- Support and celebrate the unique cultural and linguistic diversity of each American Indian community served by the programme.
- Promote lifelong learning.

IMPLEMENTATION: APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

FACE Participants

American Indian communities that have a BIE-funded elementary school; are willing to and can arrange to implement all elements of FACE in accordance with programme requirements are eligible to apply for the programme. Participants of FACE are American Indian parents or primary caregivers who have a child prenatal to age 5 (sometimes children upto grade 3). A large number of FACE participants face several socio-economic challenges including unemployment, low levels of formal education and dependence on state/tribal/federal financial assistance.

Home-Based Services

The PATNC provides training and technical assistance for parent educators (mostly American Indian) to deliver FACE home-based services to families with children prenatal to age 3, and sometimes to families with children aged 3–5. Home-based services are provided via Personal Visits, FACE Family Circle, Screening and Resource Network with the primary aim of supporting parents in their role as their child's first and most influential teacher. Personal visits of one hour are conducted weekly or on alternate weeks and the research-based Born to Learn curriculum (based on principles of child development including language, intellectual, social-emotional, and motor development) is used to help parents develop effective parent skills by providing culturally relevant learning experiences that support children's development and interests, and engage parents in developmentally appropriate interactions with their children. Screening and referrals are crucial elements of the personal visits. FACE Family Circle, designed to meet the needs of participating families by addressing child development and parenting issues and by offering families opportunities for social support, is conducted at least once a month. A resource directory is developed by the parent educators and annually updated, which helps connect families with necessary community resources and provides support and advocacy when needed.

Centre-Based Services

NCFL provides training and technical assistance for adult and preschool educators, a large majority of whom are American Indian, to deliver centre-based services to families with children aged 3–5. Centre-based services are comprised of Adult Education, Early Childhood Education, Parent Time, and Parent and Child Together (PACT) Time. Two classrooms, one for 20 children aged 3–5 and the other for 15 adults, in BIE-funded elementary schools are designated for early childhood and adult education classes respectively. The adult education component (2.5 hours per day) aims to enhance parents' academic, employability and parenting skills using Equipped for the Future Framework and Standards (EFF). The EFF Standards define the knowledge and skills (communication, decision-making, lifelong learning and interpersonal skills) adults need to carry out their roles as parents, family members, citizens, community members, and workers. The High/Scope Approach is used for the early childhood education component (3.5 hours per day) and emphasizes literacy development and children's involvement in their own learning. Its eight primary content areas are approaches to learning; social and emotional development; physical development and health; language, literacy, and communication; mathematics; creative arts; science and technology; and social studies. The Early Childhood Standards for Math (number words, spatial awareness, symbols, patterns, measuring, counting, patterns, part-whole relationships and data analysis) and language/literacy (comprehension, vocabulary, phonological awareness,

alphabet knowledge and concepts about print) are implemented to ensure children's smooth transition from preschool to kindergarten. During the parent time (1 hour per day) component, parents come together to discuss critical family issues in a supportive environment and to obtain information about various parenting issues. Parents and children are provided with several opportunities to engage in child-directed parent-child interactions during PACT time (1 hour per day) with support and guidance from FACE staff.

K-3 Services

K-3 services are offered via collaborative efforts of FACE and K-3 staff. Though FACE is primarily implemented with preschool children and their parents, there are provisions for parents with K-3 children to participate in centre-based adult education, parent time and K-3 PACT time at the FACE centre. School funds are used to provide appropriate professional development required in order to meet the needs of the K-3 educational programme.

Other Initiatives

Team Planning Day: In addition to the four days on which direct services are offered to families, one day per week is devoted to meetings for planning, outreach, record keeping, professional development, and/or providing missed services.

The RealeBooks Project: In 2006, FACE families learnt to create their own RealeBooks on computers using RealeWriter software. Four books are created each month and distributed to all FACE families and kindergartens; posted in an online library and available for FACE staff to download.

Project 'Strengthening Our Adult Readers' (SOAR): Under this initiative adult education teachers are expected, since 2008, to administer diagnostic reading assessments and implement individualized reading strategy instruction in adult literacy classes.

SpecialQuest Birth-5: In 2009, FACE staff members were introduced to resources and strategies to coordinate with state and local community partners to provide high quality services to children with special needs with a view to insuring inclusion for children with disabilities and their families.

Read Together – Catch a Dream: Initiated in 2007, this project aims to strengthen dialogic reading strategies used by FACE parents and teachers. Training is initially provided to teachers, who pass it on to parents through special training sessions. Parents are given opportunities to practice with their children new strategies learnt during PACT Time.

Supporting Family Transitions: Resources, that offer suggestions and tools to help smooth transitions for children from preschool to kindergarten to elementary school and for parents from adult education to the work place, have been developed and provided to FACE staff since 2009.

FACE Staff Teamwork: In order to enhance teamwork amongst members involved in different components of FACE, BIE sends out a monthly hand-out and quarterly team activities, and provides on-site assistance since 2007.

FACE Staffs and Professional Development

FACE staffs usually consist of five to six members: a coordinator, an adult education teacher, an early childhood teacher and co-teacher, and two parent educators. According to the No Child Left Behind legislation (put into law since 2002 with the aims of ensuring higher student achievement, stronger public schools and a better-prepared teacher workforce across the USA):

- The coordinator is required to be a school principal/school administrator/early childhood education teacher/adult education teacher.
- Home-based parent educators and centre-based early childhood co-teachers are required to have an AA degree (an associate's degree resulting from a two-year undergraduate course) , 60 hours of college credit or state certification for paraprofessionals.
- Centre-based adult and early childhood education teachers must hold required degrees and be state-certified.

These qualifications are often not visible in schools and communities where FACE is implemented, therefore NCFL and PATNC through the BIE provide high quality professional development and technical assistance such that knowledge, skills and employability of respective staff are enhanced. National Advanced Professional Development and on-site technical assistance sessions are mandatory for all FACE staffs. These aim at helping staff members integrate all delivery components and thereby maintain sustainability. The sessions include training in respect of strengthening the implementation of existing programme components and/or training in implementing new initiatives. Nearly 25 to 33 percent of FACE staffs after 2003 are comprised of previous FACE participants.

EVALUATION AND MONITORING

Research and Training Associates, Inc. (RTA) were contracted at the inception of FACE to conduct a programme study and to continue to function as an external evaluator. Programme evaluation has served to provide information: a) to ensure continual improvement in programme implementation (overall programme and site specific) and b) about the impact of the programme. Data collection instruments are developed through collaborative efforts of RTA, BIE, NCFL and PATNC. Evaluation reports are prepared based on data (monthly participation and activity reports, implementation data, outcome data, statistical and narrative data) provided by FACE staff members and participants. Annual reports are prepared for the BIE and site-level summaries are provided to individual programmes.

IMPACT AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Outcomes from Evaluation Studies: Participation

FACE has witnessed a decrease in the number of home-based participants over the years (from 72 adults and 68 children in 1997 to 39 adults and children in 2009), whereas the number of centre-based adults and children has remained relatively stable over time (approximately 18 adults and 15 children). On average participants remain with FACE for approximately two years, though adults have been found to participate significantly longer than children. This could be attributed to prenatal participation or participation by adults with multiple children. In 2009, similar to previous years, 70 percent participants received home-based services, 24 percent received centre-based services and 4 percent received both. Participation has in large part resulted from parents' desire to prepare their child better for school. Other reasons cited by parents include the desire to improve their parenting skills, help their child learn to socialize with others, improve their chances to get a job, obtain a GED (General Education Diploma awarded based on the results of five tests to people who do not have a high school diploma; states a person has American or Canadian high school-level academic skills) or high school diploma, or improve their academic skills. Adult participation in all four components of the centre-based services in terms of time is approximately half of the offered time, whereas child participation is close to expectation. While parents have been found to participate fairly intensely in personal visits, regular attendance at Family Circles remains a challenge.

Outcomes from Evaluation Studies: Adults

Parents have consistently reported that FACE has helped them improve their parenting skills and understand their child better. Improved parenting skills include more time spent with child, increased involvement in child's education, more effective interaction with child, increased understanding of child development, enhanced understanding of how to encourage child's interest in reading, and increased ability to speak up for child.

