

Islamic Republic of Iran
Ministry of Education
Literacy Movement Organization

Implementation of educational and empowering programs for literacy learners and Neo- literate adults

Through Community Learning Centers (CLCs), educational centers and schools

Preface:

Need to learning and education for better productivity, happy life and finally a better living for all are among the basic needs of all people. According to the UN Charter and Article No. 26 of the Human Rights World declaration and the 7th principle of the Rights of the Child world declaration and in the context of our country, definitely based on the Islamic thoughts and insights, The Right to Education is taken for granted for all regardless to their skin colors, race, gender, fate and regions . Fostering the humans' talents and improvement of their life, call for having decent facilities sand conditions. In the Islamic view, Education is incumbent on every Muslim man and woman. Therefore, providing access to the suitable facilities and equitable opportunities of education for all considered as a necessity in the I R. of Iran. With regard to this belief, less than one year after the victory of the Islamic Revolution of the people in Iran, upon the decree released by Imam Khomeini (RA), the literacy Movement Organization (LMO) was established to teach literacy to the out- of – school people throughout the country. LMO is affiliated to the Ministry of Education of Iran.

The literacy activities in the IR of Iran both in decreasing the rate of out-of – school children and adult literacy have shown drastic progress toward improving the social indicators within the past three decades after the revolution.

Introducing the literacy movement organization

Literacy Movement Organization is responsible for providing literacy programs for adult illiterate and low- literate people. LMO is working under the auspices of education minister and during the years to be involved in adult literacy programs has attained to remarkable achievements in reduction of illiteracy rate, narrowing the gender as well as regional gaps among illiterates. Besides that, by now LMO has collected 5 consecutive prizes from UNESCO and ISESCO.

Community Learning Centers' Background in Iran:

Initially the CLCs in Iran as regard to its multi- functional natures was established in two provinces of Fars and Ilam close cooperation with the UNESCO regional office in Asia and Pacific in 2000.The

structure of the centers was developed slightly different with the original structure of CLCs proposed by UNESCO office. Management of the Centre is entrusted to one of the well experienced literacy instructors and of course several training courses were organized for centers' managers to increase their awareness and improve their management skills. The training programs in CLCs should have the following conditions:

- Programs should be designed in a way to improve the people's life and occupation;
- Programs should be based on learners' needs and demands and empower them in different dimensions;
- In the process of planning and running of the centre's affairs, other institutions and local people should be involved and the participatory teaching- learning method should be applied.
- The learning opportunities and facilities should be equitably provided for all ;
- The learning styles and approaches should be diversified and the learners should be engaged in the process and have their own roles and responsibilities;
- The educational environment should be informal, friendly and full of sense of sincerity;
- There should be awareness and a strong belief to the potential abilities of the learners and to their eagerness to learning;
- The centers should gradually reach to the financial and executive autonomy.

The goals of CLCs:

1. To provide the appropriate learning opportunities for all especially for women;
2. To improve the quality of life among villagers and to strive for poverty alleviation ;
3. To promote the human resources capacities for development of the local communities;
4. To enrich the rural people life through rising their local awareness and knowledge;
5. To get involvement of the local communities in total process of educational and income generating activities ;
6. Gradual decentralization of literacy
7. To help in implementation of the National development plan – social, cultural, educational and economic plans.

The measures taken for establishment of Community Learning Centers

CLCs in Iran as regard to its multi- functional natures was established in two provinces of Fars and Ilam close cooperation with the UNESCO regional office in Asia and Pacific but in 2001 all of provinces started to establish their own CLCs in 2000. In the below table you can find the trend of increase of the number of CLCs in Iran.

Table- Trend of increase in the No. of CLCs (2000-2009)

Year	No. of CLCs
2000	4
2001	65
2002	1576

2003	2074
2004	2317
2005	2659
2006	3210
2007	3517
2008	3012
2009	1391

The activities and programs of CLCs:

Among the most important activities of CLCs in Iran we can mention to basic education and continuing education (post literacy programs) and basic life skills as well as basic vocational skills development of the learners which are implemented in line with improvement of the quality of life and empowerment of the people in various aspects of life as follows:

1. Basic literacy
2. Continuing education
3. Integrated program of literacy with life skills
4. Empowerment , entrepreneurship and improvement of quality of life
5. Conducting motivational programs in order to smooth the condition of learners ‘ participation in literacy programs
6. Setting up libraries and data bank for fostering the culture and habit of reading among learners
7. Campaigning and informing and development of the learners and centers’ clients
8. Organizing cultural, religious, social , economic and civic educational programs
9. Participation in the state run activities
10. Identification of the learners’ and the local community needs
11. Responsible taking by local community.

