
**Exploring programme issues in meeting the right
to adult basic education in fishing communities:
The case of Kalangala district**

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Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to two special people in my life, my girlfriend, Naome Bazinzi, and my mother, Alice Namakula, who were a great source of inspiration and supported me all through the MA programme. I thank you so much for your prayers and best wishes during my stay in Harare.

List of abbreviations

CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
FAL	Functional adult literacy
FGD	Focus group discussions
REFLECT	Regenerated Freirean literacy through empowering community techniques
MSWL	Masters in Women's Law
NORAD	Royal Norwegian Development Agency
PLA	Participatory learning approaches
SEARCWL	Southern and Eastern Africa Research Centre for Women's Law
UHDR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
KAFIA	Kalangala Functional Adult Literacy Instructor's Association
UN	United Nations
BIDA	Bufumira Island
UZ	University of Zimbabwe
KADFA	Kalangala District Farmers Association
WCHR	World Conference on Human Rights
ICEIDA	Icelandic International Development Agency
UPE	Universal primary education

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Adult Basic Education and Training Bill (South Africa)

The Constitution of Uganda

Conventions, protocols and declarations

African Charter on Human and People's Rights (OAU, 1981)

Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (United Nations, 1979)

Fourth World Conference on Women Platform for Action (United Nations, 1995)

Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women

56th Session of the General Assembly Commission on Human Rights (United Nations, 2001)

International Covenant on Economic and Social Cultural Rights (United Nations, 1966)

Universal Declaration of Human Rights, (United Nations, 1948)

World Declaration on Education For All (World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF and UNDP, 1990)

Convention against Discrimination in Education (UNESCO), 1960

Definition of terms – adult basic education (ABE):

In this dissertation adult basic education will refer to education which is aimed at adults who have had no schooling or very little schooling. 'Adults' in this case are persons above the age of 14 years who have missed primary schooling. The core elements of adult basic education are literacy and practical arithmetic. Other than this, it includes vocational skills for livelihood improvement.

Legal and policy framework on adult basic education

The drive for ‘education for all’ is an international one. It is informed by the fundamental belief that education needs to be promoted, not only as a fundamental human right but also as a driver for development. According to UNESCO (2005) education is indispensable for sustainable development and poverty eradication. It is needed to promote economic growth, create employment opportunities and foster civic participation, greater tolerance, peace and international dialogue.

Specifically for adult basic education, the World Bank report (2001) provides six concrete reasons to justify the need for a renewed engagement with adult basic education (ABE) emerging from researches all over the world. The report justifies that:

- *Adult basic education and community schools can mutually reinforce each other.* In many governments and agencies there is support for making primary schools more community-based. Adult education not only generates support to adults for sending children to school, it can also give adults the skills and confidence to involve themselves more in local schools. It can also be developed as an outreach function of a community oriented school. Thus, adult basic education and primary education can mutually reinforce each other in school but there is a need for applied research to draw lessons as to how this can best be achieved.
- *Adult basic education serves the poor and improves gender equity.* Adult basic education is important for an education strategy that seeks to be pro-poor and to redress social injustice. It is self-targeted upon the poor because it is sought by those with no schooling or very limited schooling. It has a special role to play in alleviating gender inequity. Adult basic education programmes nearly always find it easier to attract females than males. This is true even in those few developing countries where girls outnumber boys in school (for example, in Botswana). The gender gap is especially great in the poorest countries with the least developed school systems; and these are the countries which have the most urgent cause for developing adult basic education.
- *Adult basic education empowers and can help build a broad-based civil society.* If education is to serve as a means of empowerment for the disadvantaged then it is essential that *adults* be reached with a type of education that helps turn ‘subjects’ into ‘citizens’ and equips prospective leaders with appropriate skills and networks. A consistently reported positive impact of adult basic education is that it builds a greater sense of self-efficacy, the confidence to act on a wider range of social arenas than before and greater readiness to formulate and express one’s own views. This empowerment function makes adult education especially important for the development of a broad-based civil society. The rise of such a civil society is generally held to be a precondition for a government that is held more accountable and responsive to the interests of the poor. Thus adult basic education is a means to good governance in keeping with poverty-reduction goals. Historically, adult education has been closely connected with the growth of broad-based democracy in many countries. One could expect that more participatory forms of pedagogy (at least a style of teaching which treats learners with respect) are likely to be more conducive to the development of individual and group efficacy. But it also seems that ‘empowerment gains’ are a robust result from adult basic education projects using quite diverse pedagogies.

- *Adult basic education can improve family health.* A large number of studies show that literate mothers are better able to protect their children's health. One such study by Sandiford *et al.* (1995) from Nicaragua found such effects after 10 years, making use of large samples and careful controls for other conditions affecting the results.
- *Adult basic education removes barriers to entrepreneurship and can improve livelihoods.* Oxenham *et al.* (2002) review research on adult basic education and improved livelihoods. Literacy and numeracy are widely perceived by adult basic education learners as a protection against being cheated and manipulated in the market place (see also Okech *et al.*, 2001). Attempts to quantify the gains in life-time income which would be due to participation in adult basic education are yet to be made and there is recognition that other inputs are also needed (for example, access to credit and vocational skills training) for tangible short-term income benefits to occur. But for micro-entrepreneurs it is also clear that lack of literacy and weak numeracy are major impediments to success.
- *Adult basic education is needed for progress towards education for all.* In many African countries the pace of primary school expansion, even if stepped up considerably, will fall far short of what is required in order to reach international targets for human development. Primary school expansion will not on its own suffice to reach the education for all target of halving the rate of adult illiteracy by 2015. Besides, under education for all, the demand for basic schooling from illiterate and semi-literate adults must be taken seriously in its own right, now that the necessary role of adult education was clearly recognized at the World Forum on Education for All in Dakar in 2000. Schools for children and basic education for adults are complementary services with potential for synergy, rather than merely being activities that compete for scarce resources. Adult learners become more supportive of their children's education. This finding is consistently documented in many countries.

Indeed human rights perspectives press the right to education at the heart of human rights. The emphasis is that by virtue of being humans, individuals have inherent, equal and inalienable rights. These rights form the foundation of freedom, justice, peace and dignity for all in the world. One of such rights is the right to basic education. The right to receive education is found in the provisions of article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights thus: 'Everyone has a right to education.' It further asserts that education shall be free, at least in elementary stages and notes that elementary education should be compulsory.

Similarly, article 13 of United Nations Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights adds that:

'The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to education. They agree that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. They further agree that education shall enable all persons to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.'

These provisions create the following conditions to fulfill the right to education:

- (a) That fundamental basic education shall be intensified for those who have not completed primary education;
- (b) That ignorance and illiteracy will be eliminated.

Additionally, the Convention against Discrimination in Education (UNESCO, 1960) aims at eliminating any practices that deprive persons or groups of people access to education.

What has been done at international level to ensure increased access to adult basic education?

At both international and regional level, a series of processes have been undertaken to ensure the realization of the provisions in these instruments. As regards access to adult basic education, the most prominent ones include the United Nations Literacy Decade: Education for all Plan of Action, (UN Plan of Action, 2002). The 56th session of the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution 56/116, *UN literacy decade: education for all* on 19 December 2001 in which it proclaimed the United Nations Literacy Decade for the period of 2003–2012 towards the goal of education for all. The proposal for a United Nations Literacy Decade was brought forward at the 54th session of the UN General Assembly (A/RES/54/122) and was endorsed at the round table held at the World Education Forum.

Dakar 2000 reiterated by the United Nations General Assembly Special Session Geneva 2000. The proclamation of the United Nations Literacy Decade by the 56th Session of the General Assembly was welcomed by the Commission on Human Rights in its resolution 2002/23 of April 2002 on the right to education.

Resolution 56/116 recognizes:

‘...literacy is crucial to the acquisition by every child, youth and adult of essential life skills that enable them to address the challenges they can face in life and literacy represents an essential step in basic education which is an indispensable means for effective participation in the societies and economies of the 21 century’ (UN, 2001).

The resolution also supports the concept of *literacy for all* in its reaffirmation that this is at the heart of basic education for all and that creating literate environments and societies is essential for achieving the goal of eradicating poverty, reducing child mortality, achieving gender equality and ensuring sustainable development, peace and democracy.

As an action to achieve the right to basic education, the United Nations Literacy Decade was an integral part of education for all, providing both the platform and impetus for the achievement of the six goals of the Dakar framework of action (see below), which also reflect commitment to achieving adult basic education.

The six Dakar goals: Framework of Action

- 1 Expanding and increasing compulsory early childhood care and education, especially for vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
- 2 Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls and children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free primary compulsory education of good quality.
- 3 Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.
- 4 Achieving a 50 per cent improvement in the level of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education.
- 5 Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls’ full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.
- 6 Improving every aspect of the quality of education and ensuring their excellence so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills .

Source: Dakar Framework of Action, Paragraph 7

Literacy for all runs through all these six goals but in this particular case I am looking at goals 3, 4, 5 and 6 which directly apply to adult basic education. Goal number 6, for example, re-emphasizes the issues that are in the other five goals. Indeed the acquisition of stable and sustainable literacy skills by all ensures that people can actively participate in a range of learning opportunities throughout life. Literacy for all is the foundation of lifelong learning for all, a tool for empowering individuals and communities. Based on these goals and perspectives, a new vision for adult basic education has emerged.