In terms of academic ability, pre- and post- measures have shown that FACE has resulted in statistically significant outcomes for adults in respect of reading and math. This finding is supported by parents' claims that FACE has helped them improve their academic skills for several reasons some of which are achieving higher education and acquiring/improving computer skills. 4,200 adults gained employment during FACE since its inception.

Programme emphasis on reading and literacy has also resulted in a significant increase in number of adult books and magazines in the homes, and in display of children's writing/art. A statistically significant increase has also been found in respect of literacy-related activities in the home such as parents providing children more opportunities to look at/read books, scribble, draw and write; listening to children read; telling children stories; discussing the day's events or special topics with children.

Other positive outcomes for adults include feeling better about oneself, increased self-discipline, increased interaction with other adults, improved communication skills and increased use of native languages.

Outcomes from Evaluation Studies: Children

Early identification of concerns regarding children's health and development, and obtaining appropriate resources for children are essential to FACE. Programme staffs have over the years provided documentation of screening that has been conducted for children in the areas of language development, fine and gross motor skills, cognitive development, socio-emotional development, hearing, vision, dental health and/or general health. Appropriate action by team members has been taken and referrals to community services have then been made.

Preschool children have been found to make significant improvements in areas of personal and social development; physical development; the arts; language and literacy; social studies; and scientific and mathematical thinking.

Parents have reported that FACE has had a large impact in terms of increasing their child's interest in reading, enhancing their child's confidence and verbal/communication skills, preparing their child for school, and helping their child get along better with other children.

Outcomes from Evaluation Studies: Home-School Partnerships

FACE parents have, over the years, maintained a high level of involvement in their children's education and the FACE school. Parents' involvement includes helping with homework, communicating with K-6 teachers about their child, visiting their child's classroom, attending school or classroom events, volunteering time to provide instructional and/or other assistance at school, and participating on school committees/boards.

FACE staffs also participate in regular school staff activities (meetings, school-wide planning); and collaborate with classroom teachers, support teachers, and library, computer, physical education, music and art staff. FACE staffs also collaborate with special education teachers, speech therapists, nursing services, and counselling services to better serve FACE children and smoothen their transition to school. Furthermore, formal transition plans are developed and referred to with a view to smoothen children's transition from home-based FACE to centre-based FACE to kindergarten.

Outcomes from Evaluation Studies: Community Partnerships

FACE programmes have developed an extensive network of relationships with agencies and programmes that provide basic services such as health services, tribal/Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) social services,

community services (alcohol and drug abuse, domestic violence), and county/state services. Partnerships have also been forged with tribal courts/law enforcement, Women, Infants and Children programme (WIC) and the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Agency (TANF). In terms of educational services, several FACE programmes are located in communities that have a Workforce Development Program (WDP), a tribal college, post-secondary institutions, BIA adult education programmes, Head Start and Even Start Programs, tribal early intervention programmes, and public preschools/schools. Such partnerships allow for meaningful use of both basic and educational services through two-way referrals. Furthermore, FACE has helped adults increasingly partake in community events and services, for example tribal meetings.

Outcomes from Evaluation Studies: Integration of Culture

American Indian languages and/or culture are well interwoven in FACE programmes. FACE staffs work in close synchrony with schools' culture teachers in order to integrate language and culture in the programme. Some of the ways in which tribal languages and cultural activities are integrated with FACE services include personal visits conducted using American Indian languages, daily/weekly American Indian language classes, display of cultural artefacts, and organization of cultural events (Native American Week parade, Wild Rice Camp, Indian Day).

CHALLENGES AND LESSON LEARNED

FACE's efforts at continual improvement are visible in several areas. For example, in 2006, it was found that one book per month provided by the Dolly Parton Imagination library was not enough in terms of easy access to literacy resources in the home, leading to the initiation of the RealeBooks project. Nonetheless, FACE faces considerable challenges in empowering American Indian families living in remote locations. There has been in recent years a substantial decrease in FACE participants as a result of weekly personal visits as opposed to bi-weekly personal visits and emphasis on regular attendance in home- and centre-based programmes respectively. Though incentives to encourage participation are well documented and transparent at most FACE sites, professional development and technical assistance in respect of these need more attention.

SUSTAINABILITY

Though FACE emphasizes regular attendance, there is also an understanding of the complexities of parents' day-to-day life and parents are not dismissed from the programme in the light of irregular attendance. Therefore, parents are able to receive basic services on isolated reservations. Professional development and training offered to all staff members play an important role in ensuring sustainability of the success of the FACE model. Networking during these sessions allows sharing of ideas and exchange of information between several programme staffs. Furthermore, on-going partnerships with local- and county-level agencies in the areas of basic/educational services as well as the regular addition of new initiatives to the FACE model also contribute towards ensuring programme sustainability. Conclusion

FACE has made a substantial contribution towards levelling the playing field for high-risk American Indian children and their families. Evidence of empowerment is well documented in annual evaluation reports. Continuous evaluations and revision through feedback need to be continued for enhancement and future success.

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COLOMBIA

Integral School Literacy Programme

Programme Title
Integral School Literacy Programme (Escuela Integral)

Implementing Organization
The San José Higher Education Foundation (La Fundación de Educación Superior San José)

Language of Instruction
Spanish

Funding
The Government (through the Ministry of Education and Culture in Soacha, the Colombian Institute for Family Wellbeing (ICBF), the National Training Service (SENA) and the Ministry for Social and Community Development in Soacha).

Date of Inception
2006

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Citizens who are illiterate or have not completed their basic education face diverse difficulties and disadvantages which leave them unable to participate actively in society. In the Colombian communities of Soacha, people face health problems, unemployment and are served by only a small number of projects aimed at improving quality of life, social harmony and active citizenship. Due to the complexity of their situation, the inhabitants are hindered from taking up social, economic, cultural and political opportunities and remain living in difficult conditions linked to armed conflict, drug consumption, domestic violence, premature births and lack of a life plan. Faced with a dramatically increasing population, educational provisions in Colombia additionally need to serve an ever-growing number of citizens putting a strain on the capacity of the existing services.

The Integral School Literacy Model was set up by the San José Higher Education Foundation, the Higher Education Institution (Institución de Educación Superior) and the Triangular Education Foundation (La Fundación Educativa Triángulo) following ten years of development by experts and professionals in the education of young people and adults. Not only does the broad scope of this model address the educational achievements of the learners, but it promotes healthy living, social harmony and the reassessment of life plans based on the acquisition of life skills and the pursuit of lifelong learning.

Aims and Objectives

The programme strives to achieve the following objectives:

- To improve the literacy of the citizens, particularly women who are heads of the household, and to provide them with the opportunity to improve their quality of life and that of their families.
- To encourage people who are at high risk of being vulnerable to participate in academic courses, civic training, apprenticeships and psychosocial workshops.
- To provide opportunities for people to access different levels of education.
- To provide recognition for specialised knowledge and skills through a system of knowledge accreditation.
- To offer psychosocial support to the children of the participants whilst their parents are studying and at the same location. This support also extends to looking after young infants and the elderly.
- To reconstruct and strengthen families and the social fabric through internalising values, such as social harmony, tolerance, respect for human rights and democracy and strengthening peaceful relations and attitudes.
- To achieve greater economic equality by providing access to greater employment opportunities.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

Every Saturday, young people above school age and adults arrive to participate in the programme with their children who either take part in a homework club or are taken care of depending on their age. Run by the same staff and found in the same location, the childcare service offers a safe, healthy and creative place for the children to go whilst the adults are studying. The motivation for the service is to make the return to education possible for women who would not be able to receive formal education because of having to look after their families. All participants receive a nutritional supplement each time they attend. In 2008, seven educational institutions in the urban area of Soacha, Cundinamarca, were running this programme and a total of 6,900 people took part in the programme including children, young people and adults.

