



United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

Organisation
des Nations Unies
pour l'éducation,
la science et la culture

Organización
de las Naciones Unidas
para la Educación,
la Ciencia y la Cultura

Организация
Объединенных Наций по
вопросам образования,
науки и культуры

منظمة الأمم المتحدة
للتربية والعلم والثقافة

联合国教育、
科学及文化组织

Regional Conference "*Literacy challenges in the Arab Region:*"
Building partnerships and promoting innovative approaches,
Doha, Qatar, 12-14 March 2007

"Basic Education Programme for Adults"

**Programme name: Basic Education Programme for Adults
Implemented by: Caritas Egypt**

Basic Facts

Country: Egypt

Starting year: 1972

Outreach: approximately 20,000 per year

Target Population: mainly illiterate women

Language of instruction: Arabic

Operating in: 5 regions (617 classes)

Main Funding: KZE (Germany)

Website: www.caritasegypt.org

Contact: Mr Salah Sabri Sebeh – cariteg@link.net

Brief Description

Caritas Egypt helps adults analyse and resolve problems of daily life through literacy, dialogue, and problem-solving. The programme is implemented in deprived areas of the Cairo and Giza governorates and caters for 20,000 participants per year, of whom 85 % are women.

Each year, more than eighteen thousand people benefit from Caritas Egypt's literacy programme which covers more than two hundred villages in the most remote areas of the country. Approximately 90% of the students are literate at the end of the training cycle. Moreover, on average two thousand youth graduates, who successfully pass the government's literacy exam, are permitted to enrol each year in the formal education system.

Rationale

Caritas Egypt began 30 years ago, providing health services to rural and very poor communities in the Cairo and Giza governorates. Gradually, practitioners realised that most health problems were rooted in illiteracy, lack of health awareness, and poor sanitation.

Objective

Caritas's Basic Education Programme for Adults aims to contribute to expanding literacy efforts for deprived communities in Egypt.

This is achieved by building the capacities of new monitors on health and environmental education as well as strengthening and mainstreaming the health education component of the programme.

Caritas thus contributes to the improvement of the learners and communities' health and environmental status thanks to a literacy program covering primary health care, child care, reproductive health, youth health and environmental sanitation in addition to combating harmful traditions, especially FGM.

The programme also aims at promoting the learners' empowerment for active participation in comprehensive development by raising awareness about legal and human rights through classroom discussion and other activities and by further developing the concepts of human rights within the curricula.

Conceptual Model and Methodology

Inspired from Paulo Freire pedagogy, the programme is based on human rights awareness. Environment and health awareness components are also closely given in the literacy sessions. The health programme has been developed to respond systematically to the needs of the participants and their communities. It has four principal components: 1) general hygiene; 2) nutrition; 3) reproductive health and 4) health and the environment.

Cultural and social activities are an integral part of the programme as they are the tools used to involve the students in their community problems especially during the post-literacy phase of the programme and their involvement in community based activities through village libraries.

The programme uses a student-centred approach so that the beneficiaries are not only active participants during the class sessions but also trained emissaries to their communities. The programme's motto is 'Learning for Action' and its activities extend beyond the scope of the class.

Young teachers (called monitors), selected from the villages, are chosen and trained to implement the programme. They have to gather the students and follow-up their assiduity.

Itinerant supervisors give a hand to five or six monitors by visiting and helping to solve difficulties in each class once a week. Regular meetings and training sessions help the improvement of the methodology by evaluating experiences and difficulties encountered. Peer education is implemented to reach those who are not able to join the classes.

Innovative features

The programme is based on a holistic educational approach and offers the opportunity to empower marginalised people by giving them numerous skills to become a real human resource for community development.

All members in the process: supervisors, teachers, as well as students, are learning from each other and consequently are motivated to learn more and thus contribute to the programme's progress.