Locating the research to international vision for literacy and adult basic education

In the rapidly changing world of today's knowledge society, with the progressive use of new and innovative technical means of communication, literacy requirements continue to expand. In order to survive today's globalized world, it has become necessary for all people to learn new literacies and develop the ability to locate, evaluate and effectively use information in multiple manners. Fishing communities and other marginalized groups need literacy skills just as any other adult who has not had an opportunity to acquire formal education.

Literacy policies and programmes today require going beyond the limited view of literacy that has dominated in the past. Literacy for all requires a renewed vision of literacy (UN, 2002).

The vision for the literacy decade situates literacy for all at the heart of the quest for education for all. Literacy is seen as central to all levels of education, especially basic education, through all delivery modes – formal and non-formal. Literacy for all encompasses the educational needs of all human beings in rural and urban, north and south, those in school and those out of school, adults and children, boys and girls, men and women.

Literacy for all at international level is envisaged as addressing the literacy needs of individuals as well as families. Literacy is in the workplace and in the community, as well as in the society and the nation, in tune with the goals of economic, social and cultural development of all people in all countries. Literacy is envisaged to only be effectively achieved if it is planned and implemented in local contexts of language and culture. To meet the learning aspirations of local communities and groups of people in all countries, literacy must be related to various dimensions of personal and social life as well as development. Thus literacy efforts must be related to a comprehensive package of economic, social and cultural policies cutting across multiple sectors. Literacy policies must also recognize the significance of mother tongue in acquiring literacy and provide for literacy in multiple languages where necessary.

In the above vision of literacy, priority groups are particularly those in the countries of the south. According to the United Nations (2002) the following population groups are particularly noted:

- Non-literate youth and adults, especially women who are not able to acquire adequate skills to use literacy for their personal development and for improving their quality of life;
- Out of school children and youths, especially girls, adolescent girls and young women;
- Children in schools without access to quality learning so that they do not add to the pool of non-literates.

The United Nations Literacy Decade Plan of Action emphasizes that of the above populations 'certain disadvantaged groups need special attention, in particular, ethnic and linguistic minorities, indigenous populations, migrants, refugees, people with disabilities, aged people and pre)school children – especially those who have no access to early childhood care and education.'

Expected outcomes

The United Nations Literacy Decade on Education for all Plan of Action envisaged outcomes that provoke all the national governments, international agencies and stakeholders in the field of adult basic education to take action and ensure that by the end of the literacy decade it yields the following outcomes:

- (a) Significant progress towards the Dakar goals 3, 4 and 5, in particular a recognizable increase in the absolute numbers of those who are literate among:
 - (i) Women – accompanied by reduction in gender disparities;
 - (ii) Excluded pockets in countries that are otherwise considered high literacy rates;
 - (iii) Regions with greatest needs, namely, sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and E-9 countries;
- (b) Attainment by all learners, including children in school, of a mastery level of learning in reading and writing, numeracy, critical thinking, positive citizenship values and other life skills;
- (c) Dynamic literate environments, especially in schools and communities of the priority groups so that literacy will be sustained and expanded beyond the Literacy Decade.
- (d) Improved quality of life (poverty reduction, increased income, improved health, greater participation, citizenship awareness and gender sensitivity) among those who have participated in various educational programmes under Education for All.

Problem statement

Amidst international debates on elementary education and ‘education for all’ and international recognition that the right to education means making education opportunities accessible to all citizens, including youths and adults, new considerations are needed for education and the right to education to extend beyond the formal system of education and address the education needs and rights of adults and all marginalized groups, including fishing communities. Questions and uncertainty still surround how to make adult basic education services accessible to all, especially to disadvantaged groups, such as fishing communities, particularly the women, as envisaged in the Dakar goals of action.

From an experiential point of view, I was interested in conducting this study because of my past professional orientation in the field of Adult Education. Before I enrolled to pursue the Masters in Women’s Law, I lived and worked with fishing communities. During my stay with these communities, a lot of questions seemed unanswered on how adult basic education programmes were contextualized and implemented in this area. Questions such as: what happens to those living far from services when resources are not enough to extend services there and how different should a basic education programme be to attract the participation of these communities? Are we, as basic education programme planners, taking note of these characteristic differences when we design programmes? I then used this research opportunity to explore further how these questions influenced people’s access to and participation in the basic education programmes from an outsider’s point of view. Largely I wanted to uncover the lived realities and the obstacles to meeting the right to adult basic education in fishing communities.

Two basic education programmes are implemented in Kalangala district in Uganda although, at organizational level, the names for these are different since one is called a programme (the functional adult literacy or ‘FAL’ programme) and the other is called an approach (the REFLECT approach). In this dissertation I limit my interrogation to the face value relationship between them which is that they are both interventions aimed at empowering participants with basic skills for livelihood improvement. I will refer to these two programmes (FAL and REFLECT programmes) hereafter as basic education programmes.

The Functional adult literacy (FAL) programme

The 'Functional adult literacy' programme, popularly known as FAL, is a government adult literacy programme coordinated by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD). The programme uses the primers and teacher's guide for literacy instructors. It runs on the philosophy that whatever adults learn should be applied in their homes. The programme incorporates life skills training into its instruction. According to Katahoire (2001), one of the aims of the FAL programme is to help learners establish the usefulness of literacy and their new knowledge by combining instruction with actual application to a range of activities. The approach used is called 'integrated' which covers integration of subject matter, integration among service providers and integration of learning and life. Implementation of this programme in Kalangala is under the office of community-based services (CBS), daily monitoring is done by community development assistants (CDAs) and actual implementation is done by FAL instructors who have organized themselves into an organization that provides literacy services called the Kalangala Functional Adult Literacy Instructors' Association, better known as KAFIA. Financial support for the implementation comes largely from an international organization from Iceland, ICEIDA.

The REFLECT programme

REFLECT is an approach to adult basic education used by two local organizations in Kalangala (Bufumira Islands Development Association and Kalangala District Farmers' Association). It is a radical new approach to adult literacy and empowerment developed through field experimentation in Uganda, Bangladesh and El Salvador (Cottingham *et al.*, 1998). The approach seeks to build on theoretical frameworks developed by Paulo Freire but provides a practical methodology by drawing on participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques. An important element with this technique is that there are no textbooks, no literacy primers and no pre-printed materials other than a facilitator's guide that is produced locally, preferably with the input of the facilitators themselves. The approach combines the paths of both language experience and the Freirean approach. Here local groups are encouraged to assess local development needs and to plan for themselves some local development activities. The discussions from this process are used as a basis for writing down the words of the participants and for choosing generative words.

The participants in many REFLECT programmes learn literacy skills through words drawn from their participatory rural appraisal (PRA) activities. The two local organizations in Kalangala use this approach for social mobilization and assessment of local development needs, in addition to literacy with both financial and capacity building support from a British-based aid agency called ActionAid International.

Scope and limitation of this study

The scope of this study is delineated to its application and usage in Kalangala district and its comparison with similar issues in other fishing communities elsewhere, particularly in Uganda. This study will show that fishing communities have different and ever-changing characteristics which have a direct influence on their access to and enjoyment of human rights, despite the availability of these services.

The number of respondents interviewed as individuals and groups was relatively small. To this extent I acknowledge that a similar study with a bigger sample of respondents might unveil more programming issues than those highlighted in this study or even reveal different issues from the ones uncovered in this study.

Problems encountered during the study

Transport

Getting to Kalangala, on one of the days I had planned for starting the research was virtually impossible. I travelled from Kampala to Bukakata, hoping to travel the same day and start the research. I however spent the whole day waiting for a ferry since apparently the fuel provided by government was finished. We had to share the cost (50 US cents each) of transport to facilitate the movement of the ferry or else we risked not travelling that day. This was just a small insight into how hard it is for services to get to this part of Uganda, especially on other smaller and less populated islands. There is no inter-island transport to move from one island to another. In case of an emergency, one has to hire a private boat to go from one island to another at a cost of US\$100. This is totally unaffordable for the people on these islands. Due to transport problems, I missed out on interviewing respondents from some of the distant islands and to this extent I acknowledge that my research missed out on the perspectives of the people in these places and how they are affected by the adult basic education programmes.

Secretarial services

Kalangala district does not have electricity and during the research I missed out on the opportunity to photocopy some important information, such as certificates of participants in adult basic education programmes, which would have greatly helped to enrich this research.

The structure of the dissertation

This dissertation is divided into four chapters. Chapter one provides background and research-related information on the study, chapter two covers the research methodology and tools used during the research process and how these tools guided in gathering and documenting the findings for the study. Chapter three is divided into sections. In each section I present what I found out from the research, based on the research assumption, discuss the findings and compare them with similar research, perspectives and theories from a related research. I identify an emerging theme from those established by the research and related studies, then come to an initial conclusion. Similarly, chapter four based on this ongoing discussion draws up a comprehensive conclusion and recommendations.

The research and the discussions in this dissertation were informed by a range of perspectives which guided the conceptual base for an in-depth analysis. These include the women's law approach, gender and development theory and the human rights framework for the analysis of the research findings.