Educational resources:

In order to provide the learners and trainers with instructional materials, basic life skills, vocational development skills, awareness raising and development of the learners’ knowledge on the issues such as society , health, personal beliefs on religion and art work the following resources are available for them.

1. The Text books of different literacy courses
2. The Books and educational contents of continuing education circles
3. The Books and educational contents of correspondence services and media –assisted literacy programs
4. The Books attached to the project of reading with family
5. The books relevant to the learners’ needs on different issues
6. The books and pamphlets relevant to the basic life skills training programs

7. The books and pamphlets relevant to the vocational skills development
8. Instructors' manual on teaching methods of different literacy courses and teaching manuals on basic life skills
9. Leaflets and pamphlets produced by partner institutions and organizations
10. Educational films, books, Audio-visual materials
11. Magazines, periodicals, brochures, tract, newsletters, posters, etc.
12. Reference books (glossaries, dictionaries.)

Following you will find some of the topics of books used in CLC programs:

- Getting familiarity with the famous great religious persons	- Consumption pattern
- Facts for life series	- Let's be kind with each other
- Morality at home / men and women duties	- Child nutrition
- Let's live better	- How to train our children
- Elections and us	- How to fertilize the soil
- General gardening	- Water hygiene
- Safety at home, teeth and mouth hygiene	- First aid
- Milk hygiene	- Dried fruits
- Family education	- Productivity

Executive Strategies of Community Learning Centers:

Different strategies that have been used in CLCs for implementation of programs and activities are as follows:

- Flexibility of programs/ the time for conducting the activities depends on the free time of learners
- Making linkage with other educational and development workers at the community level strong linkage with state run organization such as ministries of agriculture, health, medical treatment and education, rural Islamic councils and the executive officials of the provinces/ towns. In this regard representatives of these ministries provide the learners with various educational programs.
- Networking with international colleagues such as UNICEF and UNFPA in implementation of fertility health / family planning projects.
- Involvement of different sections and organization in planning, establishment and evaluation of the centers' activities.
- Paying regular visits to the CLCs by local officials in order to assess the centers' issues and progress.

Impacts of the Community Learning Centers:

In view of the newness of the experiences of CLC establishment the executive impacts of the centers are as follows:

1. Setting up CLCs in view of creation of educational opportunities, diversified learning for empowerment of the learners, social development, increasing quality of life of the people have been received warmly by villagers so that the neighboring villages have called for setting up a CLC in their own village through local authorities,
2. most of the young women and girls , also boys and young men after being trained in such career skills as: embroidery, flower making, different types of knitting and weaving, carpet weaving , cooking , hair dressing, confectionary, doll making, mechanics, bee breeding, building wiring, first aids, bread baking, and basic life skills like women's rights, nutrition principles, training of children rearing, training of individual and social health etc, besides access to various types of skills about vocational skills while meet their individual needs , they can provide services against receiving money and in fact they can earn and save money through the skills learnt in CLCs.
3. Organizers and personnel of CLCs believe in effectiveness and efficiency of the centers and they are going to apply their experiences for enrichment of the literacy activities in the new situations.
4. Trainers and instructors have attained to a high self-confidence as a result of their roles in changing the people lives. They are specially respected by rural people.
5. Tendency toward participation among the officials and authorities of the districts have been increased due to the immediate effects of the centers on the social and economic situations of the people. So that the people have shown more tendency toward attending in the programs.
6. The local authorities have announced their readiness for providing required places for CLCs in other places; also they have made actions for equipment of centers like purchase of computers etc.
7. Providers of services to the villagers in view of preparedness of the required platform for communication of messages in CLCs contribute financial assistance to these centers and proclaim their 6 months action plan attached with allotted expenditures.
8. United Nation representatives in the Islamic Republic of Iran including UNICEF and UNFPA contribute in equipment of the CLCs and put the wide partnership in their agenda.
9. In view of the national and organizational policies based on decentralizing the executive affairs to the local levels have accelerated this trend through establishment of CLCs with an educational and learning approach.
10. The learners' acceptance of skill training classes is very high and its frequency is higher than other types of classes. This matter explains that life skills like self- awareness, communication etc, have been among the most salient axis of Community Learning centers.

