

“ONE SIZE FITS ALL?”

A STUDY INTO THE PARTICIPATION DYNAMICS OF ADULTS IN THE
FUNCTIONAL ADULT LITERACY PROGRAM IN MWIZI SUB-COUNTY,
UGANDA

By

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ADULT AND
HIGHER EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU NATAL, IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION IN ADULT
EDUCATION

2005

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DECLARATION

I, Janice Desire Busingye, declare that this dissertation represents original work has not been previously submitted in any form to any university. Where use has been made of the work of others, this has been duly acknowledged and referenced in the text.

Signed

Date

ABSTRACT

The study was conducted in Mwizi, Mbarara District, South Western Uganda. The major purpose was to find out if a uniform method of planning a programme fitted the unique characteristics of the people for whom it was intended, and whether the FAL programme deters or encourages participation in literacy studies. The study looked at the programme; the people's lives and the infrastructural support that was available in the community to enable people to attend the FAL Programme.

The research questions focused on what encouraged or discouraged people to participate or not to participate in the FAL program. In order to achieve this, the lives of the respondents were explored to see how literacy related to their daily lives and activities. This exploration was effected using a range of tools that had their roots in participatory rural appraisal and they included; interviews, focus group discussions, daily activity clock and mobility mapping. These helped me get an understanding of the lives of the people and where literacy fitted in their lives. The programme was also explored to get an insight into what it was about and this was mainly done through reviewing of literature and material.

This study revealed that one size does not fit all. That is to say, learners in different areas of the sub county have unique characteristics that cannot be planned for as if they were uniform. Similarly, underlying principles of adult education were not considered when it came to planning the FAL programme.

The study also revealed that illiteracy and learners were highly stigmatized. This resulted in a situation whereby very few people wanted to be associated with non-literates because of the stigma associated with illiteracy in our societies.

The study concludes with a set of recommendations, some of which can be addressed by program planners directly, while others are long term issues.

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ACRONYMS

ABE	Adult Basic Education
DFID	Department for International Development
DVV	German Adult Education Association
EFA	Education For All
EWLP	Experimental World Literacy program
FAL	Functional Adult Literacy
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IIRR	International Institute of Rural Reconstruction
INFOBEP	Integrated Non-Formal Basic Education Pilot Project
MoGLSD,	Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services
NALSIP	National Adult Literacy Strategic Investment Plan
NEF	New Economics Foundation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRM	National Resistance Movement
O.A.U	Organisation of African Unity
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programs
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UDHS	Uganda Demographic Health Survey
UDN	Uganda Debt Network
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Education Fund
UPE	Universal Primary Education

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people assisted me to make this work possible and even though I might not mention each of them by name, my deep appreciation goes to each and every person who contributed to this study.

At the University of KwaZulu Natal, I would like to specially thank my supervisor Prof. Astrid Von Kotze whose guidance, understanding, encouragement and support enabled me to complete this work. I also wish to thank all the lecturers in the Department of Adult Education for giving me the theoretical basis that enabled me to carry out this research. Special mention goes to Dr. Sylvia Kaye, Dr. Betty Mubangizi and Dr. Elda Lyster who never tired of giving guidance and offering help whenever approached and to Ms. Kogi Doorasamy for making life manageable at the University.

I also thank my academic colleagues on the Masters' Programs who contributed very useful ideas to this study. Special thanks go to Tanya, Kristin and Gillian for your friendship that I hold so dear.

I wish to thank the German Adult Education Association (DVV) for the financial support they rendered me that enabled me to pursue this degree.

In Uganda, I wish to thank all my respondents in Mwizi sub-county worked with me and taught me so much about their lives.

Thanks go to my research assistant, Mr. Canary Mubangizi for the time you dedicated to take me to your home area and work with me.

My thanks go to all the members of staff in the Department of Adult Education and Communication Studies, for their support and encouragement. Special mention goes to Mrs. Alice N. Ndidde for the moral and material support that you accorded me.

Last but not least let me thank my family for the material and financial support which make me feel so special and keep me moving. Special thanks to my husband, Dr. Andrew Kasoro for the love, support and encouragement and for keeping the boys when I was away.

I am greatly indebted to my mother-in-law Mrs. Naome Karugaba and to Ms J.Nyangoma for stepping in whenever I went away to take care of my children.

Special thanks go to Ms. Grace Karugaba for all the care and hospitality that you extended to me in Gaborone.

I wish to thank Drs. Jolly and Frank Kaharuza for not only looking after my children when I was gone, but also for the inspiration that you give me everyday. Daddy, thanks for all the reading and editing you did for me.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU ALL

CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 The Problem

Uganda has the lowest adult literacy rate in East Africa at 68% compared to Tanzania's 75% and Kenya's 82% (UNESCO, 2003:311). The Ugandan government has attributed this to the low enrolment levels of children in primary schools and high rates of school drop outs, in both primary and secondary schools. Since 1990, the government has prioritized fighting illiteracy because it has identified it as an obstacle to economic development. To deal with the problem of underdevelopment, coupled with the desire to follow the Education For All (EFA) goals, government vowed to reduce the rate of illiteracy by 50% by the year 2015. To achieve this objective, a two-pronged strategy was adopted which is, promoting Universal Primary Education (UPE) to increase school enrolment on one hand and raising the level of adults' literacy on the other. In 1992, the Uganda government introduced the Integrated Non-formal Basic Education Pilot Project (INFOBEP), which in 1996, was renamed the Functional Adult Literacy Program (FAL) and has since expanded. Since the original eight pilot districts, the FAL program is now active in all the fifty-six districts in Uganda. The FAL program's major focus is poverty eradication, especially among the rural poor, women and other marginalized groups.

However, the EFA global monitoring report (2004) revealed that Uganda will not be able to achieve the target it set by 2015, and poverty is on a rampant increase in Uganda (Nyamugasira & Rowden, 2002:11). The Literacy Investment Plan shows that the combined FAL program and the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) efforts have so far managed to reach only 4.3% of the 6.9 million non-literates in the country (MoGLSD, 2002). In addition, the evaluation of the FAL Program done in 1999 revealed that 73% of its participants had attended school prior to joining the FAL classes (Okech et al, 1999: xv).

The question is why are most of the poor and non-literate not attending the FAL program? The FAL program targets the very poor people, the majority of whom live in the rural areas and also form the bulk of Uganda's population. Given the country's poor literacy rate, why

would a well intentioned free of charge government program miss its target? Is the problem with the people, the environment in which they are living, or the program? The FAL was designed for the whole country and the primers that are used in most parts of the country only differ in language, depending on the region. Is it possible that a program designed for the whole country can fit the uniqueness of the various individuals and groupings in the different parts of the country to motivate them to participate in the FAL program? Programs are designed and brought to poor people with the assumption that they will embrace them wholeheartedly. The government put a lot of effort and resources into adult literacy as an “instrument” to achieve economic development, but the blame has been continuously put on the people who do not take part claiming they do not want “development”. One local government official is reported to have said that he would cane all adult non-literates in his area who were not attending FAL classes because “they were keeping his area behind in terms of development” (New Vision, January 2004). Such messages suggest to the poor that they are responsible for being poor, and they should jump at the idea of a program like FAL because it is meant to help them to get a second chance. Given their circumstances, is there anything to gain that should motivate them to take part in the program? Has the Government of Uganda done everything possible to enable poor people to attend through giving them all the support that they can afford?

This study set out to explore the lives of the people of Mwizi, in South Western Uganda, who are part of the target group, to understand why they should participate in the FAL program. To do this, I examined the program to find out how it fits into the livelihoods of the people of Mwizi. I also looked at the environment of the people of Mwizi to find out if there was any infrastructure that was supportive enough to improve participation in the FAL program.

1. 2 Geographical Context.

Uganda is located in the Eastern part of Africa and is a former colony of Britain, from which it gained independence in 1962. Uganda is a landlocked country, covers an area of 241,039 square kilometers and has a favorable climate for agriculture because of its relatively high altitude (UBOS, 2002). The Central and Western regions of the country have two rainy seasons per year, while the Eastern and Northern have one. The Western region, in which

the study area is located, is one of the regions with relatively fertile soils. The climate also determines the agricultural potential of this area and the land's population carrying capacity, with the Western region being the second¹ to the central region in terms of population density. Due to the nature of the soil, the economy is predominantly agricultural with the majority of the population (80%) dependent on subsistence farming (UBOS, 2001:1).

1.3 Political Context

The provision of adult education has undergone changes in the past thirty years, largely as a result of the unstable political and economic history. Provision of literacy, was a monopoly of the missionaries for a long time and only attracted the colonial government after the Second World War. This was mainly to provide adult education to demobilized soldiers, under the Welfare Department that has evolved to become the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, which offers and manages the FAL program. In 1964, two years after independence, the 1964 Mass Literacy campaign was launched and went on until 1971. In 1971, Uganda experienced a military coup that left many social services, including adult literacy programs destroyed. Literacy activities were to be revived by the Ugandan government after the 1986 guerilla bush war that brought the present National Resistance Movement to power.

At the time it came into power, literacy was not a priority on the government's agenda as infrastructure, the education system and many other social services had been destroyed. It was only after 1990 that the government made an effort to revive adult literacy programs in Uganda. At present, the government is looking to adult literacy as a major contributor to the overall national economic development.

Administratively, the country is divided into fifty-six (56) districts under a decentralized system of governance whereby several functions have been given to the local governments. However, the central government retains the role of making policy, setting standards and supervising (UBOS, 2001:1). Due to decentralization and the sharing of responsibilities between the central government and the local government, the Sub-counties are supposed to

¹ The Central region has 27% of the total population, while the Western region has 26% accounting for more than half of the total population.

financially support the FAL in addition to the support given by the central government. In Mwizi, this has not been realized, as compared to other areas.

1.4 Economic Context

Since 1986, the government of Uganda has undertaken macro-economic policy reforms to foster economic growth. Between 1996 and 2000, Uganda's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has grown at a rate of 6.2% per annum. Equally the GDP per capita has been growing at a rate of 2.6% per annum (UDHS, 2001).

In 2000, the government developed a national planning framework called the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP). Underlying the PEAP is the idea that poverty is a result of inequalities that exist at individual, household and national levels (MoGLSD, 2003:3). All the national programs, including the FAL contribute to the fulfillment of the pillars of the PEAP that include:

- (a) Rapid and sustainable economic growth and structural transformation
- (b) Good governance and security
- (c) Increased ability of the poor to raise their incomes
- (d) Enhanced quality of life of the poor.

Specifically, the FAL program is expected to contribute to the goal of increasing access to information and participation in self, community and national development to enhance the quality of life of the poor (MoGLSD, 2002:3).

1.5 The Literacy Status in Uganda

Uganda has a population of 24.7 million people of whom 51% are women and 49% are men (UBOS, 2002:4). Currently, the adult literacy status of people of fifteen years of age and above is 67%. Of these, 77% are males while 57% are females (UNESCO, 2003:311). The percentage of the literates is 77% in the urban areas as compared to 59% in the rural areas. The numbers indicate that a total of 6.9 million adults are non-literates, and as already mentioned this is the highest in the East African Region (MOGLSD, 2002:3).

1. 6 The Development of Adult Literacy in Uganda

Learning skills of reading and writing was first introduced in Uganda by the religious missionaries to enable their converts read holy books. The missionaries were later joined by the colonial government after the Second World War to occupy demobilized soldiers who had fought in that war to keep them from mischief.

Following an O.A.U summit in 1961 in Addis Ababa, and after independence in 1962, Uganda joined other African countries in the promotion of literacy for economic development. At this summit, Heads of Member states committed themselves to fighting illiteracy (Okech, 1999:11). In 1964 a mass literacy campaign was launched, but it died out when Idi Amin came to power in 1971. Although in Amin's regime, promoting literacy was not on the government's agenda, he provided support for literacy activities. However, this was not to last due to the political turmoil of the time (Okech et al, 1999:11). The literacy activities became active again in the 1980s and 1990s, when both government and some Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) realized that the lack of literacy skills was making implementation of development programs very difficult. Government then embarked on the promotion of literacy hoping that literacy would ease the implementation of development programs and promote rapid economic development.

