

Activity Report

“Community Literacy and Facilitation Centres in Lahore”

January – March, 2014

Introduction

Labour Education Foundation (LEF) and its work

LEF, formed in 1993, is implementing various projects to promote labour rights. Its aim is to organize, capacitate and advocate workers about their rights and provide informed input to trade unions and the various civil society organizations for promoting workers’ rights.

In cooperation with STS International Solidarity (STS), the Danish NGO partner organization, LEF has implemented the project “Community Literacy & Facilitation Centres in Lahore” (CLFC) at 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:

1. Examinations and result ceremonies
2. Shifting of centres
3. Orientation sessions
4. Monitoring visits
5. Teachers monthly meetings
6. Central Management Committees
7. Seminar
8. Pupils participation
9. Achievements

Details of Activities

1. Examinations and result ceremonies

Examinations were held In January 2014 at the Yohannabad-2, Sutter Mill, Momen Pura and Ahmad town centres, under the supervision of the Project Coordinator. The examination at the Haronabad Dehrr was held in February 2014 to allow the pupils to complete their syllabus, delayed due to the late start of the centre. The examination at Mustafabad centre was held in December 2013. Examination schedules and the question papers were prepared in cooperation with the teachers and the Project Coordinator; they were delivered to the centres on the actual examination day.

The exams were followed by result ceremonies at the six CLFC centres in January and February. 180 pupils took the examinations:

Sutter Mill 44; Ahmad Town 30; Yohannabad 222 (6 pupils from this centre could not attend as they had moved to their villages); Haronabad Dehrr 29; Momen Pura 28 (one pupil from Haronabad Dehrr and 2 from Momen Pura were absent, because they had also moved from the local areas). Certificates were awarded to those who had passed and prizes were awarded to the pupils with first, second and third positions.

2. Shifting of three Centres:

The period of January to March has been allocated to the dissemination of information about the start of the 2014 session and for mobilization. Mobilization work was carried out in new areas as well as existing areas. Door to door visits were made and meetings were held by the teachers and the Project Coordinator. 400 leaflets containing information about the centres were distributed and eye catching informative flex banners were displayed in six areas.

Jamil Park centre started in February (replacing the Mustafabad Shahdra centre) at the request of labourers in this area. As mentioned in the 2013 annual report, the low enrolment figures at Mustafabad Shahdra could not justify keeping it open for 2014.

Waqar Azeem, the teacher at Sutter Mill centre has chosen to resign because he has moved to another city. Before leaving, he proposed the area of Taj Garh as a possibility for a new CLFC centre. The LEF team visited it and conducted meetings with factory workers, home based workers and daily wagers who want to study. This was satisfactory and has led to Taj Garh being a replacement for Sutter Mill.

The teacher at Momen Pura reported that there were not enough pupils to ensure further enrolments. LEF decided therefore to move another locality where people had already requested the establishment of a centre. The area of Karbath was found suitable and meetings were held with domestic and home based workers, who have shown interest in gaining reading and writing skills.

3. Orientation sessions

Orientation sessions are an essential part of activities for improving the pupils' knowledge about workers' rights, to promote communication skills and to increase their self-confidence. In this period, thirteen orientation sessions have been held. Their basic purpose was to highlight the overall situation for workers; gender issues; importance of education; existing legislation; the weak implementation of this legislation and to start a debate amongst workers on relating these issues to their situation. The following topics were covered:

- Labour rights
- Importance and practicalities of forming and organizing trade unions

- International women's day

These topics were chosen by teachers during their monthly staff meetings. The pupils were helped to prepare and conduct these sessions by themselves. At the orientation sessions, pupils discuss topics in a participatory manner and then LEF staff supplement with eventual points missed by the pupils. These sessions were characterized by stimulating and excited discussions amongst the participants. Their view is that they are of great use and fulfil a real need.

4. Monitoring visits

In this period 12 monitoring visits have been carried out: to examine teacher performance and the progress of the centres. At the same time efforts to mobilise pupils have been made to awake their interest and to ensure high and regular attendance figures. During March, teachers were out and about to mobilise potential pupils for enrolment to the 2014 session.