Each teacher supervises and supports an average of 30 pupils. The literacy programme runs for a period of 40 weeks with ten hours of teaching and ten hours of homework every week. The flexibility of the model allows the schedule to be amended depending on the individual circumstances of the project. To complete their basic and secondary education through the programme, participants will take courses for four years, following which the subsequent steps to accessing higher education are made clearly visible for those wishing to pursue further education. After forming groups and signing a statement of commitment, learners who have enrolled for basic primary education

follow the course for one academic year. During this year, literacy plays a key role in the curriculum. For those enrolled in secondary education, two courses at this level of schooling are completed in each academic year which corresponds to a period of ten months. In parallel, participants receive training to develop life skills and productivity accredited by the National Training Service (SENA). In some cases, more vocational courses are offered to learners during their basic and middle education, such as courses in the following sectors, Filing and Office Clerking, Accounting, Beauty and Make-up and Computer Maintenance.

Teaching guides were produced by the teachers and contained individualised content according to the particular context and situation of each group of students and their environment. In addition to amendments made by the teachers, the learners contribute to the design, development and evaluation of the programme.

The values that are taught during the programme are also transferred to the home environment. The children and adults work together to finish any homework that needs to be completed, generating solidarity ties and supporting steps towards family integration. Having taken on board the values of respect, tolerance and peace they have been taught, the children demand the same values from their parents and tutors during daily life. The educational approaches employed are designed for the working population and involve the arts and vocational training.

Regarding the expansion of the programme to other sites, the steps taken prior to the General Santander Education Institute adopting the programme offer an insight into the process. Selected as a result of the problems threatening the area, the institute first held a meeting between the FESSJ and the headteacher of the institute. During the meeting, the Integral School methodology was explained as well as the manner in which it could be introduced with the help of the institution. Following this, the initial agreements were made, including reaching the consensus that the administration of the facilities would be managed on Saturdays by two general coordinators and an infants coordinator and that the school would be left in perfect condition after being used.

Skills for Life

Developing life skills is at the heart of the programme's curriculum, both to supply learners with better tools for living and to create a base for lifelong learning which can be applied to situations outside of the place of education. Within the concept of the Integral School, Skills for Life represents a new learning culture which emphasises the application of knowledge, attitudes, values and features important to lifelong learning and human development. The participants receive support to resolve the diverse problems which confront them and their contemporaries, particularly adults and over-age young people, through the following means: reworking life plans, recovering their potential and developing life skills, relating with others and with their environment. With a strong focus on interaction, the group discussion is active and collective, addressing topics such as mutual understanding and respect for the opinions of others and searching for solutions to general problems using varying forms of communication and collaboration (management – educational actors, learner – learner, facilitator – learner, learner – facilitator, educational actors – management).

TEACHING-LEARNING APPROACHES

The education model places emphasis on the all-round, integral development of the participants particularly in the areas of social, cognitive, productive, emotional and spiritual development. After primarily researching the socio-cultural situation of respective regions, the focus is placed on analysing, evaluating and restructuring the participants understanding and approach to life. Following this model, the content is based on real-life experiences; behaving like a citizen with rights and responsibilities, and participating actively in the transformation of the community and the citizens in those communities. Permanent aspects of the programme include teamwork, exchanging experiences and incorporating comments and ideas from the teachers and pupils. Preconceived ideas on certain topics are explored and from the beginning of the programme the topics to address and areas of analysis are identified with the help of the teachers and resources. As a result of collaborating on the subject matter, the teaching methodology continues to be enriched and renewed as the programme progresses in a collective process involving the entire academic community.

The establishment of this model provides the teachers with a reliable instrument which helps them to ensure that the proposed educational activities are significant and relevant to the learners. In order to protect, produce and recreate scientific knowledge inside of a determined social, historical, geographical and cultural context, the model promotes interaction between the principal actors, teachers and students. As a result, the integral educational programme can be characterised as directed specifically at young people and adults in vulnerable situations, and adaptable to meet the conditions of different environments.

Programme Costs

In 2008, the cost of running the programme reached 1,725 million Colombian Pesos (approximately USD 900,000). Calculated per capita, the cost of each participant amounted to 250,000 Colombian Pesos (approximately USD 140).

Recruitment and Role of Facilitators

The teachers and staff are university graduates in Education, Psychology and other disciplines related to productivity. The employment contracts are based on the number of classroom hours and the salaries issued are in accordance with the corresponding salary levels for Colombian teachers.

As part of the community, the teachers become role models for the

learners from the very beginning of the programme. They demonstrate how the necessary means to improve health, skills and wellbeing can be acquired by the learners as part of lifelong learning.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Vice-Rector for Lifelong Learning and Social Development at the Foundation (FESSJ) is responsible for monitoring and carrying out internal assessments of the programme. With respect to external assessments, the Ministry for Education in Soacha also carries out audits, as well as the monitoring and evaluation of the programme. Furthermore, the National Training Institute (SENA), the Colombian Institute for Family Wellbeing and the Ministry for Social Development in Soacha monitor the programme and carry out periodic assessments.

IMPACT AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Through teaching arts-related and occupational skills, the teaching approach serves the working population well and has a significantly positive influence on the self-confidence of the learners. As well as the psychological benefits stemming from the programme, the participants improve their household income when they subsequently join the world of employment and as a result improve the wellbeing of their families. In the educational area of Nuevo Compartir, the FESSJ has reported on the Integral School website that the programme was very well received by the students and community members. An important factor behind the community response was the programme's ability to provide a wealth of opportunities to improve the participants' conditions of employment by making the theoretical foundations needed for other occupations readily available.

On having completed the programme, the outlook for the participants is positive, though very diverse in overall scope. Many of those who continue with their education have reached the level of professionals in their respective field, whilst others return to work on their land as better citizens, having overcome situations of exclusion and marginalisation and having improved their quality of life. A great many participants have found employment and have proven to be competitive actors in the sectors they have been trained for. Having taken the state exams to enter higher education, some participants have passed and are now studying at the Foundation or in other higher education institutions.

In 2009, the programme was awarded with the Latin American Prize for Literacy and Basic Education for Young People and Adults.

CHALLENGES

With the support of the regional Ministry for Social Integration, the programme is currently being introduced into 15 community development centres in the capital city, Bogotá. The management team for the project aim to widen the coverage of the programme which will form an array of new challenges which will need to be tackled, including assessing and meeting the needs of the new communities.

Overcoming preconceived ideas and attitudes negative to change has posed a challenge; one example would be the move to dealing with health matters in a school environment. Moreover, teachers may consider academic achievement as the only or best means for students to be competitive in the modern world and be less inclined to support alternative educational models and methods involving life skills and training.

SUSTAINABILITY

In order to secure a sustainable demand, the participants need to continuously recognise the benefits of taking part in the programme and be motivated to continue. The opportunities offered by the programme play an important role in keeping learners motivated. The most striking opportunities include offering participants the possibility to find or reencounter themselves, providing an available space for personal development, and creating circumstances which are difficult to achieve outside of the programme, given the difficulties presented by marginalisation. At present, the Foundation is encouraging the spread of the programme to other locations in Soacha and the widening of the existing coverage.

Since it was first established, the involvement of the community in this programme has proven to be high and it boasts the lowest drop-out rate amongst all adult education programmes in Colombia. Having begun in 2004 with 400 participants, the programme served over 17 times as many participants in 2008 owing to a high demand within the communities. The General System of Contributions in Colombia assigns resources to support adult education programmes and the national government have adopted a broad interpretation of literacy into their strategic plans, including the definition of goals and the presence of clearly established time frames. Under these supportive conditions, funding is accessible and can be directed to the various groups involved.

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GUATEMALA

Integral Family Literacy

Programme Title
Integral Family Literacy
(Alfabetización Integral Intrafamiliar)

Implementing Organization
National Commission for Adult Literacy (Comisión Nacional de Alfabetización de Adultos, CONALFA)

Language of Instruction
Spanish

Funding
CONALFA

Date of Inception
1999 – present

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Guatemala is a multi-cultural and multi-lingual country with a great diversity of ethnic groups spread throughout its 22 departamentos and 332 municipalities. Although Spanish is the official language, it is not spoken by all Guatemalans. According to a National Population Census in 2002, around 40% of the population is indigenous, and the rest is considered Mestizo (mixed indigenous and Spanish) or descendants of migrants from Europe. The census diagnosed that 54.5% of the Mayan population is bilingual in a Maya language and Spanish, while 43.6% is monolingual. There are 23 officially recognised indigenous languages, such as Quiche and Cakchiquel, which are spoken in rural areas and among indigenous and Afro-descendant communities. Approximately 51% of the population lives in non-urban zones. The indigenous populations in rural Guatemala are among those with the lowest income and the lowest levels of education and literacy.