11. Interaction between the learners and trainers is one of the advantages of the Centers which have the highest frequency after the life skills training.
12. Easy participation of the learners and their on time attendance in the programs which has been one of the main and the most problematic issues of Literacy Movement have been reduced to the minimum amount. This situation has shown that changing in the policies have been conducive to much blessing for LMO.

Executive challenges which caused the activities of CLCs to be limited:

As regard to the multi-dimensional role of CLCs as well as acceptance of the programs by learners, there was no basic problem in running the centers. But the special condition of literacy activities in Iran created the situation that caused reduction of the number of Centers in Iran. Some of these conditions are as follow:

1. Increasing literacy rate in the country and excess dispersion of the illiterate people so as in some regions the CLCs were allocated to a few number of people
2. Shift in the government literacy policies and its focus on eradication of illiteracy to about zero level.
3. Presence of the organizations which could serve the local communities in parallel with CLCs such as Ministry of Health and technical –vocational education organization.

Future Approaches in running the CLCs programs:

1. To entrust the functions of CLCs to schools and using schools as the bases for establishment of CLCs.
2. Schools should have a place for integration and coordination of potential abilities and development of the local community
3. Schools also will be the place for people to exchange their views with each other toward solving the community's problems.
4. Schools would be a place for sharing the knowledge and expertise
5. Schools would be the place for holding ceremonies and celebrations.
6. Schools would be the place for activity of NGOs, Saving and Loan Funds and cooperatives.

The poverty reduction projects attached to CLCs:

- The project of empowerment of the female –headed households: this project has been implemented in Marivan and Ahvaz. In this project literacy, basic life skills and vocational development skill were integrated with each other. The project was implemented in 2000 for women and girls.

- The project of empowerment of mothers and children: it was implemented within three phases upon the cooperation with UNECEF office in Tehran
 - First phase: production of contents and learning materials
 - Second phase: education of out- of – school rural working girls (10-18 year old)
 - Third phase: providing basic education to the Afghan mothers and children

NEW Literacy Innovations in Iran:

During recent years many remarkable measures have been undertaken in the context of literacy in the IR of Iran which has paved the way for reaching literacy goals in Iran. Following you will find the most important of this kind of measures.

- **Access to the name and information of the individual illiterate people:** **Ac**

At present Literacy Movement enjoy a databank of identification of all illiterate persons throughout the country. This databank contains the information as well as the postal address of the illiterate people. In view of the existing information, illiterate persons are individually invited to attend in literacy programs.

- **Implementation of each one teach one literacy program:** **Im**

In some regions of the country that the illiterate population are so scattered that we cannot hold a class for them; one of the family members or local people are requested to teach the illiterate person.

- **Using the literacy database(computer network)** **Usi**

Nowadays, registration of the illiterate persons takes place through computer network, in this case upon registration of a person through this system; the possibility of registration for the second time in other part of the country will be blocked. Only the illiterate and low-literate people will be registered and total statistics of the learners are available for planners and policy makers.

- **Using the test maker systems:** **Usi**

As regard to the scattered population of the learners, a system of test making have been designed for administration of the final exams to be used by literacy instructors. In this sense learning achievements in literacy classes will be evaluated through a set of standard questions. This initiative saves the time for designing the new questions for each exam.

- **Implementation of post –literacy programs:** **Im**

Post- literacy program is implemented based on the new approach of the organization in empowerment of the learners. Through this program, learners beside consolidation of their literacy

(Reading, Writing and numeracy) skills can use the function skills for the individual and community development. The main activities undertaken in the framework of the program Re as follow:

1. Continuing reading and writing on ethics, economy, society and occupation
2. Implementing educational programs on promotion of social skills and life skills in schools
3. Delivering reading materials to the neo literate people through the nationwide network of the Post Company of the IR of Iran
4. Providing the learners with the skills needed to handle the emerging technologies like working with ATM and doing simple affairs on payment of the bills through telephone bank.
5. Teaching recitation of Holy Quran
6. Teaching the way of taking membership in libraries and knowhow of using the books and library services.