5. Teachers' monthly meetings

Objectives

- Building and maintaining the smooth running of the centres
- Sharing of ideas to improve performance
- Identification of ways for solving problems
- Following a common strategy to meet the objectives
- Mobilisation for the next session

Agenda

- Progress of the centre
- Functioning of Centre Management Committees (CMC)
- Examination schedule
- Improvement aspects
- Hurdles and complications in motivating the local community
- Planning for activities
- Mobilising the community for the upcoming session

5.1- Teachers Reports

3 teachers' meetings have been carried out at the LEF office. Six teachers, the Project Coordinator and Social Mobiliser attended the meetings. Each teacher was asked to present the centre report using a brief report pattern. These are the summarized reports from each centre:

Youhanabad-2 Centre

- Revision prior to the examination was completed and examinations were arranged in mid January 2014
- 22 pupils from this centre took exams and all achieved a pass grade
- The result ceremony was held at the end of January
- The session for 2014 will be initiated at the end of March
- Regular contact between the teaching staff and the local community to enable identification and selection of pupils for the next session
- LEF and its CLFC project was introduced to the pupils
- Courses for learning the Urdu and English alphabets are started

Sutter Mill Centre

- 44 pupils took the the examination and all achieved a pass grade with good marks.
- The result ceremony was held in February

Haronabad Dehrr Centre

- 28 (out of 29) pupils took exams at the end of February
- The result ceremony was held in March.
- Surveys are conducted by the teacher, on a regular basis, amongst pupils who have been active earlier, to promote the new 2014 session
- The 2014 session will be started in mid April
- Meetings have been held between the Project Coordinator, the local community and CMC members to ensure the target for the centre can be met

Momen Pura Centre

- 28 pupils took exams
- The result ceremony was held at the end of January
- The stitching class has been completed

Ahmad Town Centre

- 30 pupils took the examination and achieved pass grades
- The result ceremony was held in February
- Community members and female pupils from this area have been requesting LEF to start a CLFC for females only. Meetings have been held with the home based workers on this issue and resulted in a decision by LEF to go ahead with plans for a female only centre

Jamil Park Centre

- A class for 20 pupils was started originally and this number has now increased to 27
- LEF and its CLFC project was introduced to the pupils
- Courses for learning the Urdu and English alphabets are completed
- Classes for teaching stitching skills will be started on self-help basis from April.

6. Central Management Committees

From January to February, 9 meetings have been held by the Project Coordinator with members of the CMCs at all the centres. The CMC generally consist of between 7 and 11 men and women members. The basic purpose of the meetings was to discuss present problems and forthcoming plans for the centres. Discussion topics include: progress at each centre and what steps should be taken for mobilising local communities for the coming sessions. CMCs help LEF to spread the word about the CLFC centres, to mobilise potential pupils for coming sessions and hold meetings in their areas

At meetings held in new areas, people have been informed about the objectives, work, roles and responsibilities of CMC members in relation to the CLFC. In these new areas, people have shown that they understood this concept and have been willing to form the CMC, as soon as possible, for the improvement and better implementation of the project.

7. Seminar:

Women Cultural Mela (Festival)

Working Women Development Foundation, in collaboration with LEF, organized Women Cultural Mela at Karbath on 19th March 2014. Approximately 850 women, men, and young people enjoyed the cultural Mela for the promotion of peace and culture. Pupils from the CLFC centre and the students from government schools participated. The International Women's Day was celebrated at the Mela, which started with an introduction to LEF, the CLFC project and the history of the International Women's Day.

Cultural activities of the Punjab, such as: Bhangra, Gidha and Bolian, were presented. This was a grassroots level activity and was an initiative for conveying the message of the workers that they are gaining the strength to struggle for their rights. All those attending enjoyed the Mela in the same way as they enjoy the Eid festival – not least the pupils from the CLFC centre.

8. Pupils Participation:

Faiz Peace Festival

Faiz Ahmed Faiz was a revolutionary poet of Indo-Pak for whom progressive people organize a festival each year to pay tribute to this late revolutionary poet. This year it was held on 16th February in the Open Air Theatre at the Jinnah Garden. Over three thousand people attended, amongst those groups coming from amongst the workers, the civil society, progressive political parties as well as 78 (33 women and 45 Men) CLFC pupils, who participated in order to raise awareness about progressive thinking, social peace and justice and to enjoy instrumental and vocal performances. The programme was divided into two parts: a poetry recital session and a musical session.

9. Achievements:

- The pupils at all centres are capable of: writing their names in Urdu and English; reading utility bills, shop sign boards, street names and different types of banners such as those that disseminate information about social and political activities.
- Examinations and result ceremonies have been held at the six CLFC centres.
- The session for stitching skill training at the Jamil Park centre has been started on self-help basis.
- Despite challenges such as the lack of appropriate locations for centres, the targets for finding sufficient numbers of pupils has been achieved, due to good team work.
- Two female pupils from the Momen Pura centre have gained admission to state and private schools where they can receive regular schooling. One female pupil will study a 9th class syllabus, in order to take an exam privately.
- Three female pupils from Haronaabad Dehrr have been enrolled in a government school and two were enrolled at a private school for regular studies.
- 15 pupils from Yohannabad-2 centre have received training in the following skills: stitching, beautician, welding, electrical and IT, from the Don Bosco, New Life Ministry and Christian Services Society, who work in this area.