This low-middle income Central American country has a long-lasting history of economic and social challenges, which have been reflected in the living conditions of its population. It is estimated that 24% live in extreme poverty (i.e. on less than USD 2 per day), a percentage much higher than the Latin American average of 15%. Currently, Guatemala occupies the 116th position in the World Human Development Index (HDI), the second lowest of its region. Out of the three dimensions measured by the HDI, education has the lowest rate: .42 as opposed to health (.80) and income (.52). One of the main reasons that might explain the country's low education index is the low public financial investment on the sector: the total expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP equals 3.2%, which places Guatemala among the 40 countries with the lowest expenditures in the world.

National data from 2004 show that less than 60% of the population aged 15 to 24 has completed at least six years of basic education, the lowest average among other eighteen Latin American countries. The numbers are even more disconcerting with regard to the rural population where as little as 40% of the population has reached sixth grade. Improvements have been observed within the last fifteen years as the net enrolment in early grades has increased by 22%, which has enabled Guatemala to have almost universal access to primary schooling. However, the education system still shows significant signs of inefficiency: the survival rate to Grade 5 is 71%, resulting in only 61% of students graduating from primary school (Grades 1–6, 2007). This results in a continuous flow of new illiterate or barely literate adolescents and young people into the population group with a potential demand for adult literacy programmes.

According to the country's National Report for CONFINTEA VI, there are approximately 82,839 new illiterate adults each year, of which 60% have dropped out of school before

sustainably mastering literacy skills, and the remaining 40% corresponds to persons who have no schooling at all. There has been a decrease in the adult illiteracy rates from 48.10% to 26% (1985–2008), but the literacy rate in Guatemala is still the second lowest in the Latin American and Caribbean region. In addition, there are remarkable geographic, socio-economic and gender inequalities with regards to literacy acquisition: 71.55%, out of all adults with no or low literacy skills live in rural areas; 44% of the country's poorest have no literacy skills, whereas 91% of the richest persons master literacy; and 31% of adult women do not possess literacy skills as opposed to the 20% males who face with this challenge.

In order to address the education challenges in the country, the National Literacy Committee (CONALFA) has developed approximately 20 initiatives aimed to increase literacy rates, develop labour skills and enhance overall education among the different population groups. Some of these initiatives include a traditional formal adult education programme, literacy through the radio, bilingual literacy and literacy for the development of labour skills. CONALFA was one of the results of the passage of the Literacy Act in 1986. The committee was designed to alleviate the acute national illiteracy rates that affected over 40% of the adult population and almost 80% of individuals who resided in the rural areas. To date, CONALFA is responsible for the coordination, training, supervision, evaluation and accreditation of over 1,000 programmes carried out by public and private initiatives as well as those promoted by organisations of civil society.

THE PROGRAMME: INTEGRAL FAMILY LITERACY

The Integral Family Literacy programme (Alfabetización Integral Intrafamiliar) was launched by CONALFA in 1999 as an intergenerational literacy programme in the departamento of Baja Verapaz, the region with one of the highest rates of illiteracy in the country. Since its inception, the programme has been expanded to five additional regions: Zacapa, Alta Verapaz, Escuintla, Chimaltenango and Quiché. The initiative targets underserved communities that have high rates of illiteracy and low levels of schooling, a combination most commonly found among indigenous and rural populations. The programme employs an innovative approach in that it trains children to be the service deliverers in their own homes, teaching basic literacy and numeracy to their parents and/or extended family members. It is a flexible, context-based project that includes a creative integration between the formal and non-formal education systems.

Aims and objectives

The fundamental aim of this intergenerational literacy initiative is to promote a dynamic and comprehensive development of all participants involved in the programme, that is, not only to enhance the learners' knowledge and abilities, but also to empower children-facilitators, monitors and coordinators to be actively engaged in their communities. Additionally, the programme also attempts to improve national literacy rates, especially among the underserved communities, in combination with other national literacy initiatives.

The specific objectives for adults, school children and families are to:

- increase adults' self-esteem and sense of personal value;
- increase adults' active participation in the community;
- provide educational opportunities for women and members of indigenous populations in order to reduce and, ultimately eliminate gender disparities in access to education;
- empower children to take leadership roles in school and at home;

- increase children's responsibility in studying and doing school work;
- encourage children to further pursue their own education, not only for individual self-development, but also to improve the survival and completion rates in primary and secondary schools in underprivileged communities;
- promote/enhance children's and adults' skills, such as interpersonal, problem-solving and teaching abilities, which can be further employed for educational and professional development;
- improve the perception regarding the value of education, and the importance of succeeding in school, as well as pursuing further education and professional development;
- improve the quality of parent-child relationships, increase the amount of time spent together, and foster close interactions;
- promote literacy among family members in order to enhance family integration, cohesion and their values; and
- promote behavioural changes in order to empower families to effect significant development in their communities.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

Recruitment and training of facilitators

The programme employs two different types of facilitators. At the family level, the programme is implemented by elementary school children who teach their parents, caregivers, and/or extended families basic literacy and numeracy skills. The majority of these facilitators, or tutors, are fifth grade students, and although about 50% of them are females, in rural regions they are mostly males. Facilitators are usually required to tutor one to two adults, but they can teach up to three learners. Children are recruited within their schools by the active engagement of the school principals and teachers who play an important role in this recruitment process. These educators are in charge of advertising and explaining about the tutoring opportunity within their school and community, distributing and collecting the application forms to and from their students, as well as obtaining parental consent. The minimum requirements to become facilitators are to be enrolled in Grades 4, 5 or 6, be 10 – 14 years of age, be committed to the programme and its activities, and have sufficient time for tutoring – an average of four to five hours per week.

The children are also required to participate in one-day pre-service training held in their school where they learn about essential competencies they need to develop as tutors, such as commitment, responsibility and leadership. The children also receive an introductory presentation about the methodological approach to be used in class and a guide of steps tutors need to follow for each lesson. Children do not receive any stipend, but they are often granted incentives from local NGOs which include school materials, field trips and backpacks. They also receive meals during the trainings, and by the end of the programme, the facilitators are awarded with a certificate entitled Young Teacher (Joven Maestro) which recognises their participation and efforts during the year.

The community monitors are the second type of facilitator, and they are in charge of providing training to the children and monitoring literacy instruction. In order to participate in the programme, the monitors have to reside within the community they work in, have completed at least 6th grade of basic elementary education, be respectful towards different religions, have outreach experience, be well accepted by the members of their communities and have sufficient time to carry out their responsibilities. The recruitment process designed to select the monitors includes a

screening phase, where programme coordinators search for prospective candidates who seem to be a suitable for the position, and individual interviews. Monitors receive a monthly stipend of Q500 (approx. USD 65). Community monitors are under the supervision of the municipal coordinators, who oversee the work of the children and monitors, and provide technical-pedagogical support and instructional materials. They receive a monthly salary of Q3,900 (approx. USD 500) and are required to participate in an annual training on adult education, innovative literacy practices and didactics, as well as in monthly meetings with other coordinators in order to discuss challenges in their practices.