1. 6.1 The Functional Adult Literacy Program

In 1990, a World Conference on Education for All was held in Jomtein, Thailand and Uganda was a signatory to the multi-nation declaration. Following this conference, in 1992 the government White Paper on Education was developed. It emphasized that all people have a right to education irrespective of their age (GoU, 1992). The 1995 Uganda constitution, which stipulates that all people have a right to education, later reiterated this. In the 1991/2 financial year adult literacy programs were included in the budget, but the government needed a lot of support to embark on implementation of the literacy programs, because of limited financial resources against a range of poor social services (Okech, 1999:13).

In 1992, the plan for the eradication of illiteracy, first drawn up in the 1980s was developed into a project proposal and presented to UNESCO for funding (World Bank, 2001a:6). With

support from UNESCO, UNICEF and the German Adult Education Association (DVV), the pilot project of the Adult Literacy program was launched in eight districts in Uganda, and was named the Integrated Non-Formal Basic Education Pilot Project (INFOBEPP). Following the evaluation of the project in 1996, the INFOBEPP was expanded and renamed the National Functional Adult Literacy Program. By the end of 2004, all the fifty-six districts in Uganda were part of the program.

1. 6. 2 Why the Functional approach?

In 1992, the percentage of literates was 45% for women and 55% for men and illiteracy was looked at as one of the contributing factors to underdevelopment. Furthermore, the country was in a process of reconstruction after the political turmoil of the 1980's and the priority was to do all it could to promote rapid economic development. Uganda was pursuing the theory of modernization to economic development, hence the need to modernize non-literates with literacy. The most relevant approach to literacy in the context of rapid economic development was the functional approach.

1. 6. 3 What is the Functional Approach to Literacy?

The functional approach is premised on the idea that individual and national productivity can be boosted if literacy levels are increased (Lyster in Hutton B, 1992:32). Literacy in this school of thought and practice is looked at as a capital investment in humans that will have observable economic and social returns. Thus, government promotes functional adult literacy, which will increase the economic productivity of the participants and eventually improve the economic growth indicators.

To achieve increased productivity, the project then chose to use an "integrated methodology". The subject matter drew on several areas of life and brought together several service providers to help in the instruction process. The attempt to draw on content from everyday life was based on the idea that social problems do not originate from one area of life, but have a relationship with other areas in a person's life (Okech et al, 1999:15). Therefore solving life's problems requires one to look at the different dimensions that have a relationship with that problem. Furthermore, the deliberate effort to draw content from

everyday activities of the learners in their communities would enable the learners to use the skills and knowledge they have acquired in the course of their lives and see its usefulness and relevance in their personal and community lives.

The cooperation of several service providers was based on the idea that no one instructor could have all the knowledge about all the content drawn from several areas of life (Okech et al, 1999:15). Therefore, by involving several service providers, the program would ensure the functionality of whatever was learnt in everyday lives of the learners.

1.7 The Mwizi Sub-County in Context

1.7.1 Demographic features

The Mwizi sub-county is located in the most hilly part of Mbarara District in South-Western Uganda. It is approximately twenty-two Kilometers from Mbarara town, the major town center of the district. It has a total area of 89.6 square kilometers. It is bordered by Kabuyanda in the South, Birere in the East, Bugamba in the West and Nyakayojo in the North. The Sub-county has a population of 26,093 people of which 12,526 are males and 13,567 are females (UBOS, 2002:39), making it one of the most highly populated areas in that region.

1.7.2 Ethnicity

Mwizi is highly populated by the Bakiga, an ethnic group that commonly inhabits Southwestern Uganda, speaks Rukiga and is well-known by Ugandans for its ability to cultivate. They make up 87% of the total population, while 10% are Rwandese and 3% are Banyankore (Mbarara district, 2003). It is important to note that the Mbarara district is assumed by other Ugandans to be an area inhabited by Banyankore, an ethnic group known for cattle keeping and speaking Runyankore.

1.7.3 Economic Activities

The major economic activity carried out in this area is cultivation of food crops mainly for sale and any surplus is consumed by the family. Grazing of goats is practiced on a small

scale and is mainly a preserve of the men. Grazing of cattle is almost non-existent because the Bakiga are cultivators, even though Mbarara District is known as a cattle-keeping region.

1. 7. 4 Education

Mwizi has twelve primary schools, run mainly with the support of the Universal Primary Education initiative. In each of the villages I visited, there was a primary school. The Sub-county has three secondary schools, two of which are private and one government.

Although most parents encourage their children to go to school, I found it was very common to find children of school going age in the trading center or with their mothers in the gardens during school time. When asked why the children were not at school, most respondents said that they lacked decent clothing to substitute as uniform, while some said that they lacked lunch to pack for the children. Some of the parents had more children than they could take to the UPE schools, so in most cases the girls remained at home while the boys went to school.

One of the parents I talked to said that taking a girl to school is like taking a cow to a kraal to mate with a bull and conceive. This came from her experience as a parent in which all her three daughters had been at school but conceived child before completion.

1. 7. 5 Infrastructure

Mwizi got its first dug murrum road in 2003 and has no tarmac road. Before the construction of this road, it would take an hour and a half to two hours to get to Mbarara town from Mwizi, but it now takes thirty to forty-five minutes.

Mwizi has no access to clean piped water. Water is fetched from wells, which are usually at the lowest point of a very steep hill. The area has no access to electricity, but electricity can be seen at a distance where the television masts are planted on one of the hills.

There has been deliberate effort by the government to increase the number of upcountry Health Centers and Mwizi has been a beneficiary. There are three health centers serving the whole sub-county. When people are sick and cannot walk, they are carried on stretchers to get to the health centers. The health centers have no access to electricity, so if a patient

needs specialized attention; one has to go to the major referral hospital in Mbarara town, which is 22 kilometres away.

1. 7. 6 Transport

The major means of transport in and out of Mwizi is by pick-up trucks that transport people and produce at the same time. The front of the pick-up that is supposed to seat three people maximum seats five people, including the driver. These trucks are not always available when one wants to travel. If one wants to go to town, one has to book the night before verbally with the driver. The alternative means of transport is either by bicycle or passenger carrying motorcycles commonly known in Uganda, as “*boda boda*”. However, due to the dust on the road and the hilly terrain, this mode can be very tedious.

1. 7. 7 Adult Literacy in Mwizi

Mwizi has one of the lowest literacy rates in the whole country. The Literacy² rate for women is roughly 40% and that of men is 45%, according to the district rough estimates by the district planning unit(Mbarara district, 2004). The low literacy rates were acknowledged by the district three-year development plan, but surprisingly, there was no financial commitment to the FAL program

1. 7. 7. 1 The FAL program in Mwizi

Adult literacy programs in this area started in 1997 with three classes established in one parish. This was done as a Catholic Church initiative after they realized that many people lacked enough literacy skills to participate in church activities. The three classes at the time had a total of forty-seven learners and were using primers(textbooks for the FAL program) provided by the district. The instructors were members of the church who included two former primary school teachers and one senior secondary two dropout. These classes later died out because the learners completed the last lesson in the primer and were left with nothing else to do.

² The number of people that cannot read and write at all.

The FAL classes were revived in 1999, when eight FAL classes were established in eight villages. At the time of this study, there were forty-three classes that were said to be active, with an average of one thousand five hundred and sixty learners (1,560). However, these figures are estimates and the actual number of learners who attend were likely to be fewer than those on record.

Most of the classes were not active in July because it was nearing the rainy season, making it a very busy time for residents who were preparing for the planting season. Those classes that were active had low attendance. Worth noting is the fact that, since the inception of the FAL, no official from the Ministry or from the District had ever visited these classes.

1.7.8 The People of Mwizi

The inhabitants of Mwizi are very warm and hospitable. While collecting data, every household we went to offered us a drink of sweetened porridge or lunch, depending on the time of the day. As the findings will demonstrate, people in this area are very hard working. Most of the families are large, due to the fact that polygamous marriages are common. Most men have an average of two wives and have extended families with grandparents, aunts and uncles who are also part of the big family.

Most boys stay in their parents' homes and expect their fathers to give them a share of their ancestral land. It is very common to find many houses built around one house in a homestead style.

Men among the Bakiga are said to be very strong physically and are not supposed to acknowledge weakness. They say "a man is a man" and it does not matter whether his family has food for the day or not: the blame is put on the wife. One of the Sub-county officials said that most women pay for their husbands graduated tax³ so that they are not arrested for non-payment. Compared to the women, the men therefore have unlimited privileges. The women spend more time cultivating than the men. In addition to that, if the men are not Christians, many will be in the village bar drinking alcohol from daybreak to

³ The tax is paid by every able bodied person who is above eighteen years in Uganda who is not a student. In the rural areas it is paid by all heads of households who are assumed to have property.

sunset. The spirit that is common in the area is a local gin with very high alcohol content and is commonly known as “*crude waragi*”.

The role of childcare is a preserve of the women in this community. It was common to find women swinging their hoes with a child strapped on their backs. Or worse still, a woman carrying a jerry can of water on her head and a child on the back on a very steep hill. Most of the women bring their children to the gardens and they play as their mothers cultivate. They pack leftover food from the previous dinner for such children, while they themselves do not have breakfast.

1.8 Rationale for the Study

It has been acknowledged worldwide that poverty does not only mean low monetary income, but also among other things, lack of basic education (World Bank, 2001:4). It has also been recognized through the different international efforts that literacy is a prerequisite for equality and development at all levels in any country.

Since 1992, the present government has tried to put in a lot of effort to reduce the rates of illiteracy. In terms of actual numbers however, 5.5million adult females and 1.4million men in Uganda can neither read nor write and are not in any literacy program (MoGLSD, 2002: vii). And of this number both the government and Non-governmental Organizations' efforts are covering only 4.3%. The government has set a goal to achieve a 50% improvement in the literacy rate by the year 2015 guided by the EFA goals. However, as already mentioned, according to the Education For All (EFA) monitoring report (UNESCO, 2003:93), Uganda will not achieve the 50% target by 2015. In addition, the evaluation report of the FAL program showed that there were a big number of non-literates who were not participating in the FAL program.

It is against this background that this study is based. In particular, I set out to understand the circumstances surrounding participation and non-participation in the FAL program in the Mwizi sub-county.

This is a qualitative study in which I employed research tools that would exhibit the activities of the respondents on an hourly basis everyday, and where and how literacy was useful in the carrying out of their tasks. This helped me to gain an insight into the role and importance of literacy in people's daily lives, hence enabling me understand issues of motivation to participate or not to participate in the FAL program.

Specifically, the research set out to find answers to the following research questions:

- What are the characteristics of the FAL program participants?
- What motivates them to participate in the FAL Program?
- What are the characteristics of non-literates who do not take part in the FAL program?
- What are their reasons for non-participation?
- What can be done to enable the program attract the non-participants who are willing to take part?

By doing this research, I hope to add to the meagre body of knowledge on literacy and participation in Uganda. I will share the findings of this research with the Mbarara District officials concerned, the Mwizi sub-county officials, the FAL classes that I worked with in this research. By doing this, I hope that the FAL as a program will be improved to accommodate some of the unique characteristics of the beneficiaries, because Mwizi might just be one out of the many examples in which a program designed for all is inappropriate for the particular dynamics of a region. I also hope that other scholars will be encouraged to carry out more research in this field.

1.9 Outline of the Dissertation

The dissertation is divided into six chapters as follows;

The first chapter of this dissertation has explored the background to the study. I started the chapter with an outline of what the social problem is, and then I contextualised the study in the Ugandan situation. I also described the FAL program and its origin and the methodology used. Finally I gave the reasons as to why I did my research in this area.

