



## *Activity Report of the project “Community Literacy and Facilitation Centres in Lahore” (CLFC project) for the period July – September, 2013.*

### **Introduction – Labour Education Foundation (LEF) and its work**

Since its inception, Labour Education Foundation (**LEF**) has implemented various projects to promote Labour rights. Its aim is to organize, capacitate and advocate the workers about their rights and provide informed input to trade unions and various civil society organizations for promoting workers’ rights.

In cooperation with STS International Solidarity (**STS**), the Danish NGO partner organization, LEF implemented the project “Community Literacy & Facilitation Centres in Lahore” (**CLFC**) in six centres in urban areas of Lahore. The project aims at providing reading and writing skills to the formal and informal sector workers and raising awareness in terms of workers’ rights.

The main activities carried out in implementation of the project are as follows:

- Orientation sessions
- Monitoring visits
- Teachers monthly meetings
- Meetings with Central Management Committees
- Visit of STS representative
- Achievements
- Challenges

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### **Activity details for the report period**

#### **1. Orientation sessions**

In this period, fifteen orientation sessions have been organized. The basic purpose of these sessions was to highlight the overall situation for workers; gender issues; importance of education; existing laws; the weak implementation of those laws and to start a debate amongst workers on relating these issues to their situation. The following topics were covered:

- Importance of education
- Violence against women
- Gender issues
- Health and hygiene

These topics are identified and chosen during the monthly teaching staff meetings. The pupils were facilitated for preparation to conduct these sessions by themselves. The consideration of health and hygiene related problems in the centres and in communities led to this topic being included in the planned orientation sessions. At the orientation sessions, pupils discuss topics in a participatory manner and then LEF staff supplement with eventual points missed by the pupils. The discussions are characterized by a stimulating participation and participants often exhibit an excited behavior. According to them these sessions are needed and of great use. The main points resulting from the discussions include:

- Pupils expressed that reading and writing is very important to them all, because education enhances better citizenship and awareness of what is right and what is wrong. Education increases self confidence and they will be able to understand and negotiate their work related problems in an informed way.
- Women in society are generally neglected and males in the majority of families are preferred. Women face discriminatory practices such as being deprived of freedom, restrictions on mobility, fewer opportunities for health and education, low wages, less participation in decision making and less participation in politics. A lot of women suffer from domestic violence - this is an **important** issue. Pupils find it important to be aware that women are equal members of society and deserve equal rights and treatment.
- Pupils discussed gender issues and their relation to daily life. They were able to understand the important role that women play in the economy. The plight of home based workers (a mainly female occupation) was also an important topic and here the reasons behind that plight were illuminated.
- Laborious home based work and physical activities in the often extremely hot climate lead to dirt and sweat being an everyday experience for many workers. Encouraging the awareness of practicing good hygiene and being conscious of health related matters at any age, is important for all.

See **Annex A** for details of the number of participants at the orientation sessions (page 7)

## **2. Monitoring visits**

18 monitoring visits were conducted during the period. Their main purpose was to monitor the performance of the teachers, progress of the centres and the mobilizing of pupils in 6 urban areas. The following was concluded after the visits:

- Mustafa Abad Shahdara Centre is working according to schedule.
- In the month of RAMADAN, teachers at the Ahmad Town and Sutter Mill Centres, taught at different times to different groups of pupils to accommodate them according to their convenience.
- Moman Pura Centre was working according to the schedule.
- At the Dayal House Centre, attendance figures for enrolled pupils were irregular, remaining around 15 - 18 daily. The teacher was having difficulty in managing them and she has been asked to work on establishing better punctuality and general class discipline.
- In Youhanabad-2 Centre, pupils were attending classes at different times. This is due to some of the pupils having started to learn stitching at a local factory to enhance their job seeking. The teacher

accommodated this situation according to their needs and availability for class attendance. The centre is functioning well.