Methodology

This chapter explains the research assumptions, questions and objectives which guided me in conducting the study. In the same chapter I also explain the various tools and instruments that I used from the preliminary session of research project design, through the actual research to analysis and presentation of the findings. It includes both the theory and analysis of how this study was conducted.

The broad objective of the research was to examine the emerging programming issues in the delivery and management of adult basic education programmes and to understand how these programming issues influenced people's access to and participation in these education programmes in fishing communities. The basic assumption was that it is these emerging issues that often influence people's access to and participation in these well-intended programmes for the poor. It was therefore important to adopt a flexible but consistent research approach to facilitate the collection and analysis of data guided by the assumptions I had about basic education programmes in fishing communities.

Overview of research assumptions

The basic assumptions that guided my research process emerged from my experience and interaction with fishing communities. These informed the development of the objectives for the research and the design of the questions that were used in the focus group discussions and individual interviews with the different categories of respondents. The assumptions were that:

- People in fishing communities have limited access to adult basic education services because they are geographically isolated.
- Access to and participation in adult basic education programmes in fishing villages are influenced by whether one is male or female.
- The law and government policies have been inadequate in ensuring that adults exercise their right to basic education.
- The planning and curriculum design of adult basic education programmes significantly influences access and participation in adult basic education programmes for the different categories of adults in fishing communities.

Research questions

- 1 Does geographical isolation of the district and islands in any way influence people's access to and participation in adult basic education programmes in Kalangala?
- 2 Does being male or female (gender differences) influence in any way people's access to and participation in adult basic education programmes?
- 3 What role have the law and government policies played in ensuring that men and women in fishing communities exercise their right to adult basic education services?

- 4 Does the planning and curriculum design of adult basic education programmes affect their management and delivery in fishing communities?

Overall research objectives

The main aim of the research was to examine the emerging programming issues in the delivery and management of adult basic education programmes and to understand how these issues influenced people's access to and participation in adult education programmes in fishing communities.

Specific objectives

- 1 To investigate how geographical isolation of the district influences people's access to and participation in adult basic education programmes in fishing communities.
- 2 To explore how gender influences access to and participation in adult basic education programmes for men and women in fishing communities.
- 3 To examine the role of the law in influencing access to and participation in adult basic education programmes in fishing communities.
- 4 To explore the administrative and curriculum related factors influencing access to and participation in adult basic education services.
- 5 To examine how the provision of adult basic education can be enhanced and spread through out the islands of Lake Victoria.

Applying the women's law approach

I used the women's law approach as the overall underlying approach in this study because of it being multi-disciplinary and grounded. Stang Dahl (1987) defines the women's law methodology as a cross-disciplinary and pluralist approach which calls for a rather free use of material wherever it can be found.

Unlike many researches I have conducted in the past, this research was unique in nature; it was difficult to predict particular outcomes of planned activities or the very direction of the research itself. I needed a flexible research approach to guide me during the research process, a research approach which was accommodating enough to capture the different emerging issues during the research without rigidity. The women's law approach was useful in this respect.

The women's law research approach provides a holistic approach to research. It is a woman-centred legal discipline which takes women's lived experiences and life situations based on birth, care and domestic work as the starting point for the analysis of women's position in law and society (Bentzon *et al.*,1998).

This grounded approach to research has been described as an interactive process in which data and theory, lived reality, perceptions and norms are constantly engaged with each other to inform the researcher on what data to collect and how to interpret it. According to Glasser and Strauss (1967), this is an approach to analysis of empirical data whose aim is to generate a theory of learning rather than starting from an hypothesis.

The flexibility of this approach helped me to improve on three areas of the study. Firstly, I was able to revise my research topic when I found out on the ground that a similar study had already been conducted in the area. Secondly, I went to the field with an open mind, not biased by my own assumptions and some of them actually did not hold, as I had assumed they would. I was able to revise my assumptions to accommodate the new issues about people's access to and participation in adult basic education programmes that kept emerging. Thirdly, still during the research, I realized that I had left out one key category of respondents I had to interview. These were community members outside the adult basic education programmes. I realized that my research would be much richer if I interviewed respondents outside these programmes to get an outsiders' point of view about

these programmes. I further learnt that I had left out two important variables of age and marital status. As we shall see in the findings chapter, I was surprised to see that there were variations in responses of people according to age and marital status despite the fact that they were in the same sex categories.

Gender and development

Gender is a concept that refers to the cultural interpretation of the biological differences between women and men. On the one hand, it entails an examination of men and women's active roles in society. On the other, it examines the ingrained social ideas about femininity and masculinity. What men and women do and how they behave and interact together with cultural, social and legal interpretations of gender differences constitute a gender system (Kamau *et al.*, 2001).

This framework guided me in two ways while conducting the analysis. Firstly the framework facilitated a deep interrogation of the different forms of inequality and their interconnectedness with political and economic factors, including social structures. For example, during the research I was able to examine the factors that perpetuate inequality in access to and participation in adult basic education programmes and also to relate these factors to economic and social structures within fishing communities.

Using the gender and development framework, I was also able to see how laws and policies on adult basic education can facilitate the shaping of opportunity structures for women and gender arrangements. In the research findings I explore the discussions that emerged on how people's views could shape gender arrangements, enforce laws that discriminate, discourage access and participation or somehow reinforce discrimination.

The human rights approach

Human rights discourse is a powerful tool within international law to condemn those state acts and omissions that infringe core notions of civility and citizenship. To assert that a particular claim is a human right is to vest it emotionally and morally with a special order of legitimacy. Access to adult basic education services is a core and basic notion of civility and citizenship. This human rights principle guided me to go beyond the body of laws and legislation that protect the right to adult basic education (moving beyond *de-jure* protection) to understanding the issues that actually impinge on access (*de-facto*) discrimination. For this reason, I used the human rights perspectives mainly in doing analysis and comparing field-based emerging issues with both the international, regional and local legal frameworks that protect the right to education. This framework of analysis helped me to establish the gaps between the laws and legislations on paper with lived issues (practice) that influence the enjoyment of the right to basic education despite legislative protection.

Semi-autonomous social fields

Participants in the adult basic education programmes are part of society. In society, many bodies generate norms that affect men and women and their decisions to participate or not to participate in basic education programmes. There are normative systems other than the formal law that affect people's lives. State law is not the only body that affects male and female behaviour and decision making; semi-autonomous social fields are equally or more important.

This methodology helped in understanding how decisions made within the family, church and community grossly influence people's decisions to participate or not to participate in adult basic education programmes in spite of the legislative protection.

Research methods

The research design combined data collection directly from the respondents and from field observations, through individual and focus group discussions; these were my primary sources of data. The secondary sources included both library and internet searches to gather information on related research.

Individual interviews

I used a series of research methods to reinforce each other. It was clear, for example, that if I wanted to know about people's opinions and feeling about adult basic education, I had to speak to them individually. The data gathered would then reinforce the data from the focus groups. I interviewed respondents at different levels. These included community members, local leaders, participants in the adult basic education programmes, managers of non-governmental organizations as well as local government officers.

Table showing categories of respondents interviewed

Category	Women	Men	Total
Individuals interviewed	12	8	20
Participants in ABE programmes	10	10	20
Facilitators / Instructors	2	2	4
NGO managers / Civil society in ABE	1	3	4
Government (Local and Central)	1	2	3
Grand Total	26	25	51

Focus group discussions

Overall, there were six focus group discussions. The guide used for the group discussions is in the appendix at the end of the research report. I developed focus group discussion guides to facilitate the discussion process with respondents. These comprised mainly open-ended questions to start discussions. Participants were left to discuss issues on adult basic education related to administration and management.

- 1 Three focus groups of mixed FAL and REFLECT participants were held at Semawundo Landing site. In the first group of 15 participants, there were both men (6) and women (9) respondents while the other two groups were sex specific. The first was a group of eight women and the second was a group of six men. As a person who used to work with these groups of people, I found no difficulty in facilitating a discussion on these issues. This gave me an opportunity to look at the issues that the people were raising on access to and participation in adult basic education programmes from an outsider's point of view. I was then able to use the theoretical and conceptual frameworks acquired during the Masters in Women's Law programme to engage the emerging issues and finally come up with this comprehensive report.
- 2 Another three focus group discussions were carried out at Bufumira. One group involved both FAL and REFLECT participants with four men and eight women. Respondents in this group had established community structures and registered as Bufumira Horticulture REFLECT circle. The other two were sex-specific, one included six women and the other included five men. This categorization helped in providing three perspectives to the research – the general view on particular issues which were emerging from the research emerged from the mixed groups and then these would be triangulated with sex-specific categories to establish how each group viewed the issues and how different men's views, for example, were from the women respondents' views. Semawundo Landing site represented the case of an urban setting while Bufumira represented the case of a rural setting. The emerging issues were compared under the rural–urban divide.

Observation

During the time I conducted the research, many of the learning centres were not sitting but I was still able to look at the learning centres and some of the projects that had been implemented from active group actions.

I was also able to look at supported projects from the local government and both local and international donors, as well as the areas that had not yet accessed such programmes. A critical narrative of the issues is presented in the chapter on the findings.

Secondary data

Secondary sources of research information and data proved instrumental before, during and after the research. They included district profile records, related research findings, international regional and local human rights and legal instruments, as well as writing and research from other scholars. This kind of information not only helped to shape my research but also provided insights and perspectives that broadened my analysis.

