PROJECT NAME: DEVELOPMENT OF COMMUNITY COALITION THROUGH LITERACY

1.0 Background:

Sarvodaya Women’s Movement (SWM) emerged in 1977 as a small branch of the parent body - Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangamaya, which is a people’s organization, dedicated to development with human face, and is based on the grassroots initiative of communities. When it was discovered that more than 75% of the Sarvodaya workers were women, special women’s wing was established in 1990 as a legally constituted, independent body. One of the major objectives of SWM from its inception is to eradicate illiteracy among rural and urban disadvantaged women and female children. Hence a functional literacy programme was initiated by SWM in 1990 and continues to date.

A literacy programme was implemented during the period 1995-1999 with financial assistance from World Terakoya Movement, Japan. Based on Family Study Circles, and comprised of women and female children laying emphasis on functional Literacy groups were later developed into “Mothers Groups” in keeping with the traditional group formation of the Sarvodaya Movement. Later 15 learning centers (Terakoya) were established in rural and urban disadvantaged localities to strengthen learning center programmes, SWM provided training to facilitators selected from all three ethnic groups. The model-training center established in 1995 is now being used as a central vocational training center for female school dropouts. They are given a comprehensive training in traditional as well as non -traditional skills.

In addressing issues arising from poverty, ignorance and illiteracy, SWM continues to provide assistance to Women’s Groups mainly on agro-based micro-business and income generating activities.

2.0 Objectives

• The main objective of the programme was to minimise illiteracy among women who are living in disadvantaged areas in the island
• To reinforce the functional pattern of the women community workers of the SWM.
• To enable them to change the life-style of the Community by the eradication of illiteracy. The overall objective was to provide each participant of the programme with basic literacy skills within the shortest possible time.
• Development of community coalition to improve literacy
• Co-operative activities with Women ‘s NGOs on community specific development programmes based on Economic Literacy, Health Literacy, Legal Literacy, Social Literacy etc.
• Linkage with governmental organizations - Women’s Bureau, Industrial Development Board, Department of Probation and Child Care, Ministry of Youth Affairs.
• Awareness Programmes on Women’s Rights, Women in Violence, Child Abuse, Initiation of non-traditional skill development, Women in development.
• Preparation of materials for the package items on Economic Literacy, Social Literacy, Basic Literacy.
• Identification and analysis of a framework for illiterate women and children.
• Adult literacy programme for women. The target group comprised of 160 participants from 10 learning centers in five districts. There were also young women, Pregnant mothers, Lactating mothers, elders, non school going children, and school drop-outs, street women and children, prison women etc.

3.0 Duration: 1994 -1998

4.0 Partners

National Federation of UNESCO Associations, World Terakoya Movement Japan.
Asian South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education. (Affiliated to international Council of Adult Education.)

5.0 Inputs
• Pre-school teachers as facilitators of literacy programmes.
• Training of trainers selected from all three ethnic groups.
• Materials produced locally, internationally e.g. UNESCO, ACCU (adaptations) samples given in the Annex.
• Literacy materials, pamphlets, Posters, audio/video cassettes
• Budget - US$ 25,000 (1994 - 1998)

6.0 Strengths:
• Women from disadvantaged rural and urban communities developed their listening and communication skills.
• Increased participation in community development activities.
• Since audio-video materials were used for entertainment mostly at the beginning, facilitators did not realise the value of a multi-media package for literacy. Later after making use of the materials they realized how powerful these are in communicating messages.
• Participants preferred to hear their own voices and see themselves in pictures. It has become a good way of provoking discussions and in presenting information in a participatory way.
• Posters were very effective especially on legal literacy.
• Collaboration of programmes with other organizations.
• Trainer becomes a learner and learner becomes a trainer at alternative sessions.
• Sharing of skills and expertise between women’s organizations.
• While literacy programmes were in progress, exhibitions/sale of their products were held at public fairs.
• Introduction to non-traditional occupations.
• A clear understanding and knowledge of their own issues among under privileged women.

7.0 Weaknesses
• Emphasis of the project was on Basic Literacy Skills, the learners showed a keen interest in aspects such as Health Literacy, skills literacy training for legal literacy income generating projects, and it was revealed that they still remained weak in their writing skills. But they showed a very high improvements in social skills than was expected. This fact also led to the learners not being interested in the workbook but was more interested in the supplementary readers as “Mina Smiles”. etc..
• Difficulties in not being able to make use of audio-visual aids due to lack of facilities in the training centers outside Colombo.
• Lack of necessary technical support.
• Inability to obtain tools for economic development programmes to be implemented at the Learning Centers.
• Not allocating funds for publicity purposes at the commencement of the project.
• Inability to pay a reasonable allowance for field-workers.
• The large-scale participation of children between the age ranges of 5 - 6 years with their parents.
• The instructors were faced with the problem of basing their instructions in a two-fold manner to suit the two different categories of the participants.
• Time and duration of the programme had to be arranged in keeping with this categories of the participants.
• The unavailability of simple teaching modules to suit the respective communities of learners in
keeping with their requirements and aspirations.