Enrolment of learners

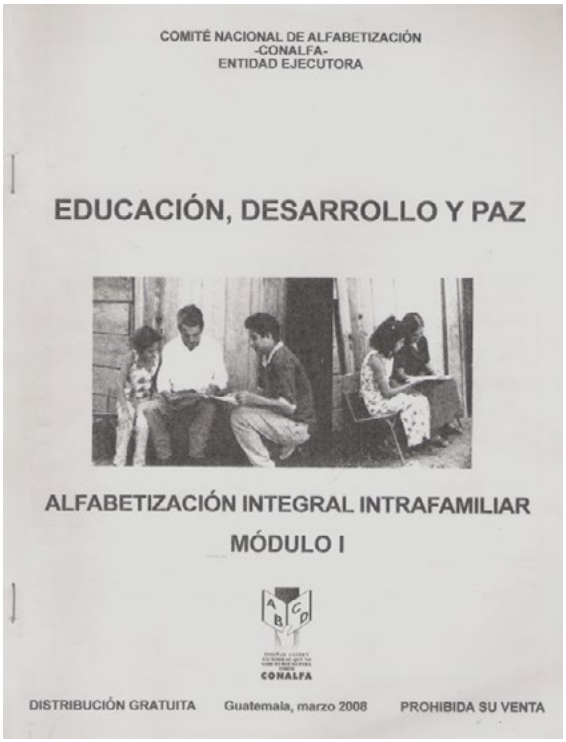
The primary target populations of Guatemala's national literacy programme are mothers, fathers and primary caregivers, as well as members of the extended family who have school-aged children at home. In particular, the focus of this programme lies on illiterate and semi-illiterate adults, Mestizo, indigenous and rural populations who come from the lower-income strata of society, but it also includes a great participation of elders. The great majority (70–80%) of the learners are women, since the illiteracy rate among these individuals is higher than among their male counterparts. The core reasons that motivate adults to participate in this programme are to increase self-esteem, to improve income and employability, to move into the formal educational system, and to be active participants in the communities.

So far, this programme has reached almost 25,000 participants in the country and has been implemented in five departamentos. However, the programme has suffered progressive downsizing in its coverage over the past five years, reaching as few as 101 learners in 2010, mainly due to limited resources and the concurrent implementation of another literacy initiative. Because the results of this alternative approach have provided empirical evidence of its limitations, federal funding and efforts will once again be invested to scale-up the family literacy approach in 2012 onwards.

Teaching/learning approaches and methodologies

Classes last for nine months, from February to October, and are offered in the participants' own homes, with flexible timetables which vary according to the participants' needs. In the literacy lessons, the approach employed is that of the generating word, a fundamental component of Paulo Freire's dialogical method for cultural action and social change. This method enables adults to construct new words based on the letters and syllabuses of the original unit as they engage in a participatory discussion about topics related to their environment and needs. Themes include gender equity, environment and ecotourism, enhancement of self-esteem, community development, citizenship, hygiene and health, and domestic economy.

Literacy lessons follow a sequence of steps: presentation of a picture, discussion of a topic, analysis of the generating word (i.e. learning the letters, syllables and sounds and writing down the small units), construction of syllables, construction of words based on the newly-acquired letters and syllables, writing sentences and paragraphs, and a final learning assessment. Numeracy content covers basic geometric forms, standard measures (height, weight, time), the concept of money, the decimal system, ordinal and cardinal numbers, problem-solving activities related to trading goods, and an introduction to the Mayan calendar. The aim of the lessons is to develop the learners' overall competence to perform basic literacy and numeracy activities, enhance their overall knowledge and develop their analytical, synthetical and reflective skills so that they



can be active participants in their communities.

The materials given to the learners are notebooks, pencils, erasers and pencil sharpeners. Tutors are provided with a calculator, a blackboard and a package entitled Education, Development and Peace (Educación, Desarollo y Paz) which includes three printed modules on basic literacy and numeracy and an exercise notebook. Its level of difficulty progressively moves from beginners to intermediate and advanced. This is reflected in the division into three models: Module I – vowels and cardinal numbers; Module II – a set of generating words, numbers 1–100 and basic arithmetic operations (i.e. addition and subtraction); and Module III – a set of words with higher complexity and the remaining two arithmetic operations (i.e. multiplication and division). All the materials are in Spanish, which is also the language of instruction.

The end of each lesson contains evaluation activities which give the adults an opportunity to have their learning assessed. It is not part of the child-tutor's role to review these activities, but rather the responsibility of the community monitors in their periodical home visits. Prior to the beginning of classes, participants are required to take a placement test that evaluates their entry-level knowledge and abilities, so they can be placed in the appropriate level. The same assessment is used later to evaluate learners' progress and acquisition of the new literacy and numeracy skills. By the end of the programme, participants may choose to take a final standardised evaluation, developed by CONALFA and designed to assess their learning throughout the programme, to certify their new competencies and to enable the learners to move into the formal system. This exam can be taken at primary schools located within the learner's community or, for those who live in distant rural villages, in the learners' homes.

Funding support

The financial source to cover the costs of the programme is the Ministry of Education of Guatemala through CONALFA and PROASE (Projecto de Apoyo al Sector Educativo), a federal initiatives created for the promotion of education, including adult learning and literacy. In 2010, the annual cost was as low as Q6,515 (approx. USD 835) due to the very low coverage with regard to the absolute number of participants as well as the very inexpensive cost per learner – only Q65 (approx. USD 8.25). The main reasons that explain this low expenditure include among others the venue of classes (i.e. participants' own homes), short training periods for facilitators, the use of very few materials and a plain textbook, recruitments done within and by the communities themselves, low stipends and salaries to monitors and coordinators and finally donations from NGOs for the incentives to the children.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The monitoring of the Integral Family Literacy programme uses a cascade mechanism in which there is a combination of different actors in the collection and analysis of data. In order to track the progress and results in the ground level, the monitors oversee the lessons and evaluation activities implemented by the tutors in the learners' home and report challenges, outcomes and questions to the next level, the coordinators of the municipality. This

coordinator supervises the work of the child-facilitators and the monitors in multiple communities, and provides the information to CONALFA where the data are consolidated, compiled and used to further improve the programme. The monitoring data include some of the following indicators: number of participants (i.e., learners, children and monitors), characteristics of the participants (i.e. gender, age, geographical location), drop-out rate, evaluation rate (i.e. number of learners who took final evaluation) and promotion rate (i.e. number of learners who have successfully passed the final examination).

To date, no external evaluation has yet been carried out in order to assess the effectiveness and benefits of the programme. However, results from the monitoring and from informal observations have provided quantitative and qualitative data about the positive outcomes of the programme. Out of the 24,830 participants enrolled since the programme's inception, 18,175 were females, 10,052 took the final exam and 8,275 were promoted. Some of the benefits also include:

- acquisition of basic literacy and numeracy skills;
- improvement in the participants' abilities to deal with issues related to family economy;
- enhanced relationships between child and parent;
- low drop-out rates due to the location of classes being in the learner's own home;
- a greater awareness of the children about the importance of education, resulting in increased attendance at school and commitment to academic work, a desire to pursue further educational development and a greater sense of responsibility towards their families;
- empowerment of children to take a leadership role within their families and schools; and
- increased participation of learners, children and monitors within their community.

CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

The challenges that CONALFA has had to address since the inception of this family literacy initiative concern the lack of resources to provide all children with stipends and other incentives, to expand the programme to all departamentos, including regions with a great number of distant villages, and to offer a longer and more comprehensive training to the facilitators. Also, many of the rural and indigenous populations in Guatemala do not speak Spanish or have it as a second language. Thus, since the programme's language of instruction is Spanish, many groups have been prevented from taking part in this initiative and remain marginalised by these national education initiatives. CONALFA intends to address this language limitation in 2012 when lessons will be given to students in their mother tongue. Lastly, learners who are promoted after completion of their studies usually do not move into the formal system or participate in other non-formal adult education services due to lack of resources, availability of time, means of transportation and personal motivation. Addressing this latter obstacle, CONALFA implemented a pilot non-formal adult education classes in the homes of the learners in the municipality Cubulco in order to enable students to be certified with a sixth grade diploma.

The challenges faced by CONALFA in combination with the positive results obtained during the past 12 years the programme has been up and running have served as an enriching opportunity to learn valuable lessons. Firstly, children are a great human resource to provide educational services, since they have proved to be capable to help in the process of teaching adults to successfully acquire literacy and numeracy skills when they receive training, support, encouragement and resources. Also, this experience has demonstrated that parents are pleased to learn from their own children as they trust and believe in their capacity to provide them with proper lessons. Moreover, the language of instruction can be a major issue for literacy programmes implemented in a multi-lingual country such as Guatemala. Home-based lessons can be effective to reduce drop-out rates, but additional support has to be provided in order to enable students to continue their education within their communities and economic limitations.