### **3. Teachers' Monthly Meetings**

Three monthly meetings with teachers were organized in this period, at the LEF office. Six teachers, the Program Coordinator and other LEF staff attended the meetings. Important topics for orientation sessions, challenges and general progress of the centres were highlighted in the teachers' reports. Detail are given below:

#### ***Objectives***

- Sharing of ideas to improve the performance
- Identification of ways for solving problems when and if they occur.
- Reinforcing commitment to work towards a common goal
- Following a common strategy to meet the objectives

#### ***Agenda***

- Progress of the centres
- Strength of pupils
- Functioning of Centre Manage Committees (CMC)
- Pupil attendance regularity
- Hurdles and complications in motivating the local community

#### ***Proceedings***

- The Project Coordinator explained the objectives of the meetings and emphasized the importance of developing on-going and practical links with all teachers and facilitation for further plans
- Teachers were asked to share monthly reports
- How to write monthly reports
- Discussion about the ways to improve the functioning of centres
- How to maintain a time table and other activity reports properly
- How to organize two meetings with CMC members in a month
- How to organize orientation sessions
- How to prepare the stationary request and other requirements for their centres for submission to LEF administration
- Reimbursement of monthly utility bills
- Briefing about the characteristics of CMC and the importance of involving of other stakeholders from the community

#### **Teachers Reports**

The summarized reports from each centre:

##### ***Mustafabad Centre***

- 28 pupils were attending classes regularly
- Learning of Urdu and English alphabets completed. Pupils have learnt to use the plus and minus mathematical functions, and to read sign boards and banners
- Book-2 started

- Pupils were speaking and reading Urdu perfectly. They were able to write their names and those of their parents
- A skill centre on a self-help basis is functioning at this centre and 15 pupils were learning stitching
- Pupils were trying to read the newspaper daily to be aware about the current situation

#### ***Youhanabad-2 Centre***

- Mobilization work is in action here to help achieve attendance and result target figures, because there were only 22 pupils at this centre.
- Most of the pupils of the centre were able to write their names in English and Urdu and to solve simple mathematical problems using the plus and minus functions
- Book-2 started
- Pupils were trying to read the daily newspaper
- An orientation session with this centre was conducted at a park (Gulshan Iqbal Park Lahore). Pupils enjoyed this arrangement.

#### ***Sutter Mill Centre***

- 35 pupils were attending classes regularly
- Students were taking a keen interest in studying
- Older pupils were also very active and helped in mobilizing the community for achieving the required number of students
- Pupils were able to work with English and Urdu words and to do plus and minus sums.
- Pupils participated actively in the orientation session

#### ***Dayal House Centre***

- Book-1 was completed but the pupils were not able to read and write very well.
- CMC was not actively working to support the teacher
- Pupil attendance was not regular.
- Some pupils have an unserious approach to their work, preferring games rather than learning.
- LEF has decided to shift this centre to another locality, possibly to Dehrr or Thokar niaz baig. Field visits are going on at the areas under consideration.

#### ***Momen Pura Centre***

- The centre has 23 pupils
- Book-2 has been started
- Most of the pupils were able to write their names and other words in Urdu and English
- Work on forming the CMC is in the progress
- Pupils at this centre are very active and take keen interest to learn about workers' rights.
- 19 students are learning stitching skills

#### ***Ahmad Town Centre***

- Regular classes have been held since June 15, 2013
- 32 pupils were enrolled at this centre
- Majority of pupils are factory workers and they have been very active and regular in attendance
- Book-1 completed and the pupils have been taught the English and Urdu alphabets. Their written vocabulary has been increasing

#### **4. Meetings with Central Management Committees**

In the period, 2 meetings have been held with the members of CMCs in all centres each month (one led by the Project Coordinator and one led by the teacher). These committees consist generally of 7 to 11 male and female members. The CMC in Momen Pura has 5 members only; the teacher is making efforts to increase the number of members. The basic purpose of these meetings was to discuss the problems and forthcoming plans for the centres. Discussions were made on the progress of the centres and what methodology should be adopted for mobilizing the community.