- In selecting venues for holding classes, temporary places such as temples and community centres had to be selected. Thus the need for a permanent literacy centre was felt in almost every district.
- Lack of support services to strengthen poor women’s economic activities. Provision of services at the doorstep of selected energetic trainees. Presentation of awards for efficient trainees at a large gathering.
- Initial training for facilitators was inadequate. Retraining, follow up programmes need to be in co-operated.
- Lack of incentives provided to facilitators, and SWM being unable to focus its attention to the problems faced by them due to unexpected financial constraints
- Lack of necessary equipment and furniture.
- Lack of audiovisual equipment needed for the centre to motivate young learners.
- Lack of correct instruments for assessment and evaluation based on training needs of facilitators and leaner perception.
- Lack of support services to poor women ‘s economic activities.
- Lack of necessary technical support.
- Inability to obtain tools for economic development programmes to be implemented at the Learning Centres.
- Not allocating funds for publicity purposes at the commencement of the project.
- Inability to pay a reasonable allowance to field-workers.

8.0 Impact Evaluation

- Formative Evaluation by Sarvodaya Women’ s Movement
- Summative Evaluation by an external group
- Presentation of awards for efficient trainers at a large gathering
- Co-operative activities with various women’ s organization and development of working relationships with such organizations in the community.
- Conversion of 4 pre schools to learning Centres.
- Formation of a National Steering Committee and a Leadership Training for them.
- Involvement of Media personnel (Annex) at the opening ceremony of the children’s Library.
- Collaboration with other NGOs in selecting target groups resulted in achieving a more balanced development in the community.
- Multifaceted interventions have provided opportunities for Groups interventions.
- Involving media personnel has played a vital role for the empowerment of women in deprived communities.
- Established mechanisms for linkages among multi-ethnic groups.
- Involvement of women as peace - promoters.
- Transmitting messages to increase public awareness on compulsory education.
SARVODAYA WOMEN'S MOVEMENT
ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Executive Committee of L J S S S

National Body

Sarvodaya Women's Movement

President
Vice President (2)

General Secretary
Assistant Secretary (2)

Treasurer

Working Committee

32 District Representative

Mothers Groups

Membership
Appendix 1

Sarvodaya Women's Movement - Core Programmes

- Social Literacy
- Spiritual Literacy
- Basic Literacy
- Health Literacy
- Environmental Education
- Economic Literacy
- Legal Literacy
SARVODAYA WOMEN'S MOVEMENT – THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

**PROCESS**

- Development Education MTI
  - Project formulation
  - Appraisal implementation
  - Evaluation reporting

Education

- Nutrition
  - Infants/children
  - Expectant mothers
  - Lactating mothers, elders

- Health Programme
  - Infant
  - Children
  - Expectant mothers
  - Post-natal mothers

- Home garden

Development of Women

- Environment
  - Agroforestry

- Civic rights & responsibilities of women

Social Moral & Cultural Programmes

- Status of Women in the family

Programmes to Develop the Economy

- Workshops
  - Seminars
  - Lectures
  - Discussions
  - Exhibitions
  - Contests

- Loans
- Savings
- Collective income generation

- Management Skills
  - Self-employment through small income-generating projects

- Awareness
  - Vocational skills

- Management

Other NGO assistance

- Assistance from government & other statutory bodies

Cultural Heritage

- Religious education

Legal Aid

Counselling

- Development Education

- Status of Women in the family

- Civic rights & responsibilities of women

- Home economics
OUR MODEL LEARNING CENTRE
Activities of the Literacy Project (1994-1998)

SLOW LEARNERS AT 'TERAKOYA' TRYING OUT 'ORIGAMI'
Street children enjoying activities (play) at Erakoya
CULTURAL LITERACY

MULTI-ETHNIC GROUP
HEALTH LITERACY FOR YOUNG MOTHERS

TRADITIONAL SKILLS FOR MOTHERS
BASIC LITERACY FOR MOTHERS AND THEIR NON-SCHOOL GOING CHILDREN
NON-TRADITIONAL SKILLS TRAINING AT A’TERAKOYA’