The second chapter is centered on understanding the concepts used in the study and giving my study a theoretical base. In this chapter I explore the theoretical understanding of participation in general and specifically in relation to adult literacy. I look at the issues of livelihoods and literacy and then go into program development. This is the chapter that details the literature review and gives my thinking process and approach to this research.

Chapter three outlines the methodology of the dissertation. It explains that the research is exploring people's lives and so employs a qualitative approach. It uses methods that are appropriate in carrying out qualitative studies. These methods have their roots in participatory research and go a long way in helping me learn a lot from the respondents.

In chapter four I present the findings under the different themes. The findings are given in the respondent's voices so as not to distort what was said.

In chapter five, I analyse the findings and see where they fit in or contradict what has been written about participation in adult literacy programs. The chapter is divided according to the themes from the findings.

In chapter six, I make conclusions, recommendations and suggest areas for further research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

This chapter explores different ideas and concepts that are closely linked with functional adult literacy. These are presented through a literature review from which a conceptual framework is developed for this study. Central to this study is the need to understand participation in adult literacy programs; but before exploring that we need to first develop an understanding of what participation is generally. This in turn allows us to better understand what participation means in the FAL program context. Participation needs to be understood because it has become common in many programs, including literacy programs, based on the idea that a development program cannot be effective without the involvement of the beneficiaries. Furthermore, in literacy programs, the strongest argument for adult education as opposed to children's formal education is that it recognizes that adults have their own aspirations, which are a result of their struggle to live better lives. This implies that when trying to understand adults' participation patterns the first point should be to explore their lives. In this case I explore the literature on livelihoods to understand how livelihoods have been understood. Since I am focusing on a functional adult literacy program, whose major emphasis is learning for a living or a livelihood to bring about development at the individual and community levels, there is interplay between livelihoods, literacy and development.

2.2 HOW IS PARTICIPATION UNDERSTOOD?

Oakley and Marsden (1990:10), suggest that participation is central to addressing rural poverty. This is because poor rural people are usually disadvantaged in society and many of the rural societies have been neglected by previous development strategies. Under circumstances of neglect and social exclusion, participation of people becomes one way of restoring social justice by encouraging people-based development (Oakley and Marsden, 1990:18). Participation of rural people was recognized as an ingredient lacking in the economic development process in the 1970s when even the World Bank acknowledged that economic growth was not equitably including the poor (Rahnemam, 1997:116). A consensus was then reached that saw different governments especially in the third world including participation in their development plans, because among other reasons, they wanted to

attract foreign aid. Using the term participation to attract aid has led to it being persistently abused and misused in that it is more talked about than it is practiced (Rahnemam, 1997:116).

While participation is a buzzword that has often been used in many development programs, it has come to mean different things to different people (The New Economics Foundation, 2000:2). They define participation as;

"The different ways in which the organization responsible for an activity, for example, the local authority can involve the participants".

In an attempt to enable the people's power to be seen and felt in the concept of participation, (Nyamugasira, 2001:2), defined participation as;

"A process, which over a period of time, builds on the views and input of ordinary people to design policies and programs in order to make them people-centered and people-owned and therefore much more effective".

In the adult education context, participation has been looked at from two perspectives that feed into each other, that is; the community development perspective and the adult education perspective. These have roots in political, development, ideological and historical contexts.

In adult education, Dewey presented the first strong argument for participation in the early 20th century. Education in his view was at the heart of social reform and the development of an individual and was looked at as very dependent on engagement in shared activities (Babikwa, D 2003:14). Later on, the critical perspective underlying Paulo Freire's ideas took root and emphasized the emancipatory and liberating roles of education. According to Freire (1970), emphasis in adult education was supposed to move away from the 'banking' concept to the more flexible and liberating type. This would mean that the learning process would include the student as a participant and partner in deciding the goals, activities and procedures of the class and program. This would be in direct contrast with the formal

school system where learners cede authority and power to the teacher, and instead a more collaborative and dialogical relationship between teachers and learners is adopted, with participation as its major emphasis (Purcell-Gates et al, 2002:79). Supporting the above argument, O'Donoghue (1996) has emphasized that there is no education without participation because education by its nature is a social activity that involves participation.

Lele (1995) however, suggests that participation is mainly focused on sensitizing rural people to increase their receptivity and ability to respond to development initiatives to encourage local initiatives. In this view participants are assumed to be ignorant of anything related to the development activities that they are supposed to engage in. They are therefore sensitized only to accept the programs that are being introduced, but they play no part in initiating and developing them.

Although many adult education programs today talk of the liberating, emancipatory and empowering roles of participation in adult education, the manner in which it is understood, viewed and encouraged, differs with the theory and context at play (Nyamugasira, 2001:2; Babikwa, 2003:). Furthermore, what must not be forgotten in the pursuit of participation is that it is difficult to achieve and people engage in rudimentary forms that are referred to as participation. For example, The New Economics Foundation (2002:2) has argued that sometimes development workers go to the people with ideas of what they want done and how it should be done, leaving little or no room for flexibility. Nyamugasira (2001:2) suggests that:

“Although participation is good, in practice, the tendency is that before going to the people, we have ideas of what we want done and how this should be done. We often go to the people in a rush and ask them to validate what we have in mind.”

Kothari & Cooke (2001: 36) add their voices to the other writers and argue that participation has become an act of faith in development for the development practitioners to exercise. They further suggest that development practitioners believe in participation, but rarely question it because it is believed to be a good thing. Therefore, the focus is more on getting the facts right rather than questioning the power and politics that govern participation.

Even with the different perceptions and understanding attached to participation, there are agreed upon underlying ideas by development practitioners that are pertinent to the concept of participation. It is generally agreed that participation, if nurtured, can become a source of tremendous strength for the creation of new and more just societies (Nyamugasira, 2000:1). It should be central to our understanding of development because nobody has the right to define or determine the needs of any group of which they are not part (Taylor et al, 1998:10). Taylor further suggests that if participation is incorporated as a fundamental idea to development, the articulation of people's knowledge can transform top-down bureaucratic planning systems.

All in all, participation in any development activity is beneficial to the individual and the community at large, because it can lead to empowerment and emancipation. What must not be ignored is the fact that participation is socially embedded and can be politically motivated to serve the interests of the powerful. The role of development workers and adult educators should be to examine what type of participation they encourage and whose interests it serves. The issue of participation would not be complete without looking specifically at participation in adult literacy programs, so the next section takes us through ideas that are specific to adult education in general and adult literacy in particular.

2. 2.1 PARTICIPATION IN ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMS

Literacy is generally believed to play a transforming role for the learner and eventually for the community as it allows the literate to access and use information that he or she would not have if non-literate. However, for this to happen, the learner must play a very active role in the learning process (Hamadache, 1986:32), hence the idea of participation. Participation of learners in adult education is as old as the discipline itself, and is deeply rooted in the liberal progressive orientation to adult education that looks at the learner as an active constructor of knowledge as opposed to a receiver of knowledge (Babikwa, 2003:14).

In adult literacy, the concept of participation became popular in the Experimental World Literacy Program (EWLP) after adult educators had realized that the skills of literacy were not ends in themselves, but needed to serve a purpose that the learners could find useful (Oxenham et al, 2001:13). In order for this to happen, Kowalski (1988:103) argues, the

learners have to be involved in all the processes of program development because it creates a sense of ownership, builds motivation and provides a democratic procedure valued by the adults. Alongside the argument of acquiring literacy skills for a purpose, came the idea of functionality. This was closely associated with the work of UNESCO in the 1960s, and built on the principle of participation and learning for life (Hutton, 1992:32).

According to Hamadache A. & Martin D. (1986:31), belief in the principle of participation implies the understanding of literacy work as being aimed at liberation as opposed to manipulation of the weakest. He further argues that the participation of non-literates fundamentally represents the most effective way of ensuring authentic motivation among the population. By doing this, literacy is seen as being effective to the extent that the people whom it is to benefit, feel the need to take part in the decision making process of their communities. Fordham et al (1995:36) further reiterate this when they argue for the learners' active involvement in setting aims for their own learning programs if they are to satisfy their needs.

However, often participation of learners simply stops at seeking people's views and identifying learning needs (Nyamugasira, 2001:2). This ignores and waters down the major principles on which authentic participation is built. According to Babikwa (2003:13), participation in adult literacy programs today has been taken to mean different things to the different providers depending on their theoretical orientation.

Firstly, in its simplest forms participation has been taken to mean the number of learners registered in or are available to attend a program. In this case, participation may only stop at the learners' registration. This idea of participation is based on the linear model of planning. Planning based on the linear model follows a sequential path, outlining the major steps to be followed in completing a task (Kowalski, 1988:90-104). It starts with assessing needs, creating objectives, designing the program, building and budgeting, obtaining resources for the program and finally starting the program. It simplifies the task and provides a degree of perceived security for the planner.

Although the linear model encourages a systematic way of doing things, it does not provide for flexibility, as there could be unseen obstacles that might need to be acted upon before the final stage is reached. It also gives the planner the upper hand and encourages top-down planning. As Hamadache & Martin (1986:68) have pointed out, literacy work must be closely linked with the needs and aspirations of communities and this will be as a result of involving the learners in effective planning for the program. Furthermore, the needs and aspirations of people change all the time and so must the basis of planning, if it is to address the needs. As Crowther & Tett (2001:58) suggest, planning for literacy should be viewed as a changing continuum. With the variability over the stages of a person's life, different needs arise at different stages in life and in different intensities and forms in work, family and community life (Crowther & Tett, 2001:58).

Secondly, Babikwa (2003) looks at participation as going further than registration to mean the active involvement of the learners in decisions in the classroom that affect their learning. The major concern of this perspective is the learners' participation inside the classroom activities.

Thirdly, Babikwa (2003) goes beyond the class activities and looks at the learner as an active participant both in the learning environment and outside that environment. He draws from the work of Paulo Freire (1970), which emphasizes the idea of participation as a tool for empowerment and liberation. In this school of thought, participation in the learning process is the beginning of the end of oppression and subordination. Participation is seen as a process of 'cutting' the ropes of oppression that bind people and collectively achieving freedom and power. People are involved in identifying the root causes of problems affecting them which are then linked to the political, social, cultural and historical context (Babikwa, 2003:15). From this perspective, a program that will be planned will be based on a model that encourages participation and reflection at the different levels. In this model planning becomes a day-to-day activity. The situation in the process of planning dictates which element will constitute the starting point for planning. It does not assume that one must go back to the initial step to recycle the planning process (Kowalski, 1988:90-104).

Participatory methods are used in programs that embrace this view; there is limited or no use of primers as the learners develop their own materials using local resources.

What is important to note is that participation has not been used to mean one uniform thing in different educational activities but is dependent on the development thinking at a particular time. However, there is general agreement among adult educators that for any education activity that involves adults to be successful and to benefit the learners, there must be active participation by both the learners and the instructors.

Understanding the different ways of interpreting participation therefore, will help me in my study to make sense of the findings and see what this concept means to FAL as a program. In this study, I chose to look at participation as active involvement of the learners from the time they are identifying their needs to the time they complete the program. This in a way looks at the process of participation in the program development process, that is, from planning to the completion and evaluation stage.

2. 3 WHAT IS THE LINK BETWEEN LITERACY AND DEVELOPMENT?

In the development language, participation in literacy by the non-literates is seen as one of the ways through which economic development can be achieved. This section takes us through exploring the different theoretical positions on the link between literacy and development.

Many developing countries, like Uganda, that have low literacy rates and need foreign assistance to provide social services have been faced with the dilemma of justifying such support to literacy programs. In 1990 at the Jomtien Conference on Education for All, it was claimed that literacy had made an impact on economic productivity since the two came into being in the 1960s EWLP (Wagner, 1993:3). And since then, Wagner asserts, in the developing countries, idealistic arguments have been supported by economic ones, especially when trying to persuade funding agencies that a literacy program is worthwhile and good value for money. This has resulted in attempts to link literacy and development, which in a

way has been an uphill task because the nature of literacy is such that the benefits are not tangible enough to quantify like those in formal education (Fordham et al, 1995:6).