Findings discussions and implications

This part of the study presents the findings according to research assumption, discusses the findings from the perspectives of law, policy and theory to identify emerging themes that can be used to initiate interventions. It tries to establish a relationship between theory and practice by comparing and contrasting them based on the study findings.

This forms the basis for conclusions and recommendations drawing from the inferences from the study.

Geographical isolation and access to adult basic education services

This assumption was tested during the study to establish its validity.

It was revealed that at least 26 out of the 64 islands which are inhabited had some form of adult basic education services. However, the assumption held for 38 islands which had people but no such programmes. The geographical isolation issue did not manifest as earlier assumed for the 26 islands since the adult basic education centres were within reachable distance. However the assumption held for 38 of the 64 islands which did not have these basic education programmes. For the 26 islands which had some form of basic education, access and participation was open to all who wished to participate. Findings reveal that geographical isolation was not a determinant for access on the 26 islands since the learning centres and circles were reachable, however for the 38 islands the assumption held strongly – many would-be beneficiaries were missing out since they lived on islands with no such programmes.

This revelation from the study reinforces the dominant view that there is spatial disparity within the system of educational provision. In most developing countries, there are communities without schools or any form of education due to irregular patterns of education location caused by a combination of physical difficulties and historical legacies. Article 10 section (e) of CEDAW stipulates that state parties should take appropriate measures to ensure that the same opportunities for access to continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at closing the gap in education between men and women.

Research studies conducted in other countries have shown that providing quality relevant education to the increasing number of children and adults, especially those in geographically isolated places, is both an opportunity and a challenge. Koech (1999) advises that it is a challenge because of the persistent discrepancies in economic growth which limit government's budgetary allocation to meeting the growing demand for education and because of the increasing population. This mismatch has delayed the achievement of the 'education for all' goals. However, there is growing commitment by governments to basic education for all as a fundamental human right and as a beneficial investment for social and economic development, especially in developing countries.

The research further revealed that although geographical isolation was not prominent in influencing access to basic education services on the 26 islands cited that had basic education programmes, there were other issues that influenced men and women's participation in these programmes. The findings from the study showed, for

example, that some of the learning centres where the participants sat during their FAL or REFLECT classes had poor facilities. At some centres, such as Bufumira Horticulture Farmers, the classes were held in primary schools on weekends but the seats were low and uncomfortable for the elderly men and women. Other classes at places like Bujumba REFLECT circle were conducted under trees which discouraged some of the potential participants from attending the classes.

Vosko (1994) advised that a typical classroom set-up, with chairs in rows and lectern in front is probably the least conducive to learning that the human brain could event. It announces to anyone entering that the name of the game is transmission and that the proper role of the student is to sit and listen.

According to Knox (1986), a critical component of the programme planning process is context analysis. To him, context analysis considers the social trends and issues, the resources and mission of the providing organization and how it influences the process of helping adults to learn. He suggests that by combining the data of the various influences with information found through the needs assessment process, feasible learning objectives can be agreed upon between the educator and the learners. Brookfield (1986) and Long (1993) suggest that as adult educators it is imperative that we become aware of both societal and organizational influences and their impact on the institutional process, curricula, programme format and evaluation standards.

Context analysis concerns the influences of the setting in which learning occurs as well as where learners are likely to apply what they learn. As an educator it is important to understand the impact of these influences on the learner and on the instructional process. Adults have perceptions of standards, expectations and opportunities that are directly related to their purpose for learning.

The imbalance between the 26 islands with adult basic education services and the 38 islands without means different opportunities for access to these programmes for men and women on islands with or without such programmes. While it is easier for men and women on islands with such services to access them, it is not easy for men and women living on islands without these services to access them since this involves travelling by boat to another distant island to find these services.

The second issue emerging from the research also points to the need for awareness of both societal and organizational influences and their impact on the institutional process, curricula, programme format and evaluation standards. The complaints about the poor and in some cases the lack of structures where adult basic education programmes can be held has meant that a significant number of people did not participate because the institutional structuring and standard of the classes was not responsive to adult learning.

Uganda has ratified CEDAW so it is therefore incumbent upon the government to take appropriate measures to ensure that the same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy, apply to all men and women on all the islands. Government needs to recommit to the challenge of reducing imbalances in adult basic education, especially in fishing communities, as a beneficial investment for social and economic development.

Related to geographical isolation is the physical environment of the learning which should encourage adults to participate. Facilities should be attractive and comfortable to facilitate effective learning. There is need to re-explore the concept of community centres and their effective functioning as adult basic education centres in communities or mobilize the community to use local resources and construct new learning centres.

The role of the law and government policies

Education is the primary vehicle by which poor children and adults can lift themselves out of poverty. The exercise of the right to education is instrumental to the enjoyment of many other human rights, such as the right to work, the right to health and political participation. Lack of education as manifested by high illiteracy rates and low primary ratios constitute a dimension of poverty. Thus all poverty reduction strategies that countries pursue should give close attention to the progressive realization of the right to education (Schultz, 1994).

The goal of universal basic education in developing countries has largely grown out of recognition that it is important for equipping nations and individuals with the capacities and tools required to respond to the demands of changing economic structures. In particular, the fast-changing patterns of employment and skills requirements in the global economic system make multiple demands on education systems. Basic education is also recognized as providing the means to social development ends, such as improving health conditions and status, enhancing political awareness and participation and reducing fertility levels through facilitating access to information and services. In addition to its instrumental value, the intrinsic value of education is also emphasized, particularly on how it increases the agency and choice of individuals. This translates into their perceptions in securing better quality lives and prospects for themselves and future generations, in addition to wider socio-political environments. Investing in education is seen as one of the most fundamental ways through which nation states and their citizens can work together to achieve long-term development goals and improve both social and economic standards of living. Schultz's (1994) research findings indicate that high levels of education and development are positively correlated.

To achieve the goal of universal basic education, countries have to develop and apply national legislation and policies which, by methods appropriate to circumstances and to national usage, will tend to promote equality of treatment in matters of education and, in particular, encourage the education of persons who have not completed their primary education and the continuation of their education on basis of their capacity. This means that governments that are signatory to the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination in Education are required to take appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination in education, including by repealing, formulating and reforming laws and policies.

The study investigated the role of the law and government policies in influencing access to universal basic education.

The study revealed that Uganda's constitution (1995) protects the right to basic education and commits government to promote free and compulsory basic education under objective viii. This constitutional provision currently provides the framework for adult basic education in Uganda. In addition, Uganda is signatory to a number of international and regional human rights instruments that protect the right to adult basic education. However, the provision to promote free and compulsory education as enshrined in our constitution is not explicit enough to adequately address the different categories of people that need basic education in Uganda. Categories of people such as adult men and women, refugees, minority groups such as disabled persons and fishing communities may fail to get specifically targeted basic education programmes because of the generalized nature of the legislation on basic education.

At national level, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development has a functional adult literacy unit which is charged with coordinating the implementation of adult basic education programmes in the country. Actual implementation is however carried out by both the local government, under the Department of Community-based Services or by non-government organizations.

Findings from the research show a gap in translating the constitutional guarantee of the right to basic education into concrete realizable plans and goals on the part of adult basic education as opposed to for primary education. Unlike primary education which government has declared universal with a national policy direction and targets, adult basic education has not yet been declared universal. There is no policy framework to guide and regulate delivery and the unit responsible for coordinating the implementation is poorly facilitated (Okech *et al.*, 1999).

This finding is irreconcilable with article 4(c) of the Convention Against all forms of Discrimination in Education which provides that

‘... state parties should undertake to formulate, develop and apply a national policy which, by methods appropriate to circumstances and to the national usage, will tend to promote equality of treatment in the matter of education and, in particular, encourage and intensify by appropriate methods the education of persons who have not received any primary education or who have not completed the entire primary education course and the continuation of their education on basis of their capacity.’

According to UNDP (2003) any human rights based pro-poor education policy should ensure that the most vulnerable and marginalized groups in society have access, free of charge, to the most fundamental types of education, such as primary education, vocational training, literacy programmes and other forms of basic adult education. Unfortunately, as of the research period, Uganda did not yet have a policy on adult basic education to ensure that the vulnerable are catered for and to regulate delivery.

Secondly, at local level, the district local government oversees the delivery of adult basic education services under the community-based services office through community development assistants. The research however revealed that the Local Government Act, which guides service delivery at district level, does not have any provision stipulating adult basic education as a mandatory service.

The general lack of an adult basic education policy as at the time of the research potentially creates uncertainty at different levels. The research revealed, for example, that some participants who had received certificates in the FAL classes wanted to use these certificates to enter the formal system of education while others wanted to use the same certificates to stand for political positions in their villages.

The lack of a policy also creates uncertainty as to who is mandated to provide adult basic education services at local level. During the research I reviewed the Local Government Act but I found no provision that commits the local government to providing adult basic education services, yet community development assistants still provide FAL supervision.

Lack of an adult basic education policy has created the generalization of programmes. Specific categories of people, such as fishing communities, disabled people, refugees and other minority groups receive fewer specifically-targeted programmes.