SUSTAINABILITY

Despite the reductions in the coverage of the Integral Family Literacy Initiative over the past five years, there has been no interruption of the services since the programme's inception in 2001. On the contrary, the programme has been up and running despite the fact that a parallel literacy initiative has been implemented by the government. Since the original version has produced greater positive results by comparison with the latter, an expansion of the family literacy programme is expected to take place for 2012. Many factors have contributed to the sustainability of this programme:

- guaranteed financial resources by CONALFA;
- low costs per learner;
- the great demand of illiterate adults, especially in the departamento of Baja Verapaz;
- the successful linkage between this initiative with the formal primary education system demonstrated by the high number of children as tutors;
- great participation of teachers and school principals as advertisers and recruiters as well as the use of infrastructures of primary schools.

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MEXICO

Aprendizajes en Familia (Family Literacy Programme)

Programme Title
Family Literacy Programme (Aprendizajes en Familia)

Implementing Organization
Regional Cooperation Center for Adult Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (Centro de Cooperación Regional para la Educación de Adultos en América Latina y el Caribe) (CREFAL).

Language of Instruction
Spanish and indigenous languages (bilingual)

Funding
The Federal Government (through the Ministry for Public Education (SEP) under the National Programme to Improve Educational Attainment).

Programme Partners
The Federal Government of Mexico (through the Ministry for Public Education), the National Institute for Adult Education (INEA), National Council for Education Development (CONAFE), National Council for Social Participation in Education (CONAPASE), Ministry for Social Development (SEDESOL) through the OPORTUNIDADES (Opportunities) programme.

Date of Inception
2011–

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Over the last few decades, Mexico has made significant progress with the task of providing basic education for all. However, the formal education system is still weakened by obstacles to a successful teaching-learning experience: low salaries, a lack of educational material and resources, excessive workloads for the staff, poverty, minimal cooperation with families, being situated in an environment unconducive to learning, etc. Significant differences also remain between the access to education in rural areas, such as Durango, Oaxaca and Chiapas, and the opportunities available to those living in or close to urban areas. The wide range of indigenous languages and communities across the country, particularly in rural areas, creates a population with a large variety of needs and interests which are difficult to meet with an inflexible, standardised curriculum.

At present, around one third of the Mexican population is lagging behind in their basic education. In 2009, a census-style test, ENLACE, for primary school pupils in the third, fourth, fifth and sixth academic years and the third year in secondary school revealed that 67.3% of primary-age pupils have a elementary or insufficient understanding of Spanish and 69% have elementary or insufficient knowledge in Maths. This situation has severe implications not only for the lives of the population but also for the economic and social development of the country. Illiteracy and educational deficits in families are related to low academic performance, dropping out and falling behind in education, poor health, environmental damage, unemployment and a lack of prospects for a dignified life, and low citizen participation. These are the areas for development which the Regional Cooperation Center for Adult Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (CREFAL) aim to positively influence through their actions and projects. CREFAL, in partnership with the Ministry for Public Education and through its Programme to Improve Educational Attainment, seeks to promote intergenerational learning which has an impact on the development and quality of life of families through the inclusion of learners and promoting their interaction.

Due to the magnitude and extent of the educational deficit, it is imperative to support basic education in areas where learning takes place and competences for lifelong learning can be developed: in families, in classrooms and in the community. In these locations, innovative socio-educational activities of an inter-institutional, inter-sectoral and inter-generational nature can encourage learning.

THE FAMILY LITERACY PROGRAMME

Launched in a pilot format in early 2011, the Family Literacy Programme (Aprendizajes en Familia) is a scheme set up by CREFAL to support educational programmes for vulnerable areas of the population which are run by the Ministry of Public Education. The scheme forms part of the Integrated Strategy for the Improvement of Educational Achievement (EIMLE) in Mexico. The objective of the EIMLE is to improve educational achievement in almost thirty thousand schools which received poor ENLACE test results in 2009, and in particular the more than seven thousand schools which were ranked as inadequate in 2007, 2008 and 2009 consecutively. The programme has so far been introduced to eleven schools in nine locations around Mexico. Seven of the sites are to be found in rural areas with very high rates of marginalisation and six of these are based in indigenous communities speaking either Tzotzil (Chiapas) or Náhuatl (Veracruz and Guerrero). The more urban locations concern marginalised populations who have migrated from rural areas in order to search for better opportunities.

Each time the programme is launched, an assessment of the individual situation on the ground is carried out taking into account the precise context, needs and interests of the school and community. The programme endeavours to encourage family participation in young people's education as well as boosting social engagement in education inside communities. The principal actors in this programme are the teachers and staff at the schools, the families and the authorities and all members of the communities. The families are responsible for supporting their children's education by participating in tutoring networks, cultivating their own curiosity and taste for learning, supporting school activities, and sharing their knowledge within the community. Participating schools are responsible for providing meaningful education, establishing tutoring networks and carrying out projects for the benefit of the school and the community.

The tasks belonging to the community include setting up literacy and recreational centres, supporting the school through the tutoring networks and collaborating with projects for the benefit of the community.

Aims and Objectives

The Family Literacy Programme strives to achieve the following objectives:

- To ensure that all participants complete their basic education, work together to form literate communities and carry out their own community development projects.
- To promote a substantive education, connecting knowledge gained from school with family and community activities.
- To increase the family involvement in the children's school education and to boost recognition of the family as the first source of education for children.
- To establish schools as institutions which guarantee time and space for the development of basic literacy (reading for understanding, writing and self-correction, and basic mathematical calculations) in the scope of lifelong learning.
- To improve educational achievement by creating tutoring networks and supporting the School Social Participation Councils (CEPS).
- To establish a flexible model of family and community based learning founded on the specific and complex reality of how three educational areas interplay (the family environment, school education and community involvement).
- To support the well-balanced development of children and young people and to promote sustainable community development by engaging the skills and knowledge of all families.
- To set up a national Family Literacy Programme to support the Programme to Improve Educational Achievement (PMLE), which promotes, coordinates and looks for funding for the plans and programmes devised by families who wish to improve the quality of life in their communities. Furthermore, to develop a model to be used across Latin America.
- The three main lines of action for the achievement of these aims are as follows:
- The promotion of literacy as a continuous process within the scope of lifelong learning.
- The formation of tutoring networks to encourage autonomous learning.
- The creation of literate communities which are capable of developing their own local sustainable development projects.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

Tutoring Networks

Sharing knowledge and developing lifelong learning skills in the community are key aspects of this programme. The tutoring network connects people who have learnt a skill or gained knowledge in a certain area with those who may wish to learn more about that area. Volunteers from schools, from families or in the community offer themselves as tutors to other members of the community. With tutoring partnerships amongst teachers and amonst pupils as well as between teachers and pupils, the support structures formed help participants to obtain experience developing their learning skills both as educators and learners. The network offers people the chance to teach and be taught informally, strengthening their ability to learn autonomously and enabling the lessons to be tailored to the interests of both the learner and the tutor. The process encourages potential tutors to take the opportunity to reflect on their previous learning experience (their interests, strategies, mistakes, questions, etc), as well as recording the experience in writing to share later with learners. By doing so, the tutors gain ownership of the knowledge in an organised manner and practise their writing skills. Tutoring transcends the limits of the classroom in order to provide families and community members with a flexible, dynamic system to accommodate the learning requirements and interests of the community.

Building a Literate Community

From pre-primary through to secondary level, the teachers are responsible for setting up a library and games collection in the learning area or classroom for the families to use. Working together with the families, they create new games and activities which support the children's development particularly in early years education. After developing highly motivating approaches and materials for pre-primary and primary education, they can be used both in school and within families. In addition to the establishment of school libraries, community centres for literacy and recreational activities support the promotion and development of lifelong learning and literacy skills in the community.