Literacy has been identified both as a cause and a consequence of underdevelopment (Robinson-Pant, 2001:2), meaning that it is seen as impeding development of high level analytical skills, a modern inventive and adventurous attitude (Papen in Street, 2001:46). This view of literacy is drawn from the instrumentalists' school of thought that views literacy as a means to a healthier and more economically productive population.

On the other hand, Lauglo (2001:5) has argued that among the other benefits of adult basic education confident behavior is widened in the market place. To him, when one can read, write and calculate one buys and sells with less fear of being cheated and can better compete with others and deal in a wider market. In addition to this, Lauglo (2001b:iii) says that the support given by the World Bank to poverty eradication, literacy and basic education is because they are 'key skills' that help the poor to extract themselves from the conditions of poverty. According to Wagner (1993:3), this view builds on a belief that industrialized countries are more prosperous because they have more educated and literate people.

This waters down the purpose of literacy to being acquired for the purpose of improving national figures as opposed to how useful it may be for an individual learner. The concern of the planner of the literacy programme therefore, is not with the process, but with the quantifiable result. The concentration is on increasing the numbers of literate people at the lowest possible cost; in the shortest time possible (Robinson-Pant, 2001:2).

Linking literacy and development has led practitioners to quantify and correlate literacy with other indicators of development. Literacy programs that target the poor are usually premised on the idea that improving the levels of basic education will lead to achieving a development goal. For example, it is believed among economic growth scholars that the basic education status of women is a pre-requisite to achieving the development goals of enhancing agricultural productivity, improving health and nutrition, and reducing fertility. However, as Robinson-Pant (2001:2) argues, such correlations, even though used in policy documents, do not confirm that there is a relationship between the basic literacy and

development, because a significant statistical correlation does not automatically indicate a cause-effect relationship.

Furthermore, Hart (1996:36) has argued that linking illiteracy and poverty leads to blaming individuals for underdevelopment. Underdevelopment ceases to be a public affair and becomes a private affair blamed on failed individuals and families. She further asserts that in many cases this ignores the fact that it is not the individual lack of literacy, but the economy with its structural inequalities to access and opportunity that causes poverty. Thus, if an individual does not participate in a development program, they are looked at as irresponsible. Meanwhile, they may be busy carving out a meager living.

Similarly, Cooke and Kothari (2000:51) have argued that there are situations where individuals find it easier, more beneficial and habitually familiar not to participate in literacy. They assert that for poor people, choices are limited:

"It seems where poor people are concerned, their choices maybe seriously limited, the scope of variation narrow. They may lack the resources for effective participation and yet remain vulnerable to their livelihood strategies based on kin and existing social structures".

For example, Chlebowska (1990: 89, 93) while explaining reasons for non-participation of women argues thus:

"Lightening the workload of the rural women for them to find time entails first and foremost, an improvement in their living conditions in general and in particular, a solution to a range of problems like health, hygiene, accommodation, water supply, roads and rural tracks. Walking long distances to collect water and firewood remains an unsolved problem in many third world countries. These tasks that oblige women to walk for miles prevent them from performing other activities which would be of great benefit to them".

The arguments presented here do not suggest that there is no link between literacy and development or otherwise, but they pose questions about the purpose of providing literacy. As Oxenham et al have argued, that knowledge and skills by themselves might not guarantee a decent livelihood, if the economic environment is not supportive. I began to wonder if illiteracy is a result of unfair conditions and opportunities in terms of unequal distribution of resources. I wondered what happens in the FAL to non-literates. Are they also blamed for

underdevelopment and if so how does this affect their participation in the program? I asked what kind of literacy is being provided in whose interests? In order to begin to find answers to these questions, this research starts with the people's lives.

2. 4 LINKING LITERACY AND LIVELIHOODS

The link between literacy and livelihoods was established at least three decades ago in the EWLP with UNESCO. The linkage was premised on the idea that literacy skills should not be ends in themselves, but should serve a purpose that is important to the learners (Oxenham et al, 2002:18). This marked the inception of the functional approach to literacy (refer to Chapter One: 1.6.3). This approach acknowledged that most of the literacy participants are poor people with livelihood needs to meet, and adult literacy should help them meet those needs. James (1990:18), Chlebowska (1990:14) and Oxenham, (2004:6) among others have argued that if literacy is to be meaningful to the learners it must be based on their needs. Betts J(2002:62) also argues that literacy provision should respond to the daily realities of the poor, that is, their needs and practices, hopes and aspirations. She further argues that literacy should start with what people already have, know and do instead of assuming that the learners are 'unknowing empty slates'.

However, as Kowalski (1988:121) argues different planners have different ways of approaching the concept of needs and livelihoods. Some needs are conceptualized by the people delivering the program and in many cases; programs are designed in this manner, taking few or none of the needs of the people into account. This becomes a recipe for disaster, because as has been argued, learners know why and when they need literacy skills in their daily struggles (Fordham et al, 1995:14). They further argue that when they are made automatic recipients of programs that are already planned for them, there are chances of the program clashing with its participants' livelihoods. This will lead them to learning skills out of context, that is, if they do come to learn them at all. Acquiring skills out of context undermines the context of learning and promotes the idea that education is detached from reality and is relevant to nothing (James D, 1990:18). And yet if they do not come to participate, they are blamed for not working to promote development and yet in their circumstances, it might be a wise choice; especially if the people for whom it is intended do

not look at themselves as disadvantaged hence in need of literacy (Kell cited in Crowther & Tett, 2001:61).

There have been two approaches looking at livelihoods. The first approach to livelihoods has a narrower focus on production, employment and household income. In this approach livelihoods is understood as the knowledge, skills, and methods used to produce and obtain food, water, clothing and shelter necessary for survival and well-being whether the economy is subsistence, monetised or a mixture of both (Oxenham et al (2001:14) .

The other approach derived from that developed by the Department for International Development (DFID) takes a more holistic view, which brings together the concepts of development, reduced vulnerability and environmental sustainability. It builds on the strengths of the rural poor, and instead of using a needs-based approach, it uses an asset-based approach. The asset-based approach is based on what is available. It aims at strengthening what exists, not at filling in 'needs' that are based on some 'norm' established elsewhere. In this case a livelihood is defined as follows;

"A livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets, (stores, resources, claims and access) and activities required for a means of living; a livelihood is sustainable which can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain or enhance its capabilities and assets, provide sustainable livelihood opportunities for the next generation; and which contributes net benefits to other livelihoods at the local and global levels and in the long and short term"
(Chambers & Conway cited in Oxenham et al, 2001:14).

According to Scott-Goldman (2001:8), this approach recognizes that livelihoods depend on all members in the households and not individuals in those households. It explores how people use the resources and assets available to them to secure a livelihood and acknowledges that people exist in a context, which is the wider community. This influences how different people meet their needs, so this approach helps one to deal with the wider and narrower contexts in which they exist so that livelihood issues are handled holistically.

In adult literacy the sustainable livelihoods approach reveals different realities and ways of thinking about literacy and communication which are essential to people's lives (Betts J,

2002:64). She further suggests, that many of the lessons that have been learned from practice in literacy programs and projects, are coherent with the underlying principles of the DFID sustainable livelihoods (SL) approach to development. Furthermore, Scott-Goldman (2001:7) argues non-formal literacy provision can fit in well with the principles of the sustainable livelihoods because literacy is a means to improving one's livelihood.

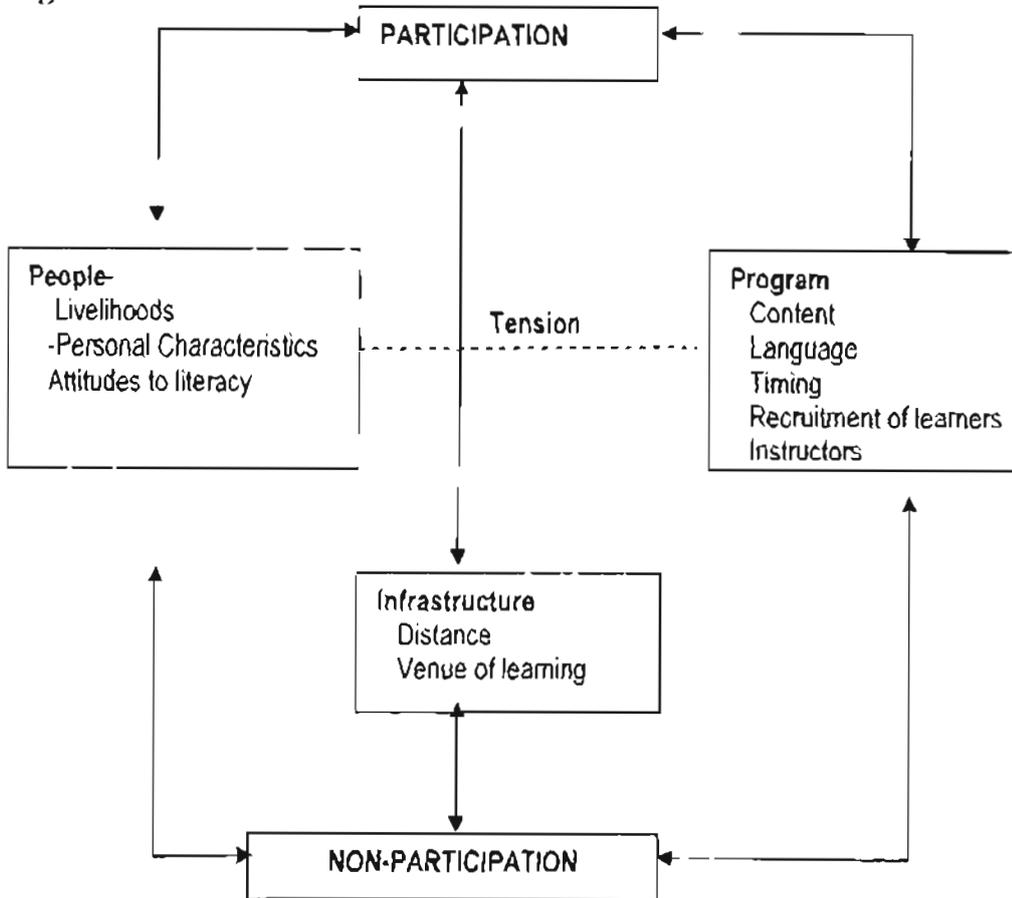
However, Betts J (2002:65) suggests that the sustainable livelihoods framework should be used as a conceptual tool for understanding how people use their lives. She further asserts that literacy work should maintain flexibility instead of drawing neatly on the SL framework principles or trying to fit comfortably into the framework.

In this study, I chose to look at livelihoods in their simplest form as the way people make their living, without going into the complexity of the sustainable livelihoods framework. As my purpose was to understand participation in the FAL program I hoped that an exploration of daily livelihood activities would help me understand the learners and non-literates' participation patterns.

2.5 PARTICIPATION IN THE FAL PROGRAM: A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

From the literature review I have developed a framework for this study that is visually presented hereunder. Participation in literacy programs as presented in the literature is seen to be a much contextualised concept that depends on the development thinking of the time and the understanding of it. In looking at the different issues explored a link is made between people's livelihoods, literacy programs and their development and development in general and how all these are influenced or influenced.

Figure 1



2.5.1 Explanation of the Conceptual framework

The diagram shows that planning a literacy program is a complex process that focuses on three basic issues. The first of these issues is the people for whom the program is intended. The people's lives have to be explored to know who they are and what they do for a living since this is the basis for not only the content but also the organization and structure of the program. In understanding the lives of the people, there is a need to understand their attitudes to literacy as these can directly have an impact on their decisions to participate or not to participate.

The other issue is the programme it self. The way a program is planned and organized can affect the people's participation. The programme therefore is explored to understand how it fits into people's lives and how it helps them to live their lives better.