##### ***Decisions***

- CMCs will help the teachers to mobilize the community to increase the strength and interest of pupils
- CMC members will use more time to work on improving the progress at their centres.
- Teachers will look to CMC members for help and support, when the need arises, in any situation regarding the welfare of their centre and its pupils

#### **5. The inspection visit to the CLFC project by the STS representative**

The STS project leader, Mr. Jamal Bakhteyar paid an inspection visit to the project from 29<sup>th</sup> July to 4<sup>th</sup> August. The purpose of his visit was to get a general view of the project's progress and specifically, to assess the functioning of the centres.

At an introductory briefing, organized by LEF, the Project Coordinator presented a detailed overview of the current centres and a plan was made for inspection visits to each centre. Requests, originating from teachers and pupils, concerning the need for additional requirements at the centres, were presented at this meeting.

A meeting was held with the LEF finance manager to arrange for:

- Irons and stitching machines for the pupils at the Mustafabad Shahdara and Momen Pura centres, where the teaching of stitching skills is available.
- Installation of UPS (Uninterrupted Power Supply – battery systems that enable continued power supplies and thereby continued centre activities during power failures. These are common in Pakistan)

During his visit to each centre, Jamal Bakhteyar, who is himself a teacher in a Danish school, spent time engaging directly with the pupils, to see and evaluate their progress in spoken and written English and Urdu. He had also brought educational materials with him for distribution to every pupil, to show them appreciation and encouragement.

At the end of the project inspection visit, a debriefing was held to give a feedback from the experiences gained with suggestions to improve the functioning of the centres, such as:

- Exchange of pupils amongst centres
- Maintenance of a complete profile for all pupils and maintenance of effective links with previous pupils
- The involvement of teachers in planning, to overcome emerging problems.
- Visible signboards for centres
- Further improvement of the monitoring system was discussed.

## **6. Achievements:**

- Approximately 155 pupils are gaining reading and writing skills and participating in awareness courses at all centres.
- The pupils at all centres are capable of writing their names in Urdu and English.
- 15 orientation sessions have been conducted with these pupils on the importance of education, violence against women, gender issues and health and hygiene.
- The skill training centre for stitching at Momen Pura has completed its first session and started the second.
- The skill training centre for stitching at Mustafabad centre has begun its first session.
- The skill training centres at Momen Pura and Shahdara Mustafabad are functioning on self-help basis.
- All the teachers are regularly engaging pupils in debate forums for discussion of actual and current topics, concerning their own lives, social issues and political issues.
- Despite challenges such as lack of appropriate locations for the centres, targets for finding sufficient numbers of pupils were achieved, due mainly to good team work.
- Attendance and active participation at the orientation sessions have been significant in enhancing knowledge and self-confidence amongst pupils.
- Records of present and past pupil profiles have been completed. These will be extremely useful because most pupils live in rented accommodation and change their addresses according to requirements often dictated by job-seeking. Using these profiles will help us to keep in contact with them and enable a follow-up of their participation in the project.
- 3 pupils at the Yohannabad centre have got employment in the Metro Bus Company, after completing and gaining certificates for the 6 month CLFC course. 3 more from this centre got employment at the Children's Hospital.

## **7. Challenges**

- Lack of suitable places to replace the Dayal House centre.
- Mobilizing communities regarding the importance of literacy costs a lot of time and effort. Likewise maintaining the numbers and interest of pupils.
- Regular meetings with CMC members are difficult due to the differences in the members' working hours.
- Poor pupil attendance regularity, specifically that of home based and factory workers (due to their bad working hours and overtime demands in certain periods, such as during the EID festivities)
- Lack of engagement amongst some CMC members.

## Annex A

### Orientation Sessions

| Centre Name                 | Total Orientation Sessions | Total Participants | Female | Male |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------|--------|------|
| Shahdarah Mustafabad Centre | 4                          | 120                | 70     | 50   |
| Youhanabad Centre           | 3                          | 90                 | 82     | 08   |
| Moman Pura Centre           | 3                          | 98                 | 94     | 4    |
| Sutter Mill Centre          | 2                          | 65                 | 0      | 65   |
| Ahmad town Centre           | 1                          | 30                 | 0      | 30   |
| Dayal House Centre          | 2                          | 45                 | 45     | 0    |