As part of the programme, three catalogues will be published with the aim to strengthen and broaden the teaching-learning process. The first catalogue is comprised of the books and audiovisual material which are available to schools, families and communities for the promotion of literacy and to encourage reading for pleasure. Organised on a national level, the programme facilitates the publication of this catalogue and supports communities who wish to gain access to the catalogued items. The second catalogue features the courses and projects offered by

different government departments and organisations which correspond to the community's needs and interests. Various government departments, civil society organisations, businesses and religious institutions offer a variety of programmes and projects focused on promoting education and development in the communities. Some of the principal aims of these programmes include increasing educational achievement in school or the community, creating sources of employment or taking advantage of natural resources. Finally, the third catalogue details the knowledge and areas of experience of community members who are able to share these skills with other members of the community through a tutoring network. For the purpose of establishing a literate community, the tutoring networks help develop important relationships between the children and the three main actors: the school staff, the families and the local community and play a key role in the successful evolution of the programme. The programme supports the collection of information, the publication of the catalogue and the organisation of exchanges through the tutoring network.

In every community, the Family Literacy Programme is organised by the School Social Participation Council (CEPS), supported by a regional coordinator and the advisory team from CREFAL. Each school has its own CEPS, or Council, comprised of parents, school staff, teachers, former pupils and neighbours who are interested in carrying out improvements to the school. The Council supports the school's educational initiatives by means of setting up several committees with different foci. The Reading Committee, as one example, is responsible for organising the required steps to set up and maintain the library and for promoting reading in the school environment. In addition, the Council is entrusted with the coordination of inter-institutional opportunities for education and compiling a report on the strengths, interests and needs of the community.

Regional coordinators for the programme manage the selection of educational projects on offer, create the catalogue of projects available in their communities and offer advice to the CEPS to encourage the growth of a literate community in the local area. Along the same lines, they help to set up and maintain the tutoring networks inside and outside of the school, offering advice on potential locations for literacy projects.

Teaching-Learning Approaches and Methodologies

Due to the wide range of intervention points, the programme employs a variety of strategies based on five theoretical fields: theories on inter-institutional collaboration, theories on organisational development as organisms which learn, theories on the professionalisation of teaching, theories on the development of learning communities and communities of practice, and constructivism as a theory of individual and collective learning. All of these theoretical focal points guide the programme and complement one another to achieve the maximum impact on educational achievement.

The tutorial relationship model, upon which the networks are based, is the main educational model used in every area of the programme. The model created by Gabriel Cámara Cervera (2004), a Mexican expert on alternative models for basic education, has been used successfully in a variety of situations and environments and is an educational model based on the exchange of personalised dialogue for use both inside and outside of schools. Centred on developing the ability of learning to learn independently, the method results in high quality learning, the development of cognitive structures and the achievement of the key competences (reading for understanding, writing and self-correction, and basic mathematical calculations).

As the key actors in the programme are families, communities and schools, it is vital to start by looking at their needs, interests and ambitions, encouraging self-management and participation, and recognising their knowledge, abilities and potential. The educators are encouraged to utilize their individual talents and interests when teaching in order to boost their motivation and make the learning experience engaging and enjoyable for all. As well as setting up a literacy rich environment in school, the teachers encourage families to carry out enjoyable yet purposeful activities with their children at home to support their development. The programme encourages teachers to adapt, enrich and incorporate concepts from educational theories on learning communities into their daily activities at school.

By allowing students to diverge slightly from the curriculum in order to focus on topics of their own interest during the learning process, the programme supports the development of skills for autonomous learning. In addition to acquiring reading and writing skills, the pilot programme aims to offer a large scale of different skills for participants to learn with the objective of supporting their integration in society and general development. Some activities which have taken place include Zumba (a dance fitness programme), cooking, origami, and other workshops.

Development of Teaching-Learning Materials

In order to enhance people's interest and confidence to take part in the educational activities in schools and the communities, an initial set of educational material will be designed and produced according to the particular features of each individual community. The materials are designed to prompt a participatory response from the individuals (family member and learners) who wish to use them. Following their use, the individuals taking part provide feedback on their experiences and on whether the material succeeded in guiding them through the content and aiding interaction.

The programme encourages teachers to reflect on the teaching materials they possess and the extent to which these tools meet the essential learning needs of the students. Emphasis is placed on involving the children when teachers are designing strategies to encourage more family participation in school education.

Qualifications

If learners wish to work towards a fixed goal or simply mark their achievements through the programme by obtaining a qualification, they have access to a series of existing assessments. The following types of evaluation are available: the National Assessment of Academic Achievement in Education Centres (ENLACE), advanced certificates in literacy, and primary, secondary or advanced secondary education from the National Institute for Adult Education (INEA), basic level certificates which are offered by the National Education Promotion Council (CONAFE) and certificates from the National Council for Lifelong Learning and Work Skills (CONEVyT).

Expansion and Future Application

The Family Literacy Programme consists of four stages which will be introduced over a span of seven years. In the first stage (2011 – 2012), eleven schools in five Mexican states will take part in the programme. As part of the second stage (2012 – 2014), nine states and nine schools will be incorporated into the programme. In the third stage (2014 – 2015), an educational model and a national plan for Family Literacy in Mexico will be established, and in the final stage (2015 – 2018) a flexible model of Family Literacy will be created for possible transfer to other Latin American countries.

Recruitment and Training of Facilitators

The process of recruitment for the regional coordinators begins with the nomination of candidates by the Ministry for Education in each state and in agreement with CREFAL. Generally speaking, the coordinators have experience of working in different fields in the Ministry for Public Education in their respective states and they have all been qualified to degree level, with one coordinator holding an Engineering degree. The selection depended heavily on the candidates showing evidence of leadership experience whilst supporting the organisation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of community projects. No formal training for this position is deemed necessary.

Training events on tutoring have been organised for the school teachers. Furthermore, educators already working with the tutoring model as part of a distance learning programme were present and brought additional input and experiences. The training is intended to give the teachers a better understanding of the model and help them to introduce it into a variety of areas.

Selection of Participating Schools

In order to target areas with lots of opportunity for improvement, the states selected for this programme were chosen based predominantly on their Human Development Index. To decide where the programme will be run in these states, the search was focused on schools and communities which fit into the following groups:

Schools in particularly marginalised areas according to the respective index of the Federal Government (INEGI).

Those communities in which several educational and social programmes converge, including programmes organised by both the government and civil society.

Schools with poor results in the ENLACE test and who were selected for the National Programme to Improve Educational Attainment.

PROGRAMME IMPACT, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CHALLENGES

Expected Impact

Concrete results are difficult to pinpoint at this point in time since the programme is still in its early stages. Moreover, a project with such a wide community reach takes a significant amount of time to reach its full potential and show its impact on the local area. Rather than focusing on achieving a numerical impact, the pilot run of the Family Literacy Programme aims to explore how a national system for family literacy could be introduced. The system would be responsible for coordinating family literacy projects and programmes using existing resources from government departments and civil society organisations, whilst researching and leading investigations in order to update the programmes and projects which are established on a regular basis. Once a nationwide system has been established, many areas of society are expected to be positively impacted.

Impact on schools: The programme involves changing to an educational model which focuses on educational attainment through developing essential life skills and encourages high quality education. The transfer to the model is supported by the efforts of the school management to secure the time and space for teacher training, and through the reorganisation of school activities so that they respond to and are even directly based upon the interests, individual situations and knowledge of the pupils.

Impact on families: As a result of the programme, significant changes to the relationship between schools and familias should occur. Families take on shared responsibility and assume a unique, independent role in the development of the skills which define a literate community. Such skills form the foundation of a society which lives by and defends values such as democracy, participation, solidarity, justice, honesty and knowledge. As such, families give impetus to and support the changes occurring in schools.

Furthermore, the new model presents a method by which all family members can become lifelong learners. Amongst the families participating, the programme is expected to promote the development of useful skills for work and life, encourage the pursuit of certificates for different levels of education, contribute to raising the educational level in families and encourage equality and democracy in family relationships.

Impact on communities: Change arises in a community as a result of the capabilities and decisions of the

community members. By providing the members with sufficient resources to improve their literacy and, as such, to perform their roles efficiently inside the community, the community adapts and forms virtuous circles of development and improvement which raise the quality of life of its members of the community in many diverse areas such as health, the environment, sustainable development, justice, equality and social peace, citizen participation, etc. The changes to the families and the communities are expected to transform the regions and states in a progressive manner. As the educational demands of the families become more complex, the horizons for sustainable development will be broadened, producing jobs, new goods and services and an increase in the well-being of the population.