The third aspect is the issue of context. This includes the infrastructure available to the community to help them and enable them to participate in a literacy program. The study will be looking at the physical facilities available in the community, which will include; water sources, childcare facilities, fuel options and other related issues that governments and other planners may take for granted, but which have an impact on participation in literacy programs.

My assumption is that there is tension in theory and practice in terms of how people live their lives and how programmes are planned on a nation-wide basis in a 'one size fits all' fashion irrespective of the learners' differences.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter explains the methods that were used to collect data for this study and why. It introduces the study design, gives information on the study area and why it was chosen. It examines the sampling process and describes and justifies the data collection instruments. In the last section, the data handling and analysis is described and limitations to the study given.

3.1 Study Design

I went to the field to explore and understand, so I employed an exploratory design. I entered the field without any knowledge of the lives of the people or their patterns of participation in the FAL program. The respondents therefore were the educators, and me, the learner. I set out to understand their lives, their circumstances and their views on the FAL program. I went out to discover if there was participation in the FAL program in this community and if so why; or if not, why not. I had no hypothesis to prove right or wrong. I tend to agree with Leedy (1995:13) who contends that a qualitative type of research more readily addresses an exploratory question.

The research required me to use a wide range of investigative tools. Specifically, I needed to understand the personal characteristics of my respondents such as age, marital status, previous educational background and sex. This information was mainly gathered through observation, interviews and in focus groups. Furthermore, using highly participatory tools, that is, the daily activity clock and the mobility map and observation, I was able to generate quality information about daily livelihood activities and mobility patterns. This helped me to better understand the role of literacy in respondents' everyday lives.

3.2 Study Area

The study was carried out in Mwizi Sub-County, Rwampara County, Mbarara District. This area was selected to host the study because of its unique characteristics and disadvantages, as already mentioned in Chapter one (1.7). Furthermore, this area had never participated in any research activity regarding the FAL program and yet their classes had been active since 1999. Uganda has so many languages, so to choose a research site; one has to be able to speak the

language that the people in that area speak. I come from the same district where this study was done and I could understand Runyankore/Rukiga, the language(s) they speak.

I chose two villages in the Sub-County and randomly selected two classes. The choice of the classes was dependent on those that were active at that time, because most of the learners were busy tending to their fields as it was the peak of the cultivating season. Originally, I had wanted to take one village in the valley and another on a hill thinking that they were different, but I had underestimated the hills. The one time I attempted and went there, half the time was spent climbing up and down, leaving very little time for interaction with the respondents.

Therefore, I settled on the two parishes of Ryamiyonga and Ngoma on the hill, which are eight kilometers apart, and in each I took participants in the FAL program and alongside those, non-participants living in the same villages. The numbers from each village varied because some of the classes, though active, had very few participants at that time.

3.3 Sampling

Leedy (1995:102) points out that a qualitative researcher often selects a few participants who can best explain the phenomenon under investigation. Sampling enables the researcher to select the research site, time, people and events (Burgess cited in Sharan B, 1992:62). For this research, I chose a section of respondents participating in the FAL program and another section of non-participants. The households to involve in the study were purposely selected, with the help of the Local Council One Chairman, looking out for those that had people who were either in the FAL program or those who were not literate. This enabled me to get respondents living under varying circumstances, and I found it very helpful in ensuring that I was not biased towards the people I had met prior to the interviews.

For the interviews, I had not specified the number of respondents before the study, but rather I employed my instruments until I was getting similar responses repeatedly from different respondents. In total, I interviewed twenty-five people, thirteen participants in the FAL program and twelve non-participants.

3. 4 Data Collection Methods

My study was concerned with understanding people's feelings and assessing how literacy fits into the daily life chores of people. This in turn would help me get an insight into both peoples' motivation to participate, and the appropriateness of the FAL program. I therefore decided to use several methods to collect data to allow for changes when need arose in the field. I opted for a combination of conventional tools such as observation, interviews and focus group discussions, and participatory tools that are rooted in Participatory Rural Appraisal like the daily activity clocks and mobility maps.

3. 4. 1 Literature Review

According to Sharan and Simpson (1995:33), a literature review

"Functions as a means of conceptualizing, justifying, implementing and interpreting a research investigation".

I conducted a literature search on different but significant aspects related to my study. I reviewed literature for primary and secondary information that has helped to situate the study in already existing theories on livelihoods, literacy and literacy program development. The literature search was also very useful in understanding the FAL program and the ideas on which it was based. It helped me understand especially the contradiction between what is written on functional adult literacy, and the implementation of the FAL program, in the field. I used both paper records and electronic records to achieve the goals of this search.

3. 4. 2 Semi-structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are those in which an interviewer works out a set of questions in advance, but is free to modify them based on her perception of what seems most appropriate in the context of observation. They can be modified in terms of wording, elaborating and leaving out particular questions, that may seem inappropriate with a particular interviewee or include additional ones (Robson, 1993:237).

The interviews were carried out in the respondents' homes. The instrument was very effective as it permitted face-to-face interaction with the respondents (Sharan B & Simpson, E. L, 1995:150). I tried to make the interview as informal as possible by not referring to a

question paper every time I asked the questions. I trained my research assistant on how to interview, work with the community as they draw activity clocks and mobility maps and what observation involves. This enabled him to ask questions in a flowing manner so that it would appear as though it was a conversation. The interviews were very helpful in getting information regarding the reasons why people chose to participate or not to participate.

3.4.3 Observation

Sharan B. and Simpson (1995:152) argue that observation is one of those methods that allow a researcher a high degree of flexibility. This is because it is directly related to typical behavioral situations in which people are seen in action. During my fieldwork, I found myself engaged in observing many happenings on an unplanned and planned basis that served to benefit this study. The information generated helped me in cross-checking or extending the data collected from the other methods. Better still, the data that was collected through this method was measured, verified and cross-checked at the field level (IIRR, 2000:33).

I observed what the people did, the activities in their homes, reading materials in their homes and distance to places where they accessed basic social services in their communities. I was also able to observe as I interviewed the respondents in their homes. For example, one of my respondents said that she left everything done when she went for the FAL classes, and yet on that day when it was time, one of her friends came to call her to go and dig in a women's group. When I asked about it, she said that it is not work as such because it is a group activity and yet it prevented her from coming to the FAL classes, even though she had said that she was coming. Unfortunately, we left this area before I could explore this any further.

When we talked about visiting their homes some respondents were not willing to let us go there. When we realized this, we convinced them that we were not coming to evaluate their activities at home, but we were visiting them in an environment where they could talk freely. One of the respondents told her friends that we were going to see for ourselves because some of them had told us lies in the group discussions.

Some of the female respondents said that they were coping and doing everything they could to attend the classes, but those who did not attend were not seeing what benefits the participants were getting. After listening to several respondents I decided to observe some of the differences between the homes of the participants and those of the non-participants. I found that some of the homes of the participants including that of the instructor were in an appalling state. In one of the homes, the food was being prepared outside because there was no kitchen. The children's clothes were torn and the house was almost falling apart. All this was attributed to a drunken and violent spouse. One of the neighbours who was not in the FAL ridiculed her in the interview asking us what her neighbour had gained from FAL. This was a completely different picture from that which was given when they came to class. They were all smartly dressed because they knew that they had visitors in their village. This method therefore was very useful in that in addition to giving us the information from one-to-one interaction, we were also able to observe alongside it. All the important aspects observed were recorded in my field diary.

3.4.4 Focus Group Discussions

A focus group is a general term given to a research interview conducted with people in a group, people who share a similar type of experience and socio-economic, ethnic, age and gender backgrounds (Kelly 1999 & Madriz, 2000 cited in Babikwa, 2003:59). In this research, I found the focus group discussion very useful especially after conducting the daily activity clock and the mobility map. The information generated a heated focus group discussion. The respondents were able to interact with each other in a group and give information that they would not have otherwise revealed when asked alone. For example, in one of the discussions one of the respondents expressed that some of the respondents were being beaten by their husbands for coming to attend the FAL programme. All the other respondents tried to 'shut her up' thinking that I had not heard her, but she spoke even louder. Generally, the focus group discussions in this research were very useful in that they gave the respondents some kind of 'protection' and they spoke generally about issues without personalizing them. The focus group discussions were conducted with all the groups of respondents. The man was separated from women during the women's FGDs, but in one

of them, women joined the man when his daily activity clock was being discussed because he requested not to discuss alone.

3.4.5. The Daily Activity Clock

A daily activity clock is an instrument which shows what a group of people do from the time they wake up to the time they go to sleep. It shows the activities that people are involved in alongside the time they do them (IIRR, 2000:33). In this study, the daily activity clock was very useful in exploring and understanding the activities of my respondents and looking at their world through their own eyes. The daily activity clock enabled me assess my respondents' daily workload, pointing out the time spent on each task and which tasks required literacy to be performed.

In my theoretical framework, I emphasized the importance of understanding participation of very poor people in literacy programmes from the context of their daily livelihood activities. This particular study, therefore, explored what people are involved in on a daily basis and where the functional literacy fits in with their activities in light of their socio-economic and cultural circumstances. This is because as has been observed elsewhere, time constraints and workload may prevent potential participants from participating in development activities (IIRR, 2000:33), and if this is coupled with the fact that there is no relationship between the activity and the short term livelihood needs of the people, then they may not be sure why they should participate

We introduced the activity that we were going to do with the respondents. Some of them welcomed the idea and others thought that they were going to write so that I could see whether they had actually learnt to write. We went around the building where we had met and collected all kinds of weeds, seeds, sticks and leaves that could be used. We broke into three groups and found space outside the building under the trees and began to use the materials to construct the clocks. As we went through the process they realized that it was not going to involve any writing or reading and finally we worked together. We used leaves, seeds, sand, sticks and flowers as symbols for different activities because these were the readily available materials and they did not cost us anything. For example, seeds were used for gardening. The respondents were very excited especially when they started collecting the materials saying that they had become real "school children". At the end of the activity

clock each of the groups had a group discussion and analyzed the activity clock. That was when some of the respondents refuted what had been done. One of them told her fellow participants thus: -

"You people let us be honest, how many of us give our children breakfast? For me I know that I cannot afford it and most of you are like me. If you wake up to cook breakfast what time do you get to your garden?" (Ryamiyonga, female FGD).

They then decided to remove breakfast from their clock after a hot argument. Some of them were insisting that they actually have breakfast, so we changed strategy and decided to visit their fields in the morning. Most of them had their pans in the gardens in which they had brought left over food for their young ones.

Furthermore, there were some activities that were done by the women, which they took to be insignificant, some of these were generating income for their homes. An activity like getting groundnuts out of their pods was looked at as though it was passing time and yet it was usually done in the afternoons on a large scale or in the evenings as one is cooking and the nuts were for sale.

3.4.6 The Mobility Map

One of the arguments for the provision of literacy to the rural poor is that it helps them access resources that they otherwise would not have, because of their inability to read and interpret sign-posts, signs and other labels in and outside their communities (World Bank, 2001:88). A mobility map is a way illustrating either by location or schematically, the main places that people travel to in their daily struggles (IIRR, 2000:33). Therefore the mobility map helped me illustrate if and how often the respondents moved out of their community and for what reasons. By doing this, it helped me assess whether the activities that were carried out in and outside the community required literacy skills, which in turn helped me understand if this was a motivating or demotivating factor for participation. The construction of the mobility maps was also done in groups and after the activity, the different groups explained to their fellow members what they had done. We used local

materials and drew the map in the sand. After the activity, the map was transcribed onto paper as presented by the community. The mobility map was done with all the twenty-five respondents to help ensure a good comparative analysis.

3.5 Data Analysis

Mouton, J (2001:108) describes analysis as involving 'breaking up' the data into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships. In this study, analysis was done as a continuous process, in that, at the end of each day, I edited the data that was collected for that day. The editing process helped me see where there were missing links and I planned for the next day putting in mind such a missing link.

