

Mothers' Union Literacy & Development Programme (MULDP)

March 2009

Celebrating the success of the last five years, the national collaboration in Burundi, increased financial opportunities in Malawi and access to further education in Sudan

Evaluation

Over the last five years, Comic Relief in conjunction with Mothers' Union members have together jointly funded the MULDP. During September and October 2008 and January 2009 an extensive evaluation of the MULDP took place in Burundi, Malawi and Sudan respectively.

The evaluation was undertaken by Nite Tanzarn, the same external consultant that was used in the 2006/2007 evaluation. Nite travelled to and spent time with literacy circles, accredited learners, facilitators, Literacy Trainers, Diocesan staff and other interested organisations in 11 out of 12 Dioceses with the programme.

- Women's profile in the community is improving and more women are accessing positions of influence in society;
- Community ownership of the programme and increasing acceptability by the men;
- Improved agricultural production;
- Learners empowered to develop personal and community initiatives related to issues such as health and hygiene, gender inequality, women's rights, income generation, and HIV/AIDS; and
- Women being equipped to challenge the attitudes and practices of society and men that have led to their marginalisation and subordination.

Achievements



The evaluation demonstrated that across the three countries:

- Disadvantaged women and men are becoming literate and numerate;
- Partnerships and cooperation between women and men are being promoted and gender relations being transformed;
- Improved gender awareness and a growing commitment to the promotion of gender equality within communities;
- Women are participating in household decision-making;

Great achievements indeed!

National Collaboration



In Burundi the MULDP has worked hand in hand with the National Literacy Service since the beginning of the programme in 2000. This partnership has enabled Burundi to develop a national accreditation level that ensures that all learners in either the MULDP or the national literacy programme achieve the same level of literacy and get a nationally recognised certificate.

The National Literacy Service has also really valued working with MULDP and the Literacy Trainers as they share lessons learnt especially with regards to methodology which is helping to ensure best practice is kept to and programmes are community owned and totally participatory.

Illiteracy is still a huge problem in Burundi, but as the two programmes work side by side even more communities are now being given the chance to become literate and numerate.

Financial opportunities



MULDP is significantly contributing towards female economic empowerment. In Malawi in particular, where there are good credit facilities, accredited learners are now gaining access to small loans and starting business enterprises. Before the programme began operating, it was the common view that a woman who practices business was a prostitute. MULDP has now helped to change this opinion and mind set as communities now realise the huge importance women can make to their family livelihood as well as that of the wider society.

Further education



MULDP in Sudan is enabling accredited learners to access formal education and

achieve their school leaving certificates. Across Juba, Khartoum and Renk, learners, after receiving their MULDP accreditation certificates, now go to enrol into government run evening classes. Now literate, most learners are able to immediately join class five instead of class one which is the equivalent of the first year of primary school.

This is a huge sense of achievement and accredited learners relish the chance to finally gain their leaving school certificates – a dream they did not ever imagine would come true.

Throughout the communities in which the programme operates, education has now become a priority. Whether it is making sure all their children attend primary, then secondary school or for them as individuals to continue learning new skills and knowledge.

"In the past when my child was absent from school I wasn't worried as I didn't think education was important, but now I insist that my children always go. I am not shy and because of my learning I am happy to share my views." Jennifer, accredited learner, Ndirande Makata literacy circle, Southern Malawi.

Beneficiaries



There are now over 54,000 learners involved in the MULDP of which almost 40,000 have now become accredited literate and numerate and are engaged in either income generation or other development activities.

Although at present Mothers' Union does not have another donor like Comic Relief, we are committed to supporting the programme throughout 2009 and ask for your continued prayers to help us secure another donor to ensure thousands more learners will be given the same opportunity.