While non-legislative interventions are important, legislative interventions are also equally important to provide a framework for advocacy for increased resources for adult basic education, regulating delivery to assure quality and specifying the parties responsible for delivery at different levels. The mode of delivery of adult basic education as it stands leaves out a number of vulnerable and marginalized groups, preventing them from exercising their right to basic education. During the literature review on adult basic education, I came across the South African Adult Basic Education and Training Bill. This Bill gives a number of insights and provides a framework for the development of our own country Bill that could help in regulating adult basic education.

The Bill was designed to regulate adult education and training and provide for the establishment, governance and funding of public adult learning centres. The Bill also provides for quality assurance and promotion in adult basic education and training.

Gender influence on access to adult basic education services in fishing communities

Efforts to eliminate *de-jure* and *de-facto* discrimination as well as the adoption of special measures to give disadvantaged groups access to adult basic education can best be understood at lower levels. My assumption of gender having a significant influence on access to and participation in adult basic education programmes was tested and generated a series of gendered lived experiences for both men and women. While some of the issues that influence the participation of men and women were related, others were totally different.

General issues influencing access for men and women

The biggest number of participants in either FAL or REFLECT as the basic education programmes in Kalangala were women, with varying ages. However there were a few men in the basic education programmes. This finding is indeed not surprising since research studies carried out elsewhere reveal that many women miss out on the opportunity to access formal education when they are young.

Ramya (2002), in justifying why women miss out on formal education, points out that the education of women in particular is seen as providing the key to securing inter-generational transfer of knowledge and is the substance of long-term gender equality and social change. Gender equity in access to health and education occupies a central place in the global policy discourse on human and social development. Gains made in women’s education as a result of global advocacy and donor pressure have been significant in some cases, however, more often than not these are fragile, vulnerable to economic and social environments and still struggle to catch up with male rates of enrolment and achievement. Achievements are particularly visible in the primary sector whereas in the secondary and tertiary sectors; there are still huge gaps evident, especially in sub-Saharan African countries.

Table: Gender differences in enrolment in Bufumira Island’s REFLECT circles

Location	Name of circle	No of males	No of females	Total
Semawundo	Semawundo R/ Circle	21	21	42
Bufumira	Bufumira Horticulture Farmers	15	22	37
Misonzi	Misonzi R/ Circle	15	25	40
Bugobe	Bugobe Twegate	07	18	25
Total		58	86	144

Source: ActionAid (2004)

The above table shows that most of the participants in the adult education classes were women.

The research revealed that although 26 islands had some form of adult basic education programmes running, there were other indirect barriers to accessing adult basic education services despite their availability. Interviews with women brought out different perspectives and issues related to access compared to interviews with men. An interview with Ms Madinah and Mr Lwanga clearly brought out some of these barriers.

Women’s empowerment

What emerged from the research was that women make up most participants in these adult basic education programmes. This implies that adult basic education programmes can act as important avenues for women’s empowerment and give them more control over their environments. This is looking from the perspective of integrating them with developmental and empowerment programmes to reach out to the women through development interventions.

Lack of time: the case of Ms Madinah and Mr Lwanga

Ms Madinah Nankya is 30 years old and has three children. Her story is typical of the experiences of many women who come to the islands of Lake Victoria to make ends meet. She separated from her husband who later died in 2000. Today she alone carries the burden of caring for her three children and meeting her family’s financial needs. Madinah has two small jobs on Semawundo landing. She owns a small papyrus thatched restaurant and she does fish smoking in the afternoons. During the interview she narrated:

‘I have never had an education but I would really love to. The problem is that I just can’t find the time to attend FAL. If I dare to close and go for the classes, not only will I miss that day’s income but my customers too may leave me and go to someone else, I can’t afford to hire someone to stand in for me because, as you can see, the business is still very small. My children expect me to put food on the table. If it were you, what would you do? I need these two businesses to survive – hopefully when one of my businesses grows I may abandon the other and spare time to study.’

When interviewed on how much she earns per day, Madinah maintained that although the earnings vary from day to day, her average income after deducting capital per day from both businesses is approximately 6500 (US\$ 3.50) but she says this without clarity. Her daily activities are compared with Mr John Lwanga's activities as a fisherman on the same landing site. John, like many men on the same landing site, works as a fisherman for a successful fish dealer who owns a fleet of boats and nets on Semawundo landing site:

'I am supposed to get 30 per cent of the total fish I catch. The rest is for the owner of the boats and nets but he provides me with the fuel I use every time I go fishing. These days the fish catches have greatly reduced. On an average day we catch around 30 kilos of Nile perch. Each kilo costs 1800 (\$1) we earn 54000 (\$30) from the total 30 kilos and mine is 16200 (\$9).'

Lwanga calculated with his calculator at the front of the fish display table where he has just sold his fish.

'Yes I have been to school but I dropped out in senior two to join my brother who was doing very well in the fish business here. I have no plans of going to school now, maybe in future.'

Daily activities profiles for Madinah Nankya and John Lwanga

	Ms Madinah Nanya	Mr John Lwanga
Time	Activity	Activity
6:00 am- 6:30 am	Wake up, wash up	Return to landing site from the lake
6:31-7:00 am	Rush to sell dry fish to boat going to kasenyi	Sell fish
7:00-8:00 am	Make tea, dress children for school	Dry fishnets
8:00-9:30 am	Hotel, make tea & peel food to sell	Relax at the landing site (free)
9:30-11:00 am	Serve customers breakfast & cook	Eat breakfast Sleep
11:00-12:00 pm	Press the <i>matooke</i>	
12:00-3:00 pm	Start serving customers lunch, eat and send food home to children.	Lunch
3:00-4:00 pm	Go to fish display table, buy remaining fish	Sleep
4:00-7:00 pm	Buy wood fuel, clean and smoke the fish.	Drink beer, visit friends, sometimes sleep
7:00-8:00 pm	Buy food to sell in the hotel, cook supper, bath and bath children	Go to cast nets
11:30-12:00 (midnight)	Go to sleep	Cast nets
12:00-4:30 am	Sleep	Sleep in boat to protect Fish from being stolen.
4:30-5:30 am	Sleep	Remove fishnets from water

Madinah's case study points out a huge gap, often unseen in adult basic education programme design. It shows that opening systems for access and participation is in itself not enough to guarantee access and participation in such programmes. It reveals that there are indeed other diverse forms of exclusion that need to be understood and addressed in the planning process. Many women interviewed referred to their multiple responsibilities of caring for the children and looking after the home as what stopped them from attending the adult basic education programmes.

This revelation echoes a related perspective by Ramya (2002) who advised that access, retention and participation are all pressing challenges which need to be understood by analyzing the socio-economic dynamics within the household. Knowles (1986) advises that there is need to undertake a thorough context analysis in the programme planning process. Context analysis considers the societal trends and issues, similarly Brookfield (1986) suggest that as educators, it is imperative we become aware of the influences of both societal and organizational pressures and their impact on the instructional process.

Emerging from the daily activities profiles is a new perspective that calls for a renewed view of adult basic education in the light of people's social demands for survival: people's struggle to earn a living. Although many people were interested in the adult basic education programmes, it was clear that struggling to earn an income to maintain themselves and their families consumed most of their time. However the story is different under the formal system of education. In this case, while the individual wants an education, they want it as long as it does not compromise their social and economic responsibilities. This development calls for reshaping the structures and framework in which adult basic education is delivered, to start from this lived reality if they are to attract greater participation.

Although women form the biggest chunk of participants in these programmes, my findings show that a lot more women who want to attend miss out on this opportunity because their husbands stop them from attending the classes. Interviews from women only focus group discussions with non participants in these adult basic education programmes revealed that some married women were stopped by their husbands from attending because their husbands feared that their wives would be promiscuous when they come to attend these programmes. During the focus group discussions respondents noted that some of the women who insisted on attending the adult basic education programmes would be beaten by their husbands or sometimes quarrel with them.

One way of discussing the effects of the interplay of norms between men and women and within the different fora is by employing an actor and structure analysis. By focusing on the woman and her relationships with men, with other women and with the society in which she is embedded, we may uncover the norms, expectations and social and economic forces which influence problem solving and dispute resolution (Bentzon *et al.*, 1998). When I employed this perspective, I realized that *de-jure* the structures and systems were open for men and women to access adult basic education services on islands where these services existed but *de-facto* the dynamics at household level of who gives approval to attend or not and the way men and women viewed these programmes were prominent in determining who had access to and participated in the programmes.

Emerging from the research points to the fact that merely opening the system for all to access and participate in is on its own not enough to ensure increased access. There is need to engage with and understand the household dynamics of decision making.

Gender-specific influence to access

The research revealed that indeed being male or female had a significant influence on people's access to and participation in adult basic education services in fishing communities. The respondents highlighted issues that were of social significance and that influence people's decision about whether or not to attend the programmes.

During the research it was noted that there are more women than the men in almost all the adult basic education programmes on the islands visited. When interviewed on why some people did not attend these basic education programmes, the responses varied according to sex.

Men

In Kalangala, fishing is the main economic activity. However fishing is entirely a preserve of men. The men do the fishing on the lake while the women cook for them at home or operate small hotels at the landing site to cook for the fishermen. When interviewed; the respondents noted that during the time the literacy classes start they are usually busy casting nets on water and cannot afford to attend the adult basic education programmes.

