

Corresponding Services

Project

Literacy Movement Organization

Islamic Republic of IRAN

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In the Name of God

Project Title: Corresponding Services Project

Implementing Agency: Literacy Movement Organization

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INTRODUCTION

To provide opportunities for those who are not able to continue their education through literacy programmes, but are interested in learning more to improve their life style, LMO planned and implemented a project named “Corresponding Services” since 1996 with the collaboration of Post Company of IRI. The assessments of 1997-1998 show that it has been successful.

The main purpose is to access information after post-literacy programmes and empower the learners to read and learn through non-attendance activities, so that they can reach self-teaching.

Target learners:

Neo-literates or semi-literates in rural urban areas who have participated in continuing education groups-semi-attendance education-the majority of the learners include women and girls who have basic education but could not continue their education for various reasons.

Main Objectives:

1. To complete semi-attendance education process to Non-attendance education process in post-literacy programmes
2. Reinforcement of reading and writing skills through letter-writing and preventing relapse into Neo-literacy
3. Reinforcement of self-teaching
4. Fostering of reading culture in the living environment of the learners especially in rural areas and among women and girls.
5. Promoting general and applied skills of the learners.
6. Participation of the learners in cultural activities and helping to the constant development of the society

Project Content:

The content of the materials which is offered through these services is according to the learners' reading needs.

In 1997, LMO accomplished a national survey in order to recognise reading needs of Neo-literates in different provinces. Samples of 3565 learners were investigated through structured questionnaires.

The results showed that the majority of learners had chosen social awareness as their first priority to read. Ten subjects with examples of their subdivisions were introduced to the respondents. In the social awareness subject, the subdivision of family problems had the most selection (84%). The second priority was health issues with emphasis on hygiene (74%) and the third priority was about religious awareness.

According to the results, LMO produced some easy to read materials individually and with co-operation of other organizations.

Table No. 1 shows the materials which are distributed through corresponding services

In 1996, when the project was in experimental stage in Fars province, several books about family education and birth-control were offered. In 1997, several books considering social awareness subject was distributed and several books about the ways of income generation. In 1998, several self-help books about agriculture and conservation of natural resources were put into the programme. Of course, the content changes according to the local needs. Along with the book, some educational brochures prepared by governmental bodies are sent to the learners, which can be kept by them.

Implementation procedure:

The project with emphasis on postal services is performed in two ways:

1. Through indirect corresponding with the delegates of each corresponding group:

Each continuing literacy group has one delegate who is selected by the members, so that LMO can contact them to continue their activities after semi-attendance period.

Local literacy offices of LMO recognise these delegates. Members who live near the delegates are introduced to them (at least 10 members), therefore she/he can contact them and distribute the materials among them.

Local literacy office sends the books, pamphlets, newspapers etc., of each member to the delegate and after distributing (lending) for two weeks, the delegate gathers all the materials and send them back to the office. This cycle continues and per month at least one correspondence is done.

2. Through direct corresponding with the members:

In some regions, the number of participants is low or the members are scattered, so local offices correspond directly with the members and send them easy to read materials. They send the materials back after two weeks. LMO recommends that the members lend the materials to the others and also to her/his family.

Membership period:

The membership period is two years. In this period, one correspondence is done each month with the members and on the whole 24 titles for 24 months is predicted. At the end of the period, learners become familiar with library concepts and how to use its services, such as postal services. In this way, they are encouraged to be a member of a public library in rural and urban areas.

Cost of project:

This project is implemented with minimum expenditures, of which the most part belongs to the printing of the books and postal services. In this project, a book could be lent several times to different members. For postal services, LMO pays some parts and the rest is paid by the learners, and the delegates work voluntarily. It is an economical project with emphasis on learners' participation.

Table No.1: Titles of the books used in the project

<u>Agriculture & conservation</u>	<u>Religion</u>	<u>Social &family problems</u>	<u>Health issues</u>	<u>Nutrition</u>
1 Chemical toxins and their loss	1. Recognition of sins	1 How to train our children	1.Pregnacy	1. Preventing malnutrition
2. How to prepare dried fruits	2. Biographies of religious leaders	2. Security of children in the house	2. Recommendation for pregnancy	2. Food products
3. How to fertilize soil	3. Hero women of Islam	3. Duties of wives	3. Breast-Feeding	3. Dairy products
4. Increasing gardens plants		4. Duties of husbands	4. Child growth	4. Fruits
5 Traditional irrigation		5. Father-mother, why a son!	5. Diarrhoea	5. Vegetables
6 Drop and Rain irrigation		6. Let's live better	6. Vaccination	6. Jams & pickles
7. Methods of preventing pests		7. Story telling in family	7. Catch cold & cough	7. Grains & dried fruits
8. How to prepare healthy Pistachio		8. Drugs: human & captivity	8. Milk health	8. Child's nutrition
			9. How to have healthy children	
			10. Water: a vital source	
			11. First aids	

Table No.2

Year	Cost of printing the books	Cost of postal services
1997	\$1,000	\$3,750
1998	\$3,700	\$15,000
1999	\$3,825	\$31,250
2000	\$5,000	\$37,500
Total	\$13,525	\$87,500

Evaluation:

Evaluation is considered in three ways:

1. In each correspondence, a questionnaire is sent for each learner to reflect her/his opinion about the books. Therefore, we can assess their level of learning and their changing behaviour, because of learning new things.
2. At the end of each year and after 12 correspondences with the members, a national contest is held (non-attendance), and it is another way to evaluate the effectiveness of easy to read materials and their messages in their life.
3. An evaluation team is sent to each province during the implementation to assess the procedures and to recognise weak/strong points. This project was designed to attract more learners and expanded at least 20 times as compared with the year 1997.

Table No.3 The expansion of project learners

Year	Learners
1997	4,500
1998	17,500
1999	40,000
2000	80,000

The survey shows that 93 % of the correspondents have been completely successful and the LMO local offices have received the materials on time. Only 7% have not been successful mainly because the materials did not reach to the members on time or they sent them back with delay.

The first priority is allocated to rural areas as evaluation shows that 2/3 is under the project in rural area while 1/3 of learners is in urban area

Privileges:

1. During the project, the LMO local offices in each province, invites the delegates to gather in a meeting and explains their duties and encourages them. In particular, those delegates who work seriously are given some gifts.

Some entertainment programmes are arranged by the learners and some lectures are presented through local authorities.

2. During these meetings, some delegates and members become friends and keep contacting each other by letter-writing, enabling them to exchange their information and promote their skills.
3. If some members are interested to have a book for themselves, they can directly contact the local office and buy it.
4. Decreasing sex discrimination in terms of availability of information, because the majority of learners are women (96%) and only 4% are men. Thus, the authorities decided to plan according to women's needs and produce proper contents for them.
5. LMO has arranged two national reading contests for this project. Table No. 4 shows the number of books which have been read and the learners who have participated in the contests.

Difficulties:

The most crucial problem had been the postal services delays in remote areas, which caused some problems in the table provisions.

We have solved the problem by using one staff of the LMO local office who transports books and other materials to delegates or members.

Table No.4: The number of materials and learners under the national contests relating to the project

Year	Material	Learners
1997	2,425,000	320,000
1998	4,620,000	480,000
Total	7,045,000	800,000