At the end of the fieldwork I gathered all the data and separated it according to the instruments used to see if there were any similarities or if there was any information that was feeding into another set of data gathered using another instrument. These helped me in developing the themes for the study. All this was done manually, using flipcharts and sometimes using the micro soft word processor. This ensured that every voice of each of my respondents was heard speaking for itself, as all the answers that were given were all valuable to this study.

3.6 Limitations to the study

During fieldwork there were some limitations that I encountered which led to some changes in what had originally been proposed.

Firstly, I come from the same sub-county and it takes about an hour and fifteen minutes to reach where I grew up. The language we use in this area is assumed to be the same, which it is, but having a conversation with someone from my study area showed me that the language may sound the same, but the dialect is completely different. I had anticipated this, with guidance from my research assistant who comes from that district, whom I trained in all the instruments that were to be used and explained to the purpose of the research. Indeed when we reached the field, I found that language was a problem, so in most cases the research assistant asked the questions and I took down the answers. For example, the Bakiga speak in

past tense when they mean the present tense. Listening to them I would hear everything being said as though it had happened in the past, and yet they would be telling me that it was happening then.

I had planned to use a tape recorder for the interviews, but this could not happen. I realized that the first people we used it with were very uncomfortable. They went and told the rest whom we had not interviewed on the first day. We realized that people were holding back. We were later told that they feared being heard on radio because they thought we were going to broadcast what they were saying on the local radio station. We abandoned the tape recorders and started conducting the interviews and taking down the responses. This meant spending more time than originally anticipated.

Some of the respondents in one of the villages did not want to talk to us. Some would keep following us wherever we went to hear what we were asking. This happened a lot especially in one of the villages where we moved with the local council chief, who is one of the arresting officers of defaulters of graduated tax. One of them came and asked why we were moving around their village and when he was told why, he shouted to another group of people saying, "*they are not coming to arrest us, we were deceived*". Rumors had circulated that we were looking for those who were not attending FAL to have them arrested. The people in the rural areas are usually arrested for not paying graduated tax by the local council chairman and the local defence unit. Most of those who were running away were men. Some of them did not want to talk to us because they did not want the community around to know that they are not literate.

The study was done at a time when participants and non-participants were busy clearing their fields for planting. Therefore the group activities usually started very late and had to end early. The interviews were done in the afternoons into the late evening because the respondents worked both in the morning and afternoon. Mwizi has a hilly terrain and this restricted our movement to some places. We could not visit the classes and villages in the valley because the hills were so steep. This limited us to the villages on the top of the hills that appeared to have better social amenities.

CHAPTER FOUR: THE FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter gives the results of the study. It presents the respondents' personal characteristics, daily livelihood activities, and the issues related to motivation to participate or not to participate in the FAL program. The chapter also looks at the structure and delivery of the FAL program.

The study was done in a rural village in Uganda inhabited by poor people who have no access to clean water, electricity and many other social amenities. The people cultivate for a living and some of them keep animals for sale. Water is fetched from dug wells and firewood is in the form of shrubs that women find grown near gardens where they will have cultivated.

4.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS

The socio-economic characteristics of the respondents were thought to be pertinent to participation and non-participation in development programs. Those explored in this study include age, sex, marital status, and the respondents' means of livelihood. Since the number of children that one has and their age might determine whether or not one will participate in FAL, I also looked at the number of children that the respondents had and if they were attending school. I explored the level of education of the respondents and asked participants how much time they had spent on the program.

4.1.1 Participants in FAL by age and gender.

Table 1

AGE	GENDER	
	Female	Male
26-35	2	2
36-45	6	
46-55	4	

As shown in table 1, the respondents that were participating in FAL were mostly female. There was one male in each of the two classes. This gender imbalance has been noted in other classes elsewhere in Uganda while carrying out an evaluation of the literacy programs. It was found that 79% of the population used in that evaluation were women.(see World Bank, 2001:17).

4. 1. 2 Non-participants in FAL by age and gender

Table 2

AGE	GENDER	
	Female	Male
19-30	2	1
31-40	4	1
41-55	4	1

As table 2 shows, there were ten female non-participants that I worked with and three males. Among the non-participants, it was the females who were willing to speak about their non-participation and their literacy status. Most males feared speaking to me, because they thought they were going to be arrested for non-participation. Others did not want to acknowledge that they were non-literate. In some households that we visited there were males that were non-literate, who claimed that they were literate. The non-literate were identified by the local council chief because he knew those who used their thumbprints in registration for the village meetings.

4. 1.3 Respondents by Marital Status

Table 3

MARITAL STATUS	No of participants in FAL	No. of non-participants in FAL
Married	9	9
Widowed	4	2
Separated	1	2

As shown in the table above, most of the respondents in both categories were married. There were no marked differences between those who were widowed or divorced and those who were married, in terms of attendance and non-attendance. Noteworthy was the fact that the widows and divorcees explained that the decision to come to the classes was for them to make, while the married women had to run it by and get approval from their spouses.

4. 1. 4 Livelihoods and literacy

As has been noted, majority of Uganda's population lives in rural areas and mostly depend on agriculture. The respondents in this study were involved in many activities, the major one of which was cultivating. Mwizi experiences two rainy seasons in a year so cultivation and other related activities are done throughout the year. As has already been mentioned in Chapter one, the cultivation is done on a small scale mainly for the purpose of sale and the household consumes the surplus. The major crops are Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes, peas, groundnuts, and sorghum.

The gardens in the households of married respondents were divided between men and women. They both had family gardens on which the women planted food for the family and there were other gardens that had food for sale. On the market day, each of the two sold what would have come out of his or her garden. Sadly, sometimes the men demanded their portion of the household produce from their wives' produce, for "waragi". This was done irrespective of whether the family needs had been met or not. Despite men having their own produce and animals which were sold for income, they encroached on the family income. The women therefore put a lot of effort in cultivating so that they would manage to pay fees, buy household needs and in some cases pay the graduated tax for the husbands.

4. 1. 5 The daily livelihood Activities

The findings about the people's livelihood activities were generated from the daily activity clocks, observation and field notes.

4.1.5.1 The daily activity clocks

The daily activity clocks were employed to find out what the respondents do from the time they wake up to the time they go to bed. It helped to explore and understand what activities

the respondents are involved in and for how long every day on an hourly basis. The daily activity clocks also helped me understand where in the lives of the respondents literacy is useful. Below is a visual presentation of the activity clocks.

Figure 2
Daily activity clock for women participants in the FAL (Rwenyaga).

TIME(am-pm)	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
DAY																	
Monday	school children	Gardening/firewood					prepare lunch/			F A L**			Fetch water	Prepare supper			Eat/pray/sleep
		→					→						→				
							wash dishes										
Tuesday	children	cultivating/firewood					Prepare lunch/ wash dishes/eat lunch			cultivating/IG A			Fetch water	Prepare supper			Eat/pray /sleep
		→								→							
Wednesday	children	Gardening/firewood					Prepare lunch/ wash dishes/eat			FAL**			Fetch water	Prepare supper			Eat/pray/sleep
		→											→				
Thursday	children	Market**					Prepare lunch			cultivating/IG A			Firewood/water	Prepare supper			Eat/pray/sleep
		→															
Friday	Breakfast	Prayers**		Water/firewood/prepare lunch/wash dishes/eat						Cultivating			Prepare supper	Eat pray sleep			
				→						→							
Saturday	Cultivating			Firewood/lunch/water/wash dishes				Wash clothes/weed around home/attend women's groups**			Prepare supper	Eat/pray/sleep					
Sunday	Breakfast/prayers**				Prepare lunch/wash up				Visit friends, firewood, water			Prepare supper	Eat pray sleep				

Figure 3
Daily activity clock for women non-literates in the FAL (Kabura).

TIME (am-pm)	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
DAY																	
Monday	Fetch water/children	cultivating/firewood →				Prepare lunch Open bars/rest**	Cultivating Open bars**/ IGAs		Open bar/restaurant**/prepare supper/water/firewood				Eat pray sleep				
Tuesday	Fetch water/children	cultivating/firewood →				Prepare lunch Open bars	Cultivating- /IGA →		Open bar/restaurant**/prepare supper/				Eat/pray /sleep				
Wednesday	Water/children	Gardening/firewood →				Prepare lunch Open bars**	Cultivating/ IGAs		Open bar/restaurant**/prepare supper/				Eat/pray/sleep				
Thursday	water/children	Market** →				Prepare lunch/rest. Open**	cultivating/IG A, Open bar		Open bar/restaurant**/prepare supper/				Eat/pray/sleep				
Friday	Water/firewood	Prayers**		prepare lunch/wash dishes/eat →			Cultivating IGA, Open bar ** →				Prepare supper		Eat pray sleep				
Saturday	Water,cultivation			Firewood/lunch/wash dishes			Wash clothes//attend women's groups**				Prepare supper		Eat/pray/sleep				
Sunday	Firewood/water Breakfast/prayers**			Prepare lunch/wash up			Attend to customers				Prepare supper →		Eat pray sleep				

**Literacy and numeracy skills are needed to carry out these activities, but they can be done without the skills.

Figure 4
Daily Activity Clock for Male learners of FAL. (Kabura)

TIME (am-pm)	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
DAY																
Monday	Fetch water/Cultivate				Rest/ Graze animals		Lunch		FAL**			Rest/visit friends			Eat/sleep	
Tuesday	Cultivate				Rest/read FAL books**		Lunch		graze animals			Rest/visit friends/go to the trading center			Eat/sleep	
Wednesday	Cultivate				Rest/graze animals		Lunch		FAL**			Rest/visit friends			Eat/sleep	
Thursday	Fetch water	Market**/lunch						Grazing animals			Visit friends in the trading center			Eat/sleep		
Friday	Cultivate	Prayers**			Graze Animals/rest		Lunch		Grazing animals/rest			Visit friends			Eat/sleep	
Saturday	Cultivate				Rest		Lunch		Grazing animals			Rest/visit			Eat/sleep	
Sunday	Prepare & go for prayers				Rest (trading center)		Lunch		Visiting/resting			Back to the trading center			Eat/sleep	

Note:

Men fetch water only when they feel like it otherwise women do it. When the men do it they use bicycles as the distances are long. It is against custom and tradition for women and girls to ride bicycles.

- Men graze animals and they retire when the children are back from school so that they can take over.

FIGURE 5 Daily Activity Clock for Male Non-literate participants. (Kabura)

TIME (am-pm)	7	8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
DAY																
Monday	Fetch water/Cultivate →				Rest/ Graze animals		Lunch →		Rest/visit friends →			Rest/visit friends →			Eat/sleep	
Tuesday	Cultivate →				Rest		Lunch →		graze animals →			Rest/visit friends/go to the trading center			Eat/sleep	
Wednesda y	Cultivate →				Rest/graze animals		Lunch →		Graze animals/visit friends →			Rest/visit friends →			Eat/sleep	
Thursday	Fetch water	Market**/lunch →						Graze animals →			Visit friends in the trading center			Eat/sleep		
Friday	Cultivate →	Prayers** →			Graze Animals/rest →		Lunch →		Graze animals/rest →			Visit friends →			Eat/sleep	
Saturday	Cultivate →				Rest →		Lunch →		Graze animals →			Rest/visit →			Eat/sleep	
Sunday	Prepare & go for prayers →				Rest (trading center)		Lunch →		Visiting/resting →			Back to the trading center			Eat/sleep	

Note:

Men fetch water only when they feel like it otherwise women do it. When the men do it they use bicycles as the distances are long. It is against custom and tradition for women and girls to ride bicycles.

Men graze animals and they retire when the children are back from school so that they can take over.

The daily activity clocks revealed that all respondents are involved in agriculture, mainly cultivation, trading and keeping of animals. Keeping of animals, mainly goats, is a preserve of men. Even those that are traders find time to cultivate.