Other men noted during the interview that they feel challenged to study in these adult basic education programmes with their spouses and young girls in the same class. Others noted that some men are ‘pretenders’ – they do not want it known that they are illiterate. Attending adult basic education programmes would be clear testimony that they are illiterate and would expose the fact that they cannot read or write to the general public. Such issues highlighted by the respondents emerge from the failure in the initial programme planning process to take care of the context and characteristics of the different categories of people for whom the basic education programme is intended.

According to Knox (1986), a critical component of the programme planning process is context analysis. To him, context analysis considers the social trends and issues, the resources and mission of the providing organization and how it influences the process of helping adults to learn. He suggests that by combining the data of the various influences with information found through the needs assessment process, feasible learning objectives can be agreed upon between the educator and the learners. Brookfield (1986) and Long (1993) suggest that as adult educators it is imperative that we become aware of societal and organizational influences and their impact on the institutional process, curricula, programme format and evaluation standards.

Men, unlike women, go out on boats to fish and they earn more money compared to women. They therefore see basic education as adding no value to their livelihoods since they already have more money even without an education.

Mr Kyate (52) is a fisherman at Semawundo landing site and when interviewed about his views on enrolling on a basic education programme, he bragged:

‘Leave me alone – adult basic education? Why do I need an education at my age? What does a person who went to university have that I cannot get for myself? How much does he or she earn that don’t? We employ them hereto count and bank our money. I don’t have time to attend to such things.’

Literacy for all addresses the literacy needs of the individual as well as the family. Literacy in the workplace and in the community, as well as in the society and the nation, is in tune with the goals of economic, social and cultural development of all people in all countries (UN, 2002). In this context, literacy is envisaged as not only effectively achieved if it is planned and implemented in local contexts of language and culture but also help in fulfilling learning aspirations of local communities and groups of people in all countries. Similarly, adult basic education programmes structured in a top-down framework may fail to capture the participation of people like Mr Kyate.

Mr Kyate’s case raises the dilemma that faces many adult basic education programmes in developing countries. It points to the fact that to address learning needs like his, a bottom-up and flexible needs assessments or consultative process needs to be undertaken so that dimensions of personal and social life inform the planning of the learning process. The challenge however, is that many countries in Africa lack resources to undertake such consultative participatory processes. The United Nations (UN, 2002) points out that literacy must be related to various dimensions of personal and social life as well as to development. Thus literacy efforts must be related to a comprehensive package of economic, social and cultural policies cutting across multiple sectors. Literacy polices must also recognize the significance of mother tongue in acquiring literacy and provide for literacy in multiple languages where necessary.

Most of the issues influencing men’s participation in adult basic education programmes were linked to the structuring and curriculum of the programmes. Complaints such as the fear of studying with spouses, timing

and disorientation from participating in the basic education programmes, are largely a result of the failure to understand fishing community characteristics and how they impinge on the learning process or on the possibilities of a change in the characteristics of the learners due to a delayed learning needs assessment. Literature about adult basic education programmes presents a list of exemplary principles and characteristics which provide rich insights on addressing specific problems of individual adult learners and their learning needs.

Knox (1980), while relating to the character of an adult educator, suggests that an adult educator should possess three specific areas of knowledge: knowledge of content; knowledge of learners; and knowledge of methods. He argues that the personality of the adult educator should promote a sense of self confidence, informality, enthusiasm, responsiveness, and creativity. A similar study carried out by Apps (1981) found that the best adult educators were those who showed an interest in their students, possessed a good personality, had an interest in the subject matter, had the ability to make the subject interesting and were objective in presenting the subject matter and dealing with learners.

Knowles (1986) on the other hand identified seven principles of effective practice; he argues that their implementation should characterize the education. He refers to these as the seven components of andragogical practice (the art and science of helping adults to learn) and these components or principles suggest the type of skills and abilities a good educator or facilitator should possess. He proposes that a facilitator must:

- Establish a physical and psychological climate conducive to learning;
- Involve the learners in mutual planning of methods and curricular;
- Involve participants in diagnosing their own education needs;
- Encourage learners to form their own education objectives;
- Encourage learners to identify resources and devise strategies for using such resources to accomplish their objectives;
- Help learners to carry out their learning plans;
- Involve learners in evaluating their learning.

These characteristics summarize the key qualities that an educator must possess and both the technical and interpersonal skills that make an effective facilitator of the learning. This means that a proactive adult basic education programme would by priority consider the above principles as they relate to fishing communities while introducing and planning a programme.

Women

The research revealed that there is stigma from within the community which is associated with participation in such adult basic education programmes. The women noted that when one enrolls to attend these programmes, they are given humiliating names by the community, which discourage them from attending the programmes. Such names include *FALA* (this is community slang meaning someone who knows nothing) and such name-calling is the biggest obstacle for many women to attending these adult basic education programmes. The community, which should be supportive and motivational, instead perpetuates demotivation for women and reinforces female subordinate structures. Schuler (1992) points out that the social cultural, religious, ethnic or racial reference groups play a critical role in perpetrating certain forms of discrimination; discouraging through stigmatization and name calling of participants is one way of perpetrating discrimination in access to basic education.

The social ties associated with access to and participation in adult basic education programmes for married women is much more negative than that of unmarried women. There is a general community view that these programmes are meant for women who are not yet married or those who are divorced. The general community

assumption, especially in the rural parts of the islands, is that a married woman should stay home and take care of her children and the home and not 'waste time' in activities perceived as avenues for rumour mongering.

The stigmatization in access to basic education is a complex form of exclusion which remains a challenge. Ramya (2002), responding to these diverse and complex forms of exclusion, pointed out that a wide range of interventions have been undertaken in other countries to address related forms of exclusion of women. However, these have largely been aimed at providing incentives to promote girls' education in terms of supply of education and have focused less on creating the enabling environments at local level for women and girls to develop voice and articulate their choices.

The stigma associated with participation:

The initial planning of the adult basic education programmes did not envisage that there would be stigma associated with participation in these programmes. This stigmatization scares away many men and women. Although efforts have been made to popularize the programmes through the radio, there is need to rethink the framework in which adult basic education is delivered to fishing communities and dispel the stigma associated with participation before it becomes thoroughly entrenched.

Women also noted that unlike their male counterparts, for married women the decision to attend these classes or not largely depends on the approval of their husbands while men don't have to seek permission from anybody. They simply decide and if they want to join they do so without consulting anyone, including their wives.

The respondents also noted that HIV/AIDS has devastated and changed women's activity patterns, especially on landing sites. Unlike the men, women have to take care of sick relatives. It is even worse if the husband is the one who is sick, which is often the case, because on top of looking after the sick husband, the wife also has to find the money to buy food for the family.

Unlike on the mainland where people can supplement income with food from the gardens, here most people do not cultivate. The main source of income is from fishing and hotels. If the person who goes fishing is sick, then it is difficult for such a family to cope. For such a household, basic education is the last thing on their minds because they could hardly find time to attend the classes. Unless these programmes were adjusted to educate people about how to care for the sick and, if possible, provide food for the family.

Administration, curriculum delivery and management of adult basic education programmes

The success of adult basic education programmes depends largely on the planning process, the curriculum and how the programme is managed. It is however important to note that planning an educational programme is not a series of independent steps or processes but an interactive system. Under the assumption that the administration, curriculum delivery and management of adult basic education programmes influences fishing communities' access to and participation in these programmes, I explored the management, curriculum and administrative related influences to accessing and participating in such programmes.

Many theoretical bases are available to study adult basic education programmes. In my study, I used the different theoretical perspectives as presented by Norton (2000) (see table below) to examine the adult basic education programmes in the district of Kalangala.

Table: Basic approaches in adult learning

Progressive Education	Humanistic Education	Critical Pedagogy
Participatory approach Lifetime learning	Participatory approach Holistic idea to the betterment of society as a whole	Participatory approach stems from knowledge Experience of both teacher and participants Space for learners to speak
Challenges teacher-led, Subject-centred approaches Experience-based and a reciprocal learning objective is social change	Emphasizes self-directed learning and learner centred learning Humanism is the driving philosophy Self actualization	Discussion on how to introduce social change It is based on the understanding that power is unequally distributed in society
And interests of learners Educated individuals would in turn work for a better, democratic society Teacher is guide rather knowledge transmitter	Cooperative group learning, Develop individuals' effective and emotional as well as cognitive dimensions Develop self esteem	Based on class and economic structures. Learners' collective ownership, responsibility and control in programmes Personal change also promoted

Source M. Norton (2000)

The theoretical perspectives in the above table, when applied to the findings in my study, revealed a significant difference between theory and practice. The different approaches as presented by Norton (2000) reveal gaps between the principles, as envisaged by the theorists, and the actual practice. Mrs Walakira of Bufumira's commentary about what may happen through the procedures used in a basic education programme highlights this gap clearly:

'These people don't know how to protect the dignity of their learners. Currently when they have completed a particular learning level they give them exams. Whoever passes is given their results back with a certificate of attendance. However, if one has failed, their results do not come back and as you know some people they study with simply cannot keep quiet. They start laughing at everyone whose results have not come back, saying that they failed the exams and the rumour spreads in the whole village up to the husband and children. For some of us who want to attend the classes, when we hear such things we get discouraged from attending the adult basic education programmes.'