First Achievements

Since its introduction in May 2011, a number of preliminary achievements and positive experiences have been reported across the programme locations:

Three teacher training events have been held, providing over 140 people in Durango, Guerrero and Veracruz with specific training for the tutorial relationship model.

Six of the schools taking part have now joined the Schools of Quality Programme (PEC). One of these schools, María Angelina Flores Morales in Teopisca, Chiapas, was assigned funding through the PEC which has now been allocated for the construction of a school dining room.

Each of the schools taking part was visited by the coordination team and the pilot programme was introduced to each school community.

A website covering the details of the programme (http://atzimba.crefal.edu.mx/learnfamily/) has been set up by CREFAL and a leaflet has been designed to encourage the support of families with reading and writing activities. The design of teaching guides, a memory game and teaching handbooks covering literacy in the family, school and community are scheduled for design by December 2011.

On introducing the programme to communities, many positive comments were made by the parents reflecting their desire to improve their own skills as well as support their children's educational development. The following comments have been reported and reflect the opportunities the programme opens up for all community members : "I learn more with my daughter than what I learnt at the same age…" "If I learn, I'll be able to help my son more". The interest in the community to continue learning and to help to improve the children's educational achievement is evidence of the potential the Family Literacy Programme has in these communities.

Challenges

During the preparation and implementation of the programme, a number of challenges have been faced mainly due to the fundamental changes made to the teaching-learning approaches and the focus on community participation. The following areas have presented the main challenges for the programme so far:

Introducing a change of paradigm through the move from governmental intervention to the promotion of self-managing communities. For example, the CEPS already exists in the majority of schools but has not assumed its role, for reasons of lack of organisation or lack of information. The composition, training and functionality of the CEPS is a wide area for development in the coming academic year.

Transforming the pedagogical focus from memorised learning to a teaching-learning model which centres on the educational achievement of the pupils and their families both inside and outside of school.

Fostering the active participation of the whole community to encourage ownership of innovative ideas and new action plans in order to adapt them to the realities of each community.

Transforming the institutional culture centred on its own objectives in order to make way for an open collaboration process between institutions and sectors with consensual goals and focused on benefitting the country's most needy groups.

Accommodating the necessary time for community changes to come to fruition. Transformations of such a magnitude require long-term vision and planning and can suffer at the hands of changing politics or inertia. Given that political support is necessary to obtain funds to continue with the programme, agreement with the authorities on the schedule for progression is notably important.

Acquiring financial, material and human resources to sustain the educational changes taking place as well as the transformations in families and in the community. Since continuous action is required for long term community transformations, it is necessary to have the resources available to keep the programme going.

The introduction of tutoring networks provoked reservations on the part of some teachers as they consider themselves to have had little experience of the workings and benefits of the model. To address these concerns, the teachers were introduced to the model in a short, one-day workshop on tutorial relationships. Held in the company of some telesecundaria teachers who already work as tutors, it was agreed to hold a broader workshop as soon as possible so that they can gain a wider and deeper insight into the topic as well as to envisage the possible areas in which they could use the model.

A number of specific challenges to the smooth running of the programme stemming from the culture and demographics of Mexico have been reported by CREFAL representatives having visited the schools and communities. The prevalence of many indigenous languages in Mexico can pose difficulties with regards to learning resources and communication in the community. Dilapidated teaching facilities, such as old blackboards and even a lack of benches, can hinder educational progress in schools through creating

a poor learning environment. On introducing the programme to one particular community, some of those present had reservations about their participation in the programme given the various tasks and responsibilities they have at home. Nevertheless, as time has gone on, a considerable number of mothers have expressed their desire to participate, looking for a better role in their children's education and improved results as well as searching for an improvement to their own education. Rather than engaging both parents, CREFAL has reported from initial investigations that it is more often mothers rather than fathers who participate most actively in the school life of their children. Overcoming the initial apprehensions of teachers and communities forms another preliminary challenge, as they may have experience of unsuccessful past programmes and do not wish to be overloaded with new responsibilities and a greater workload.

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

To learn from the community experiences during the programme, it is vital to ensure that the transformations which occur and the systematisation of educational experiences at all levels are well-documented. The collected data serves as a continuing form of evaluation which improves the management processes, as well as providing the most important source of information for those in charge of producing the Family Literacy Model and designing a national system to implement it. As the programme is running simultaneously in five states, CREFAL has called on the support of institutions dedicated to educational research and studies and which have an authentic interest in improving the quality of schools, namely teacher training colleges in the participating areas and universities which offer degrees in Education. With the recent establishment of academic bodies in the teacher training colleges, it is now crucial to carry out systematic research and to interact with other higher education institutions. In the same manner, universities are generally interested in participating in investigations which provide their students with significant field experience.

The research will focus on the following areas:

- Documenting the changes which have occurred in the schools, families and communities.
- The systematisation of the experiences of the Family Literacy Programme with its interaction between schools, families and communities.
- The documentation and systematisation of the experiences of collaboration with other institutions and across sectors.
- The educational evaluation of the programmes and projects which develop as a result of the involvement of the Family Literacy Programme.
- Organising the data to enable regular assessments on how the programme is functioning.

Through research and evaluation, the programme helps the schools, the families and the communities to shape their actions in order to best achieve their goals. The results of the evaluation and the subsequent improvements provide ideal material for use when developing the integral and systemic Family Literacy Model.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The national team of coordinators will visit the states four times a year and take part in two national meetings annually. The first national meeting took place in October 2011 and dealt with the three central goals of the Family Literacy Programme: to promote reading, to create tutoring networks and to establish a literate community. The principal aim of the meeting was to discuss the elements which enhance the efficiency of the programme in order to reach these goals in communities and schools.

LESSONS LEARNED

Even though the programme is still in its early stages, it is expected to bring insight and deeper understanding of the most important aspects to ensure the success of such an education programme in Mexico. Until now, three clear lessons can be mentioned:

The active participation of all those involved as well as significant interaction between institutions is required for the success of the programme. With only limited support, such a transformation to the community dynamics would be hard to establish or sustain. Sufficient time is also required in order for each community to ascertain the optimum speed of change, to take ownership of ideas and to organise the management and use of available resources.

The process of putting into practice the good ideas and intentions behind existing laws and reforms and making them a reality in communities where they have not been incorporated until now is a sizeable task and should not be underestimated.

It is necessary to highlight the importance of inter-institutional relationships which have already proved to bring positive results to the communities. In one particular case, the collaboration with governmental programmes, such as OPORTUNIDADES (Opportunities) run by the Ministry for Social Development, has enabled families in marginalised areas to enrol in a scholarship and study grants programme.

SUSTAINABILITY

In order for the project to be sustainable over the long term, it will be necessary to convert the participating schools into learning and cultural centres for the community. Forming a learning community involves a wide range of actors, including children, young people, adults, families and elderly people as well as potential educators, who include all those just mentioned, students, social workers, teachers, professors, public workers and every citizen who would like to share their knowledge and skills. It will be important to maintain a demand for learning amongst all citizens and by integrating literacy practices into the community there will be a firm base from which to promote and maintain participation. With regard to motivating family members and community representatives to participate in the programme, the catalogue detailing the existing educational projects in each participating state supports those who wish to take part. The Council in each school also aims to help families by evaluating and organising their

interests and needs into requests for training and support them with selecting educational projects from the catalogue.

Given the possibilities for education (informal, non-formal, distance, online, led by experts, across generations, etc.), the model is very flexible and highly sustainable due to its variety and range. By promoting the development of learning to learn independently for the teachers, pupils, families and the wider community, solid foundations for a literate and socially engaged community can be laid down. The Family Literacy Programme will continue to work with the communities, schools and families concerned until the community actors have taken over the role in the process of transformation which the programme promotes. This process is expected to take approximately four years. Within this period, it is hoped that the actors will establish ownership of the community changes in order to maintain them with the support of government departments and civil society organisations in each state. As the presence of resources is a constant concern for programmes reliant on funding and support, the use of existing resources from other programmes and initiatives increases the sustainability of the programme.

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