On average a woman in Mwizi in the literacy class works for a total of fifteen hours a day. The activity that takes the highest amount of time is cultivation on the family land. Women work in their gardens twice every day, in the mornings and the evenings. Most of the work that takes women's time is household work, leaving them little time to engage in income generating activities.

FAL classes are held on Mondays and Wednesdays. However, not all the learners enrolled in the FAL program attend all the classes.

The women's daily activity clocks revealed that there is a marked difference between those who participate in FAL and those who do not, in terms of what they do in the afternoons. The clocks show that the non-participants open bars and restaurants or cultivate in the afternoons. The activities they do earned them tangible benefits. The non-participants who have such responsibilities spend the early hours of the morning fetching water for the preparations, so that on coming from the gardens, they begin the cooking. Even though they spent a little bit of time working on their income generating activities (IGAs), they revealed in the discussions, that they are better off than the FAL program participants (see 4.4.1).

The clocks show that respondents do not have breakfast before going to their fields. As soon as they get out of their beds, they make sure that the children leave for school without breakfast and rush to the gardens. This study was carried out in the dry season and it would get very hot as it approached afternoon, so by 6.30 am women would already be in the fields and their target was to dig a sizeable chunk of land before the sun became too hot. They

packed porridge or left over food for the small children. (*Observation in a garden, Rwenzoga, 7/07/04*)

Firewood and water in this area are very difficult to access so people walk very long distances to get them. Many collect thin sticks and shrubs for firewood. It is common in Mwizi to find a woman with a bunch of such shrubs on her head, a child on the back, a bunch of bananas on top of the firewood and a hoe on the shoulder, at about twelve noon (*observation, field notes, Kabura*). This is after she has dug for about six hours in the morning. After the cultivating, she goes home to prepare lunch and in some cases leave before eating it to be in time for the FAL classes (*see 4.4.3*).

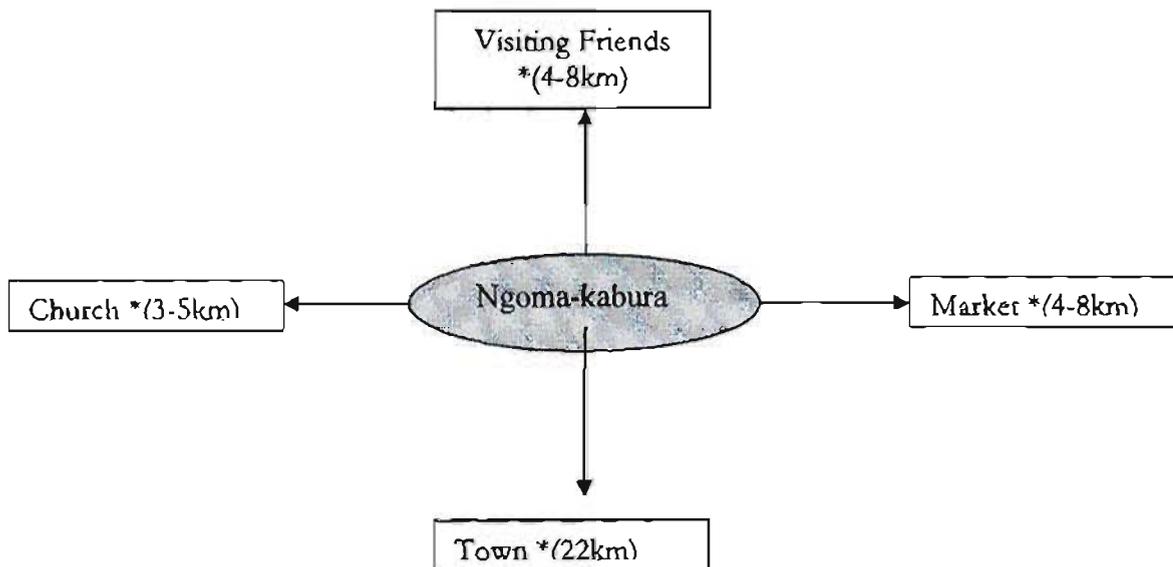
By comparison, men cultivate for fewer hours than women. The women commented that in most cases, men are involved in cutting down shrubs and doing other supportive jobs to cultivation. After cultivating, men usually go home, wash their feet and rest as they wait for lunch, as they will have finished their major task for the day. Where there are animals to graze, the men take them and tie them up in the fields before their rest. After lunch, they have a siesta up to about 4.00pm when the sun goes down and they take the goats out to graze. Most of those that have children, ask them to look after the goats after school at about 4.30pm. This gave them time to visit and interact with friends in the evenings as they passed the time, until they would go home and have supper.

In their daily activities, literacy is only needed occasionally and is a skill that the non-literates manage to do without. Taking a look at the women's activity clocks shows that in all the activities they carry out, literacy is only useful in the market, prayers and in women's groups. For the prayers in church, most of them could memorize the hymns without reading and someone took the reading for all of them to hear. Unlike FAL programme participants, some non-literates have income generating activities whose operation would have been made easier if they had literacy skills. But many of them choose not to go for FAL in order to attend to those activities.

4.1.5.2 The Mobility Map

The mobility map was used to find out where respondents went to within and outside their communities. This in turn helped me to know where in these movements they need literacy. This served as an exploration into the purpose of literacy in the everyday and occasional movements of the respondents, hence making it a motivator for attending or a demotivator for not attending the FAL program classes. The mobility maps were done with all the groups of respondents, separating women from men. We constructed the maps using sticks, stones, white sand, soil as symbols for roads, health units, towns, markets and other locally available materials. Below is a visual presentation of what was done then by gender and location.

Men's Mobility
Figure 6

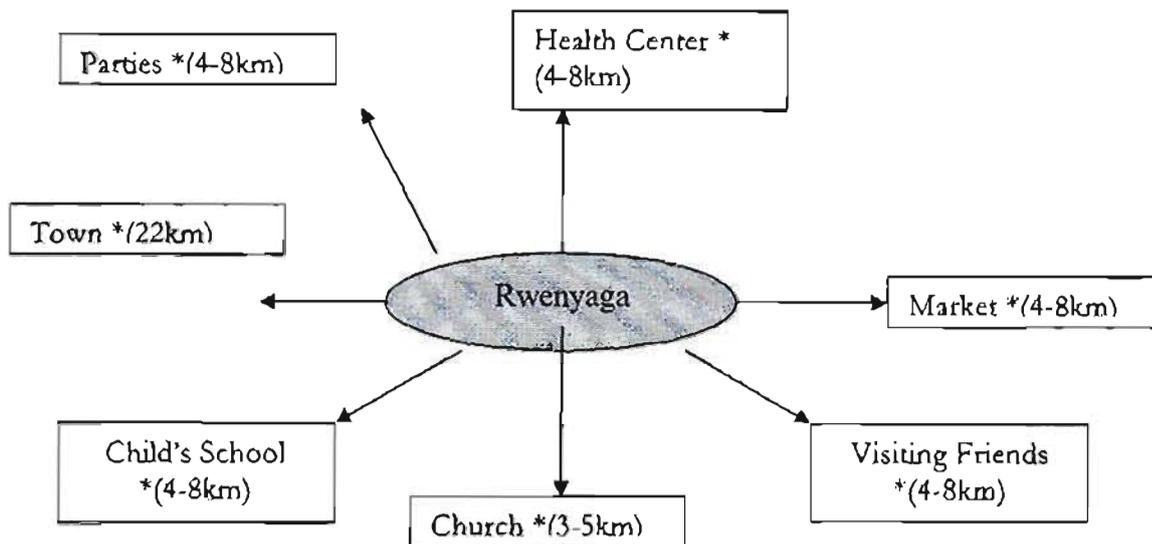


Note: ** means literacy was required for that activity or in that place.

For the male non-participants, apart from attending the FAL classes the rest of their mobility map was the same.

This mobility map represents movements of over a one-month period.

Women's Mobility
Figure 7



Note: women non-participants had a similar mobility map apart from attending FAL classes. Like the male's map, these were movements made in a period of one month.

The mobility maps show that women tend to move more than men. Child-care related activities such as taking sick children to hospital and visiting children at school are done by women. As shown by the mobility maps, both the participants of the FAL and the non-literates moved to similar places.

Although no one indicated that having no literacy and numeracy skills prevented them from moving to where they wanted, from the discussions I had with the FAL participants, it was clear that they were able to cope better after FAL than they did before joining the FAL, especially at hospitals and markets as shown below:

"When I go to hospital and am given a number, I can tell what number it is and I go when my turn has come. Before FAL, people used to go in my turn because I would not know that they were calling out my number" (Female FGD, Kabura).

"In hospital, sometimes they would tell me to go and find a door number that I had no idea what it looked like. If I would not get anyone to ask, I would go away without seeing the health worker; but now I can find it myself" (Female FGD, Rwenyaga).

"When I go to the market these days, I know how to check and read the weighing scale. If the traders from town are telling me lies, I tell them so and they tell me that old woman as you have become "sharp" and that makes me feel proud. (Interview with a female participant, Rwenyaga)

On the other hand, discussions with non-participants revealed that they relied on other members of the household or community to cope in similar situations as expressed below;

"When I visit the hospital, I go with one of my children who can read. If they give me a number the child tells me when my turn has come. If the children are not around, I ask the health worker what the number is". (Interview with a female non-participant, Kabura).

"I know that I cannot read or write so I do not bother myself with the weighing scale. If I want to sell my produce in the market I go with the children and since I do not sell every day, if I miss one market day I wait for the next. If the children are not there I ask anyone I know in the market or my husband for help". (Interview with a female non-participant, Rwenyaga).

4.1.4 Number of Children and schooling

All the respondents except one of the non-participants have children. Of all those who have children, only one of the respondents (a participant) who has fifteen children, has some who are not attending school. She said that the rest were not going because she could not afford the fees for all of them. She is on the disciplinary committee of the FAL class and has been in FAL since its inception. Her husband has two wives and many other children so supporting her children is solely in her hands. Even though there is Universal Primary Education (UPE) in the area, she can not afford the additional money they are told to pay and buy school uniforms and lunch for all of them. She came to the FAL class in 2001 to learn how to vote, but had not yet learnt how to write her name.

4.1.6 Educational Background

All the respondents, both the participants of FAL and the non-participants had never been to school. When the program started, the learners were composed of both literates and non-literates. When non-literates complained that they were feeling left out, learners decided to have these classes exclusive for the non-literates. One of the participants cited instances where the already literate participants would make them feel stupid: -

We chased out those who had ever been to school because when we asked questions, they shut us up and told us that we were stupid. They would ask us that how could we not know the letter 'a'?
[Women FGD, Rwenyaga, 5/07/2004]

4.1.7 Time spent on the Program

Of the participants in the FAL program, seven had spent five years, four had spent between one and two years, and three had spent less than a year. What should be noted however is that although most had been on the program for a long time, the actual time spent in class was less than that. This was because while the program runs throughout the year, some of the participants keep dropping in and out of classes especially during, planting, weeding and harvest seasons.

4.1.8 Local Leaders' involvement in the FAL program

From the informal conversations with the local leaders, their ideas about FAL were very scanty. For example, while taking us around the village, the Local Council Chairman (LC I) admitted that he had heard about the FAL but had never given it serious thought. He said that he knew that old people go to learn, but he had never seen it as a useful program since all those that attended, returned the way they went, in terms of tangible benefits. In another incident, while asking the Sub-county chief for permission to carry out the study in his area, he said that he knew very little about the program. He expressed his surprise about people wanting to carry out research on such a program. Nevertheless, the LC I chairman helped us and took us around identifying those who could not read and write and were not participating in the FAL program. They knew because they were all born in this area and they knew who uses a thumbprint and who signs with a pen. They also acknowledged that illiteracy was a big problem in their area because it had been neglected or a longtime. The local council chairman also explained that Mwizi had a very bad access road and the culture

hindered girls from going to school. He said he would encourage his village members to attend.