Assessment of learner progress and performance is an important part of the learning process. It helps the educator to determine if the participants in the learning activity reached their educational objective and desired outcomes. However this exercise needs to be conducted with respect for adults. Humanist approaches to adult learning call for a learning assessment which upholds the individual's self esteem and builds on the principles of the humanist philosophy which include, respect, human dignity and self actualization (see table above). Non-certification of participants who failed embarrasses them in the community and undermines their self esteem. An alternative method of learner assessment should be explored.

Under the FAL programme, a certificate of attendance is issued to whoever has passed FAL exams. What emerged from the research is that these certificates had created a false hope in the participants. Many participants thought they would use these certificates to enrol into formal education, stand for a political position in their community or use them to access job opportunities. Those who did not succeed became very frustrated and felt they had wasted their time participating in these adult basic education programmes.

Women have a lot of needs and responsibilities and when they undertake studies they expect some support through the learning programmes to implement what they have studied, however this does not happen. As Madina, in the Semawundo class, said:

‘After the classes people do not get to implement what they have studied. It’s true we want to learn reading and writing but merely meeting to learn “Aeiou” does not solve our day to day problems. Our problems are more than learning to read and write, contrary to what they think.’

In critical pedagogy, the learning is centred on how to introduce social change. Emphasis is put on promotion of personal change based on the understanding that power is unequally distributed. Supporting learners to learn what is beneficial in their day to day lives and, consequently, implementing what they have learnt is one way of introducing and promoting social change.

The research revealed that economic factors, especially in terms of poverty, was a major underlying influence acting against participation of both men and women but in this case indirectly. While it was free to participate in the adult basic education programmes for men and women, because the financing was already covered by the government and international organizations, it was evident from both the focus group discussions and the individual interviews that more would be able to attend if they did not have too many social and economic demands in their respective homes and communities.

Further still, even from the perspective of government and the financing institutions, coverage of the adult basic education programmes would be throughout all the islands if the resources would permit. Indeed it was clear that there were a lot of administration and management obstacles that emerged from economic challenges. For example, because of finances, it was extremely difficult to provide post-literacy resource centres on each island to separate the learning classes for the young and the old or the women and the men (although it was clear that these categories had different learning needs) or even to support initiatives for the learners to apply what they had learnt.

Difference in learning needs between older men and women and young men and women

During the interview respondents pointed out that the methodology and content of instruction for the adult basic education programmes was inappropriate and inconsiderate of the learning needs of men and women over 40. Older students complained about their inability to implement what they learn from the adult basic education programmes and under both programmes there were generational disagreements about the learning process. Older participants complained that the young participants laughed at them during classes. On the other hand, the younger people complained that the over 40s were slow and conservative and wanted whatever they said to be adopted.

Pre-prepared learning materials

Respondents pointed out that the adult basic education programmes under FAL use materials that are already designed and follow a particular curriculum; this leaves little room for participants to inform the content of the programmes and contribute to remodelling the learning in these programmes. They pointed out that the instructor’s manual already spells out what should be taught and how it should be taught. They said that some of what is taught is actually irrelevant to their realities.

This finding about the functional adult literacy curriculum and materials shaping the learning process differs considerably from the original aim of the FAL programme as captured by Katahoire (2001):

‘...the aim of the FAL programme is to help learners establish the usefulness of their knowledge through combining instruction with actual application to a range of activities.’

Referring to the approach as that of ‘integration’ – integration of subject matter, integration among service providers and integration of learning and life.

Similarly, my findings show that although a learning needs assessment was conducted at time of the initiation of the FAL programme, due to the fluid nature of the fishing communities, especially on landing sites, where there are regular migrations, the learning needs have changed, yet the focus and structure of the education programme have not changed. Respondents added that even the very emphasis on adult literacy needed strengthening. They pointed out that after the literacy courses, they did not get any opportunities to strengthen their literacy skills since there were no programmes or facilities for post-literacy activities:

‘ It is difficult to get information for reading here, consequently many of us forget what we have learnt in the classes. The Icelandic International Development Agency (ICEIDA) has established a resource centre for us to read books and strengthen our literacy skills but it is not accessible since one would need to travel to Kalangala by boat to be able to read in this resource centre.’

Progressive educationists identify with post-literacy learning (see table above). They argue that education should be participatory and life-long. In the above case, life-long education can only be promoted in fishing communities if there are post-literacy learning centres in addition to the basic education learning centres. The graduates of the basic education programmes can then use these centres to enhance their literacy skills; however this is yet to be realized in the case of Kalangala district. In addition, progressive educationists challenge teacher-led, subject-centred approaches and instead promote learning aimed at promoting a more democratic society.

The study also revealed insights of lack of dialogue between the providers of basic education programmes and the beneficiaries of these programmes. Administratively, lack of dialogue can clog the relationship between the providers and the learners and in the long run demotivate both the providers and the recipients of the basic education programmes. Nothing explains the challenge of lack of dialogue as well as the sewing machine story:

The sewing machine story

Our class is called Semawundo FAL class; recently one of the donors facilitating this programme visited our class. Amazed by the tremendous progress we had made in reading and writing, she donated a sewing machine to our class and fabric for us to start a sewing business. But we don’t know how to use the sewing machine and the few people on this island use second hand clothes. We are very glad about the offer but we are stuck with a sewing machine we are unable to use (a FAL class participant).

The sewing machine story reveals an absence of dialogue between the supporter and the participants in the FAL class. Although the idea of donating a sewing machine was well intentioned, the absence of dialogue undermines the foundations that underpin informal and non-formal education. According to Freire (1993), dialogue should not involve ‘one person acting on another’ but it should be in itself a cooperative activity involving respect. He adds that the process is important and can be seen as enhancing the community and building social capital, leading us to act in ways that make for justice and human flourishing.

Shifting paradigms and exploring new approaches

The purpose of this chapter is to contribute to the shaping and shifting of the dominant paradigms about access to and participation in adult basic education programmes for such communities through a reconciliation of the issues emerging from the research with some of the dominant views about adult basic education.

The conventional thinking about adult basic education is at variance with lived realities on the ground in Kalangala. While there may be *de-jure* provision of basic adult education to all citizens of Uganda, according to policy and the legal framework, so in the abstract sense, the reality on the ground is that access to adult basic education is far from automatic and subject to many other considerations:

1. Decisions at household level restrict women because their attendance is subject to approval by their husbands. For instance, one respondent said:

‘When I wanted to go and attend adult education to acquire basic skills to manage my small business, read my correspondence and enhance my quality of life, my husband said that this was not a priority at the moment because I had too much to attend to.’
2. There is a lack of basic facilities for people with special needs, for example, the blind or the deaf and dumb. There is nothing on ground for these categories of adults to help them realize their dream of achieving even basic education. This is an area for further exploration by all the stakeholders to see what input they can offer to remedy the situation.
3. Poverty is a major variable that hinders women from accessing and participating in adult basic education programmes. As referenced in Nankya’s daily activity profile, such a woman could hardly find time to participate in adult basic education programmes since most of her time is engrossed in struggling to provide the daily bread for the family.

Legal and policy implications

The implications arising from the findings are that the law is not self-implementing. It needs people to pressurize and lobby to ensure its implementation. This triangulated well with my data since the legal provision of basic adult education has not been implemented on the ground. This means that we either have to change the law or sensitize law enforcement agencies to create a timeframe and set the benchmark for when this objective can be realized. The policy implication is that we may need to raise taxation to support this programme or to re-direct resources from other non-critical areas like defence, to support basic adult basic education. This means that there would have to be sufficient political will to make such a dramatic shift in the allocation of resources.

I realized that there is a close relationship between policy and the law. They complement each other. For example, there is lack of enforcement of the law pertaining to adult basic education because there is no policy to guide its implementation by specifying actions and trends. In this context this means that if there were a

policy, it would inform the law on the need for reform to address the specialized needs of particular categories of people, such as fishing communities and disabled persons.

On the other hand, the law needs to fill the policy gaps that are making this adult basic education programme difficult to implement. Since law is a normative agent that creates obligations that must be obeyed, this would encourage policy makers to implement the law and bring in the necessary changes that are desirable.

The local government authority which is the implementing agent of adult basic education lacks a provision for adult basic education. There is no provision in the Local Government Act for implementing adult basic education as a mandatory service. The officers I spoke to on the ground thought they were doing the people a favour, unaware that there is a constitutional provision guaranteeing this right. This means there is need for law reform and legal literacy education campaigns to enlighten the policy implementers and the general population on their duties and responsibilities in respect of government policy.

Administrative and curriculum shifts

The structure and curriculum of adult basic education programmes are again at variance with the lived realities of fishing communities. Whereas the administration of adult basic education programmes in Kalangala follow a structured curriculum, it dawned on me during the research that certain administrative and curriculum related aspects of the basic education programmes need to be revisited for these programmes to attract greater participation. For example, I realized that awarding certificate to participants who have passed the FAL exams is potentially creating multi-faceted tension among the participants. Those who do not pass don't receive certificates and those who do pass cannot actually use the certificates. This means that there is need to shift from the conventional approaches to evaluating and motivating learners and explore alternatives.

