



Fast Facts

Country: Nepal

Duration: May 2002 to December 2005

Implementing UN Agencies: UNESCO

Other Implementing Partners: Non-Formal Education Centre, Ministry of Education and Sports; National Resource Centre for Non-Formal Education

Budget: \$490,698.18

Key Words: Access to education; capacity building; community empowerment

BACKGROUND

In the latter half of the 20th century, Nepal undertook a radical expansion of its formal education system. In 1954, there were 8,500 students in the nation's 321 primary schools; in 1997, more than 22,000 schools educated about 3 million children. Despite these achievements, dropout rates were high and the overall literacy rate remained low, especially among girls and the rural poor. Girls were often deprived from education due to obligations in the household and yet

there was significant demand to provide education that could reach everybody, regardless of gender or geographic location. To fill this gap, an alternative to formal education was considered through community learning centres (CLCs). Under this approach, communities were provided with a central location where people could meet, share knowledge and information, and participate in literacy courses and vocational skills trainings.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The project aimed to strengthen the social and intellectual capacities of community members in Nepal by (i) introducing and expanding CLCs in deprived communities; (ii) encouraging community

ownership over the CLCs; and (iii) establishing a district-wide network of CLCs to promote CLC policy development at the national level.

BENEFICIARIES

The project was implemented in the Doti, Dadeldhura and Humla Districts, located in the middle and far western regions of Nepal and benefited approximately 18,000 community members, of which 50 per cent were women. Through the establishment of new CLCs in the communities, these beneficiaries participated in vocational training and awareness-raising programmes, as well as received legal assistance. Moreover, by engaging in cultural preservation

activities, library services, and small-scale community development projects, the CLCs contributed to community empowerment and thus indirectly benefited the entire communities. Since women in particular participated in the CLC activities and were actively involved in the management of the CLCs, they were able to increase their status and raise their profiles within their communities.