

## EL SALVADOR



### PEACE PROGRAMME FOR WOMEN VIA RADIO DIFFUSION IN A POST-CONFLICT SITUATION

(Non-formal Education)

#### BACKGROUND

At the end of a bitter 12-year civil war, the 1992 Chapultepec Peace Accords mediated by the United Nations prompted a broad and extensive post-conflict peace-building programme for national reconciliation in El Salvador. UNESCO's contribution to the latter was through a culture of peace programme with women as the focal population for human rights, social and environmental awareness building. In a tough political environment, the primary ingredients for quality planning required a creative imagination and courage to venture forth as a force for social cohesion between rival factions.

#### Project Funding

The project received funding from the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and was executed by UNESCO. However, despite growing popularity of the project among the beneficiaries, the project did not receive renewed commitment by donor groups due to a change in funding priority to another part of the world.

#### Project Objectives

The overall objective of the radio programme entitled "Support to Radio Services in Non-Formal Education, Training and Information on Women" was to constitute a common goal for the country in the interest of bringing all rival factions and parties together. The management, the content and direction of the project was in essence a peace-building process with women as the focus group across the board.

The programme topics aimed at reaching and raising women's awareness vis-à-vis their rights and creating a social and educational environment conducive to the exercising of those rights. A total of 40 local, regional and national radio stations broadcast the programmes on a daily basis, and each station was monitored and evaluated through a questionnaire by community correspondents.

The positive impact of the radio shows is largely attributed to the built-in evaluation system that helped to track the reaction on the ground on a regular basis thus permitting feedback data to improve the show. Even though women and women's issues were on top of the programme agenda for non-formal education, men soon took an active interest in the discussions.

## **EVALUATION**

Although the success of this project as a potential peace-builder cannot be entirely measured through standard measurement tools, indications on the ground weigh heavily in favor of attitudinal change by the people and the power of the radio programmes in bringing feuding factions together. Prior to project implementation for example it was even difficult getting the people to work together. They were hesitant and reticent. In an environment rife with mistrust, project objectives and outcomes were made very clear so that questions such as "who would own the project or the equipment?" were no longer a major preoccupation of the participants. Suspicion soon gave way to collaborative work once a common goal in the interest of all beneficiaries was made clear.

The project has greatly improved the image of the radio stations themselves, as they were previously victims to factional discord. They are now perceived as active partners of the government in addressing national concerns.

***Monitoring, validation and evaluation*** formed an important component of the project design. As such, the expenses related to the evaluation were foreseen from the very outset, and accordingly incorporated into each activity. Major evaluations, such as tripartite reviews (Government, Donor and UNESCO) and external evaluations were budgeted separately.

A team composed of professionals from NGOs, the radio and the government produced the radio shows. The initial project goal was to broadcast from 14 stations. This target however was surpassed well before project completion when 40 stations were willing to broadcast the show free of charge.

**Pre-project activities:**

An investigation was carried out about the knowledge, attitudes and practices of Salvadorian women before deciding on the structure of the radio shows.

Prior to project implementation, the structure of the radio shows was validated several times with radio stations, the beneficiaries and radio experts until a final design was accepted. During the course of project implementation, the design was adjusted and adapted according to changing external factors on the ground (following observations or requests from the radio stations or beneficiaries).

***Content of radio programmes:***

The content of each show was developed through a process involving research and discussion by the technical and production team. Scripts prepared for each segment followed a format compatible with radio production, which includes dramas, interviews, testimonies, illustrated conversations and articles.

UNESCO provided training for the voice, radio formatting, gender focus, etc. The 40 radio stations were furnished 2 recorded shows each which were broadcast on different time schedules according the discretion of the station.

***Community correspondents:***

were responsible for collecting interviews, testimonies, and news from all over the country. They ensured that the information collected was of interest and relevance to the audience at the grass roots level.

At times the evaluation is done in a workshop format with the participation of all project personnel.

***A Technical Committee:***

comprised of a representative each from

- a. women NGOs, b) community radio broadcasters,
- b. participating governmental institutions, and
- c. a UNESCO representative. They were also the decision-making body with the responsibility of ensuring project objectives.