This means that adult basic education programme design should be consultative enough to address the different categories of people. Those who need accreditation can join adult basic education programmes whose aim is exactly this so that their certificates are recognized and they can freely enter formal education programmes or use the certificates to campaign for political positions.

I also realized that the challenge with campaigns about adult basic education programmes that take shape at international level is that they lose steam as they get down to the intended beneficiaries. For example, whereas at international level much noise is made about ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes, with international plans of action, some people who want literacy services at the local level still cannot access them. There is need to explore new perspectives on adult basic education to replace conventional top-down campaigns. The starting point needs to be nurturing and supporting local community-based access to adult basic education initiatives in the quest for education for all.

A ray of hope for women's empowerment programming

The research revealed that most of the participants in the adult basic education programmes were women. From a programming perspective this scenario provides an untapped opportunity to integrate women's empowerment programmes, such as savings and credit and other life skills interventions like agribusiness, into basic education programmes in the district. This intervention will not only increase motivation to participate in the basic education programmes but will also empower the women to sustain themselves and their families.

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusion

This research set out to validate four major objectives about access to and participation in adult basic education programmes. The four specific areas were:

- investigation of how geographical isolation influences people's access to and participation in adult basic education programmes in fishing communities;
- analysis of how gender influences access to and participation in adult basic education programmes for men and women in fishing communities;
- examination of the role of the law in empowering men and women to access and participate in adult basic education programmes in fishing communities; and
- examination of the management and delivery of adult basic education services to make appropriate recommendations for improving basic education programmes in Kalangala district.

This chapter presents the overall conclusion and recommendations from the interrogation of the study's emerging themes with conventional views, theorization and conceptualization about adult basic education programmes.

The right to education as enshrined in Uganda's constitution means making education opportunities accessible to all citizens including the young and the old, women and men, boys and girls, both in and out of school. Based on the issues emerging from the research, if the government is to ensure that at least 50 per cent of all Uganda's over 70 million non-literate adults (AAIU, 2004) have access to adult basic education as envisaged by the 'education for all' policy, a reexamination of non-traditional methodological approaches ought to be employed. More specifically, this is essential if the programmes are going to attract members of remote fishing communities to these adult basic education programmes, Approaches need to be updated and informed time and again using the lived realities of programme beneficiaries.

Overall conclusion

The four aspects of law, gender, geography and administration of adult basic education programmes still contribute significantly to access and participation in adult basic education programmes. However each of these aspects is manifested differently. Although my research did not establish the exact number of the people who miss out from accessing and participating in this basic education because of these four aspects, judging by the responses and number of non-participants in these programmes, a sizable number of potential participants miss out due to either the direct or indirect implications of the four aspects of geographical isolation, gender, administrative concerns or the law itself.

I have provided recommendations for action on some of the critical elements that I thought ought to be priorities if such communities are to realize their right to education through adult basic education programmes.

Recommendations

Legal interventions

Government should declare adult basic education universal and set national goals, objectives and targets. These will provide a framework for all the stakeholders (the private sector, non-governmental organizations and government agents) to act, raise resources and re-strategize to meet the right to education for marginalized and disadvantaged groups.

Government should introduce adult basic education facilities for disabled people including the blind and the deaf and dumb so that they too get the opportunity to exercise their right to basic education. This should be in addition to increasing the financing of adult basic education programmes and opening up more opportunities for continuing education, especially for marginalized and geographically-isolated communities. This could take the form of offering opportunities for entry into formal education and recognizing the certificates acquired through adult basic education programmes.

There is need for government to reform the Local Government Act to include a provision for adult basic education and this should be done hand in hand with legal literacy education campaigns to enlighten the policy implementers and the general population on their duties and responsibilities in respect of implementing government policy.

Government should extend adult basic education programmes to the remaining 36 islands to meet the essential role acquisition of basic education skills play in enabling such communities to address the problems and life challenges in the 21st century.

Non-legal interventions

Providers

Providers of adult basic education programmes should reorient adult basic education to the socio-economic realities and learning needs of participants and periodically update the learning with changes in learning needs, context and environment of participants in the adult basic education programmes.

Providers of adult basic education programmes (government, private sector and civil society) need to rethink the programmes using models that integrate and address issues of economic empowerment, such as savings and credit, micro-projects, developing life skills.

There is need to bridge the gap between the non-literate and the literate by exploring avenues and encouraging the private sector to participate in the provision of adult basic education. Illiteracy can be greatly reduced, especially if there are many service providers and they are given incentives to provide basic education services to marginalized communities, like the fishing communities examined.

Providers of adult basic education programmes should make sure there is no possibility of creating false hope among the participants. Some of the FAL programme participants hoped that the certificates they received could be used to enter formal education, acquire jobs or stand for political positions. On realizing that this was not the case, many of them became frustrated and felt that they had wasted their time attending the basic education programmes.

Providers of adult basic education programmes should engage with women's domestic life – the home and family – since that is where, regardless of whether access to adult basic education services is free or not, the research revealed that the biggest obstacles to women's participation in adult basic education were. Much more hinged on the family and personal lives of women at household than on external issues. The design of adult basic education programmes should therefore be a product of a thorough situation analysis that goes beyond mere assessment of learning needs, interrogating the dynamics within the household and how they affect access to and participation in the proposed programmes.

Policy makers and implementers should also explore channelling women's empowerment programmes through the adult basic education programmes since most participants are women. This approach may potentially yield double results since the women will acquire both literacy skills and economic empowerment through the basic education programmes.

The planning management and delivery of adult basic education programmes should go hand in hand with programme awareness campaigns to destigmatize participation in these adult basic education programmes. Awareness campaigns could focus on educating the community about the programmes, where to access them and the benefits associated with participation in such programme before the stigma becomes entrenched in the community.

Providers of adult basic education programmes should categorize learners based on their learning needs and interests. A lot of programming problems could be addressed if the planners of these programmes grouped learners according to their learning interests. The research findings reveal a fundamental conflict of interests between the different categories of participants in the basic education programmes. While the youth wanted to acquire certificates to enroll for formal education, some older men and women simply wanted to learn to read and write and often the women had different learning needs compared to men. Lumping them all in one class was creating a conflict of interests.

To make adult basic education programmes relevant one needs to consider the social and economic context of the participants and the reality that many would-be participants spend most of their time struggling to earn a living for their families. There is need to re-orient adult basic education programmes in the light of the struggle for survival and cater for potential participants who do not have the time to attend the current classes as they are scheduled. Exploring alternatives such as work-based literacy could greatly contribute to a deeper understanding of how best universal basic education can be achieved.

To sustain adult basic education programmes delivery in the long run, government should promote a tri-sector approach to its delivery. In this case the private sector, government and civil society are encouraged and facilitated by government to provide the services. This will not only increase options for the learners to choose the basic education programmes that satisfy their learning needs but it may also lead to increased access and sustainability of adult basic education services since there will be more providers. In this case, government's role would be to regulate the quality of the services and set standards for delivery.

Planner and implementers of adult basic education programmes should make efforts to ensure that they involve and promote participation of the local leadership, especially at lower level local councils because they play a big role in mobilizing the community and creating awareness about the existence adult basic education services in the area.

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APPENDIX : INTERVIEW GUIDES

Interview guide for non-literate individuals outside the ABE programmes

- 1 Where do you live in Kalangala (Assumption 1)
- 2 What do you know about adult basic education programmes? (Assumption 2)
- 3 Did being a man or woman affect your decision in any way not to attend ABE programmes? (Assumption 2)
- 4 Do you have any reason about the way the ABE programmes are managed that stopped you from attending? (Assumption 4)
- 5 What studying opportunities would you like? Explain. (Assumption 3)
- 6 What kind of help would you like to get to those studying opportunities? Explain (Assumption 4)

Interview guide for beneficiaries of ABE programmes

- 1 Where do you stay here in Kalangala? (Assumption 1)
- 2 What is your view about the way ABE programmes are run in your class/ circle? (Assumption 4)
- 3 What influenced your decision to attend the ABE programmes? (Assumption 4)
- 4 How can ABE be improved in your class? (Assumption 4)
- 5 How does your being man or woman affect your access to ABE? What about participation? Explain (Assumption 2)
- 6 How can ABE programmes be improved? (Assumption 3)
- 7 What can be done for more people to participate in ABE programmes? (Assumption 1)

Interview guide for local government authorities

- 1 As a local authority, what is your role as regards ABE? (Assumption 4)
- 2 What in your opinion needs improvement for more people to access ABE in this area? (Assumption 3)
- 3 What categories of people in your opinion are not participating in ABE? Explain (Assumption 1)
- 4 In as far as housing applications and waiting lists are concerned, are women and men equally considered? (Assumption 1)
- 5 What have you planned to address the different needs of participants of ABE programmes? (Assumption 2)
- 6 What challenges as implementers do you face in your efforts to provide ABE services in the district? Explain (Assumption 4,2)

Interview guide for facilitators/ instructors

- 1 How does being male or female influence access and participation of participants in ABE programmes. (Assumption 1)
- 2 What can be done ensure that more people join the ABE programmes? (Assumption 1,2,3,4)
- 3 What specifically about the law and government policy can be improved to enhance access to ABE? (Assumption 3)
- 4 What can be done to enhance your ability to deliver effective ABE programmes in the district? (Assumption 4)