Program for Empowerment of Girls and Eradication of their Illiteracy

The General Objective of the Program: The eradication of illiteracy and the empowerment of girls in the governorates most in need of such a Program.

1. The Program Objectives:

- Eradicating the illiteracy of 1000 girls under the age of ten who are out-of-school, the male brothers and young mothers in every governorate.
- Combating poverty and providing jobs and income to 80 of the families of new graduates of girls and young mothers in disadvantaged rural areas that are most in need
- Building the capacity of 80 new graduates on establishing rapport, planning, management and participation in the development of poor rural and local communities and their empowerment
- Opening 80 classes for illiteracy eradication in the homes of facilitators or in schools or in NGOs.
- Creating an environment conducive to learning, communication and hope among the girls in the villages most in need.
- Raising health awareness and the provision of health services for 1000 students and their families in each governorate and linking between health and literacy as a means for the empowerment of facilitators and girls.
- Raising the awareness of adolescent health, reproductive health and rights due to the girls. Also, combating the diseases prevalent among adolescents such as anemia and parasites.
- Combating female genital mutilation, early marriage and violence against girls and domestic violence. Supporting girls successful in the eradication of illiteracy to join preparatory schools in formal education.
- Linking this project with the other programs of NCCM.

2. Time Period:
January 2008 to December 2008

3. Geographic Distribution:

5 Governorates, in the more needy marakz. These governorates are Fayoum, Minia, Assuit, Sohag and Aswan.

4. The Targeted Groups:

- Illiterate girls less than 18
- Their male brothers
- Young mothers

5. Accomplishments:

The following is a presentation of the number of students and attendance and success rates in the final examination in the different governorates.

The program has been successful in:

- Eradicating the illiteracy of 3890 girls and boys under the age of 18 of the total number of 4062 students who attended the examination. Note that the number of students enrolled in classes at the beginning of the project was 5040 male and female students.
- The percentage of those who did not sit for the examination was about 20% this year for several reasons including the delay in the commencement of the program and that it coincided with the harvest and also the lack of an economic employment alternative for the children in poor families being targeted by the program.
- The number of male children was 138.
- The success rates ranged between 84% in the governorate of Minya, 97% in the governorates of Aswan and Fayoum. The ratio stood at 90% and 91% in the governorate of Sohag and Assiut respectively, at a relative average of 92%.
- Jobs and a monthly income were provided of the total number of 345 families of the new graduates. The target is to provide the same services to 400 facilitators
- Over the last two years, 20 facilitators were trained in the governorates of Assiut and Aswan to the open classes for illiteracy eradication by using the computers. The facilitators and the students whose number is 200 students were able to use of computer competently even though it was the first time for the two categories, facilitators and students, to use the computer.
- The facilitators after training in NGOs were capable of covering various areas of development.
6. The Executive Partners with the NCCM:

- The more needy of the local communities
- New female graduates
- Localities
- Higher universities and institutes
- The General Organization for the Eradication of illiteracy and for Adult Education

7. The Role Of NCCM

- Planning and sharing in implementation
- Training
- Sharing in follow-up
- Funding

8. Challenges and Available Opportunities:

- A family's poverty and its inability to provide the real cost of education, which was raised by the cost of private lessons which the disguised ransom requested from children, is a major reason for the child to leave school and infiltrate into the labor market.

- The cost of transportation – despite its being minor – is another reason for the difficulty of the girl and boy children to continue in education.
- Many parents in remote communities in some governorates refuse to let their daughters use public transportation even to places that are relatively close.

- Eradicating illiteracy classes is a preparatory year to transition from the family institution to the school institution in pre-transition from the institution, in other words the transition from one school of thought to another which is completely different

- The cost of teaching girls to read and write is 200 pounds, and the program provides jobs and a monthly income for the families of facilitators. The program is one of the most profitable programs with the highest return.

- The provision of a meal in any form the most important needs of girls students.
• It is not possible to dispense with non-formal education in planning for the eradication of illiteracy or replacing by formal education. Until it is possible to provide the cost of the construction of schools, boys and girls will remain illiterate.
• Attention to the program and its support by other projects of the Council should be considered a paramount necessity.

9. Related programs:
• The Program to Fight Poverty
• Adolescent Health Program
• Female Genital mutilation Program

10. Success stories:

Success stories of students attending illiteracy eradication classes for in Aswan Governorate:

"My name is Asma Sayed Ahmed. I am 13 years from the village of Nejj Al- Hegab, East of El-Gabl...Do you know where it is?
I left school after the second year of primary education because of the circumstances of my father and the small family income. The opinion of my father was that education for me was not necessary because I am a girl. So I left school and cried every day when I saw my colleagues go to school every morning, but to no avail. All my friends succeeded and moved on to preparatory school, while I remained status quo. I very much want to continue my education. I read a lot of magazines and I keep record of the time television series are projected. but my father cannot afford to pay for my school fees, private lessons and clothing.
Then I heard that an eradication of illiteracy class of uneducated girls and school drop-outs will be opened by the National Council for Childhood and Motherhood. I looked for Miss Rasha Mohammed Abdel-Azim, and I asked her what I needed to do to join the class. She told me that needed a copy of my birth certificate which I got for her from my father. Only then, did I feel that I was joining school one more time like all my colleagues and I realized my dreams. The classes began and I was joyous when the miss handed out to us the books and notebooks and a pencil and rubber. Later, she taught us how hold the pencil and write with it. And I knew once again how to read all the letters and words and everything the Miss gave us. After this, the Miss told us that we will learn how to use computers. We were all very happy as this was new to all of us. Frankly, I had never seen a computer or sat in front of one. I was frightened and I thought of leaving the class, but the teacher told us that it was very easy and all we need to do is concentrate with her and learn from her and that it doesn't matter if we make mistakes, until we finally learn. At this moment I felt that there was true concern for me and my peers in the class. And we did in fact learn how to find the letters on the computer, how to open the computers and how to find the lessons and I sat for the exam at the end of the year and succeeded and I passed. God willing, I plan to continue my education in the preparatory stage, but I am still expecting that you help me get my eradication of illiteracy certificate."
My name is Fatma Abed Salem. I am 10 years old. I come from the village of Abu Khrit (Otaiba). Did you ever see it before? .. I didn't go to school and my father made me stay at home because in our family girls do not get an education and only the boys go to school. This tradition is not true of my family only but of the whole village. When I heard that a class for eradicating illiteracy will be opened by the NCCM in our village and that it could be in any home of the girls who want to join. I asked my father if I could join and he said 'yes.' I asked about Miss Fatma and I signed my name with her. I was very happy when I was given books, copybooks, pens, pencils and colors. I was afraid the first day in class, but the Miss preferred to chat with us until we felt she was like a sister to us and that she wants to teach us and that Mother Suzanne Mubarak planned to teach all the girls in Egypt. Now I know how to read well. When I first joined the class I knew nothing at all because I had never gone to school but now I know how to read and write. I cannot describe my emotions … at first it was like I was blind and incapable of seeing anything … Now, Thank God, I can see, read and understand everything. God bless all those who taught me and helped me and God Willing when I get the degree I will join preparatory school and will complete my education and become a teacher so that I can teach the girls of my family and all the girls of my village because knowledge is light and so no one can fool us and make us sign on forfeited document.

Success stories of a facilitator teaching illiteracy eradication classes

Fatima Abdel Basit Hassan is a facilitator from the village: Iniba (Wadi Khrit): Ever since I was a student in school and I love volunteering and social work, particularly work with girls, whether special needs or illiterate, because I think that these groups are more worthy than any other interest group. When we started on the illiteracy education and empowerment of girls project started two rounds before, I speedily tried to work as a facilitator in the classes of the project and thank God I passed the personal interview. Following this I attended a 15 session to prepare us to work as teachers. We then met with Dr. Hoda El Tahawy who explained to us the goals of the project and the reasons for implementing them and she asked us to work for the sake of these girls and we must adopt their problems in the eradication of illiteracy and we all promised to do so. Wadi Khrit Village was selected as it is inhabited by Arab families who don't care about educating their daughters as dictated by customs and traditions of the tribe. I met the Head of the tribe and explained the offer. After a long discussion, he finally accepted with the exception that the girls of the tribe are taught in the homes of other girls and don't ever venture outside to schools or NGOs. I started to record the names of the girls and I managed to register a class of 17 girls who genuinely desired to learn and I saw this in their seriousness in bringing their birth certificates and their asking when we will start the study sessions. The current session started in mid-January 2008 after the training session for us the facilitators. I was surprised that all the girls do not know how to read or write or even know how to hold the pencils and I felt frustrated because these girls need a double effort. But I set teaching them as a challenge to myself I would meet with determination and I wanted to prove myself and to perform my message and to do something in my life I would always be proud of before my girls and before society... and with determination and the help of God and when I saw the real desire in the eyes of the girls and their desire to learn reading, writing and arithmetic I was encouraged even more. Without exaggeration, I spend a very, very long time after classes and after study time which is attested to by the supervisor and the families of the students and whenever there is a response from the girls I feel a sense of success and excellence and how happy I am when I saw the girls
who did not know how to read and write, learn to write the alphabets and then read words, then sentences and then pages and then lessons and then become aware of the numbers, reading and writing them and arithmetic operations such as adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing. That day I felt that I had succeeded and felt proud that I had done something that made me feel my value in life.

How I wish from God that I will perform this role for many years and I am willing to do it as part of the Project or otherwise as voluntary work and not be paid for it as the real remuneration is when I see a girl read and write after she had been illiterate.

**Ghada Hamid Fathi** is a facilitator from the village: Abu-El-Rish. When I was a child I wanted to become a teacher, but circumstances stood in the way of my realizing my dream. I tried very hard to find a job but failed and I decided on my own to teach the girls and young boys of my neighbors who had not gone to school to read and write. And then I thought that I can invest my desire in educating the illiterate as a voluntary, un-structured and individual effort and I was able to implement this idea with my relatives and Thank God they learned to read and write and when I learned later that there was a project I was very pleased and submitted my papers and Thank God, I passed the personal interview and practical tests.

I gathered the girls in the target age group of 6:18 years and I prepared a class and began to teach them to learn alphabets and numbers. When they had learned the basics we began to work on the computer, but the situation was initially difficult for the girls as they didn't have the courage or confidence to sit in front this body which is unknown to them and after a brief period during the introduction of lessons on the computer screen, the girls acquired some confidence. I took advantage of this opportunity and taught them how to hold and how to control the mouse. This took much effort from me and from them until they learned to control their hands. From hence, I was happy and it was the beginning of the real practical education of these girls and the elimination of their illiteracy through the use of a computer step by step. The girls became attached to the class and became keen to attend. They also became attached to me.

The number of girls enrolled in the class was ten, all distinguished themselves, each girl better than the other and I was overwhelmed by a feeling that I have realized part of my dream to be a teacher and to fight for a national cause towards my girl sisters who had not been lucky enough to have an education because of social or economic reasons. I made a promise to my self to endorse this issue and I'm looking forward to it after I saw the significant success after the tests and the great success of my girl students. I do not know how to describe my feelings, but I am happy and my conscience is at peace.