4.2 MOTIVATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FAL PROGRAM.

In order to understand why some people living under similar conditions choose to take part in the FAL and others chose not to, I explored the reasons for joining the FAL program for those who were participating. The reasons for participating were as diverse as the participants of the program and most were somewhat personal. Most of the respondents that I worked with wanted to learn to read, write and count, but this was supposed to be a means to an end.

4.2.1 To avoid getting lost

One day I was I left my home going to the hospital to see a relative in town. I was told as I left home that when I see a big poster with a sign of a cross, I get out and cross the road. When I reached town, all the posters seemed the same size. I feared to ask the conductor thinking that he might be a thief and steal my things. I got out in the middle of town with cars running everywhere, and I asked a man who directed me to a place and told me that it was the hospital. I by-passed the hospital on my way and was only helped by a policeman. I think everyone could read it on my face that I was illiterate. I felt like a blind man all the way back home. I decided that day that I was going to join the FAL so that I would be able to use my eyes and read for myself.

[interview with a participant, Rweinyaga, 6/07/2004]

4. 2. 2 “To avoid ‘abusing’ myself”

In the Bakiga and Banyankore culture, when a person points their thumbs at you with the part of the nail facing your direction, it is an abuse. It usually means that one is telling you that ‘you will die in that state’ and usually it is not a pleasant one. Some of the respondents said that they came to learn to write their names so that they would stop using the thumbprint. Using the thumbprint meant that the nail part of the thumb would be pointed in their faces and in effect they would be abusing themselves, commonly known as ‘*kuhu mutinzi*’. They said that they wanted to stop abusing themselves and learn how to write their names.

4.2.3 To learn to vote

In one of the villages all the people that had joined for more than two years wanted to learn how to vote. This was because of an experience that they had as a community. In one of the local council elections a few years ago, those who could neither read nor write were assigned agents who were to help them vote. On the day of the voting the agents went with the voters and helped them to tick the wrong box because they could not read the names of the candidates.

When the results were read everyone was shocked to find that the candidate they expected to lose was the one who won the elections. After a few days, the agents revealed the trick that they had used. The whole village descended on the non-literates with insults. Many of the people at that time chose to join FAL to learn how to vote.

4.2.4 To avoid being cheated

"My sister got married to a man who became a drunk and she came back to my parent's home.

Culturally, the man had paid bride price and so it had to be returned. It was valued and we were supposed to pay them 120,000 Shillings. We organized the money and because my father was already dead I had to take responsibility. They came to collect the money and they had already written the agreement, which they brought, and we put our thumb-prints (with my illiterate male witnesses). They left me with a copy and took a copy. After a month the LC I chairman of the area came with a representative from the man's side claiming that we had not paid them the amount we were supposed to. I almost run mad. I had sold all the goats I had to pay them off and now they were back with a pack of lies. The LC chairman asked me for the copy of the agreement they had left me with and I brought it out. I could not believe when I heard what was being read. I acknowledged that I gave them 12,000 Shillings because I was not able to read.

I sold all I had and made sure that I paid them off.

The next week I quit drinking waragi and came to FAL to learn how to read for myself".

[a male respondent, Rweinyaga, interview 6/07/2004]

Some women reported that they had been cheated in the market before they came to FAL. They said that the buyers who are shrewd businessmen from town already know that most people in Mwizi cannot read or count so they take advantage of the situation. One of the women narrated her sad story:

"One day I took my sack of groundnuts to the market to get fees for my daughter who had been sent away from school for fees. I knew that at least I would get enough money to help take her back. When I reached the market, they divided the sack into two portions and they measured. They told me that one of the halves had fetched fifteen kilograms (15kgs) and so had the other half. I pretended that I was checking the scale and said that I had read, but did I even know how to read. They paid me the money for 30kgs and I went away happy that I had got all the money I wanted. When I reached home I went and borrowed money from my neighbour who asked me why I was borrowing when I had just sold a whole sack of groundnuts. I told her that the money out of the 30kgs was not enough. She told me that they had cheated me by 20kgs, but I was already cheated and could not do anything about it".

[Female respondent, interview 6/07/04]

4.2.5 To be accepted in Women's groups

In one of the villages, there was a wave of women's support groups and saving clubs. At the end of each month, members buy household items, which are passed on to the beneficiary of that month. The items included chairs, cups, saucepans, plates, hoes, jugs and many other things. These help the group members own things that they would have otherwise never afforded to own. However, in order for one to qualify to join these groups, a woman needs to know how to write her name. Automatically, those who cannot write their names are excluded. Many of the women chose to join the FAL to learn to write their names so that they would be able to join these groups. What was sad was that some of the learners who had joined five years ago to learn how to write their names had not yet learnt to do so. Their facilitators on the other hand found out why these learners had joined the classes as this study was being done. Some of the women reported that they know how to write their names but could not tell which letters make up the name. Some were reported to have dropped out and when informally asked, they said that they had achieved what they wanted.

4.2.6 To be listened to in public

Some of the respondents said that they were being shut down in meetings and gatherings because they could not write their names, so they had joined to learn to write so that their voices could be listened to in public. It was revealed in the discussions, that when making contributions in public places other members of the community booed those they knew lacked literacy skills. They made comments like *"what is that one going to say yet she or he cannot*

write her name. Some felt bad and if they did not stop attending the meetings, they came to FAL to learn so that those who looked down on them would stop.

4.2.7 To make up for what their parents did not give them

Some of the participants were in the FAL to make up for what they did not get from their parents. They felt that they had got a second chance to attend school again. This came out clearly in a session in their class when they asked if they could present their problems to us. In one of the discussion sessions, they asked if they could tell us some of their grievances about the program. They wanted us to pass on the information to whoever was concerned. They said we could see the people since we were all from town. We agreed and on our way from the fieldwork we passed them on to the Community development officer.

Two of the class members said that the class needed uniforms so that they could stand out and look like the school children that they are.

One of them exclaimed thus;

“Now that you have come, we are also going to shine. All those who have been looking down on us should prepare to see the new us. You are going to give us uniforms; school bags and we shall also look like the school children. Let them wait and see (kind of nodding her head with a lot of pride)” [FGD, female, Rwenyaga 5/07/04].

She said this with pride (*with her hands around her waist*), like someone who has been belittled for a long time and was communicating with some invisible person telling him or her that she was not as stupid as they always thought.

4.3 WHY WERE SOME PEOPLE NOT PARTICIPATING THEN?

Although there were a number of learners in the FAL program in this area, there were equally a big number of participants that were not participating, so I set about exploring why they were not participating.

4.3.1 To be in FAL or not to be; what is the difference?

Some of the respondents that were honest about the reasons for not attending the FAL program felt that there were no tangible benefits that the learners were getting as illustrated hereunder:

Annet is a businesswoman and had been doing her business for a very long time. She has ten children all of whom go to school and one of her children is a university graduate. Her husband is both a primary school teacher and owns a business. She participates in the school activities and in the management of a new parents' school. She has never been to school in her life and to emphasize her distance from schooling, she says she has never even sought shelter from rain in a school since she was young. They are quite well off by village standards (*they served me all my meals the time I was there*). Annet first said she cannot go to the FAL classes because she does not have time and then asked me,

"What have those who have gone there gained? Do they have iron-roofed houses? They pretend that they are like children, carry books and swing their dresses that they are going to FAL when they cannot afford to have a meal on the table".

When she wants to count money, she asks one of her children to help her. She goes to town and buys stock for the shop when she has to. She knows the particular shops and places where she buys the things. She leaves home when all the money is counted.

As she would be serving me supper, I would hear her every night telling the children to go and read. She said that she liked school very much but when her parents denied her the chance she resolved that she would marry an educated man and have all her children educated. [Ngoma, Interview, observation, field notes]

Talking informally to those who went out of the program revealed that for most of them, the program did not meet their expectations as one of them explained: -

"When the program was introduced, they said it was for development (itunguka), like getting into activities that would earn us money, but when we got there, we realized that they were just teaching people a,e,i,o,u. What would I be looking for in such a program?

[Field notes, informal conversation with ladies in a garden, Rwenzaga, 7/07/2004]

Going by the numbers of those that were pointed out as having gone out of the program because of the above-mentioned reason, the number was also quite high.

Lil is 19 years old and is married with two children. She has never been to school. When we got to her house she was just returning from the garden. She said she had heard of FAL but did not know that it was for people like her. She felt she was too young for such a program. She asked,

"You mean it is true that old people join this program and learn?" "What do they learn and for what?"

She said her husband went up to primary seven and always helps her when she has something to be read. She asked us who told us that she cannot read and we told her that we were just guessing. She told us that she lacks the time otherwise she would have loved to come. She says she cannot find time between her family, home chores and the FAL program. She asked if after learning in FAL one can get a job in town. She commented that how can one learn without the hope of achieving anything like a job at the end? We left her laughing at the idea of old people learning.

[Interview, observation Ngoma 8/07/04],

We passed by a man's house, I will call him Gru. He was in his house and we asked if we could speak to him. When we talked of FAL he went off talking non-stop. He told us that it was a useless program that was not helping those who were taking part. He cited five examples of people who were in FAL but their houses were almost falling on them. He told us of those who had enrolled and dropped out because they realized that they were wasting their time. [Informal conversation, observation, Ngoma 8/07/04]

For the respondents whose views have been presented above, their feeling was that there was nothing tangible to gain from FAL. They felt that if people were involved in a program that was not improving their living conditions, they were wasting time. Most of these and others who believed so, told us that FAL was for 'embura mukom' meaning vagabonds. When spoken in the local language it carries a lot of negative meaning in as far as explaining one's uselessness. Those that were operating bars and staying home to cultivate, felt that they were adding to the 'development' (see 5.2.3.2) of their families unlike the FAL participants, most of whom were too poor to afford capital to start businesses of their own. Their benefits were measured in terms of how much they were able to display, tangibly especially in as far as their families' welfare was concerned.

4.3. 2 Lack of time

Among the respondents, there are those that are involved in other activities alongside cultivating that need a lot of time, leaving them no time for FAL.

Agnes is a businesswoman in the trading centre selling crude waragi. Her day begins so early as she has to cultivate on top of operating her bar. Her customers have no time limit, in that they can come very early in the morning and are the last to retire in the night. The peak period for selling is in the evening when people have come back from the gardens and are resting.

She has eight children, four of whom are in a nearby primary school. Those who go to school are in the lower classes so they come home at lunch. As we carry out the interview, two of her children keep coming to play with her.

She has a husband who enjoys the local brew very much and by the time we were doing the interview (about 12.00noon), he was already drunk.

She tells me,

"I have all these children to look after. They need fees, they need food and other necessities and you can see what job my husband does. Even though I was dying to come to FAL, there is no way I would make it because of my children. So I will count my losses and forget about school".

However, she operates her business very well and when her eldest child returns from school, he counts the money, explains to the mother and she keeps it. She says she knows the notes and coins and cannot be cheated.

She tells me that even a child can count money.

[Interview, observation, Ngoma 9/07/04]

For Agnes and many others in her circumstances, life is a struggle to make ends meet. With a big household to feed, dress and educate, she has to engage in other activities to satisfy the needs of her household.

4.3.3 Poor Eyesight

Most of the respondents that were already advanced in age reported that they had eyesight problems. They said that they could not read the things that were written on the blackboards and that every time they attempted to look at anything written their eyes brought tears. This was a problem that was raised by some of the learners in the class that we visited, although here three quarters of the class reported having the problem. We later found out that the class told us so because they thought we would bring Doctors to distribute spectacles, which in this area is seen as a symbol of modernism. For the non-participants however, though there were cases of poor eyesight, most of them said they had never looked in a book or tried to read because they could not read what they did not know.

4.3.4 Go to FAL? Not a manly thing to do.

Most of the male respondents that we worked with felt that by going to FAL, they would expose to their fellow men that they were non-literate. Being non-literate in this society was something to be ashamed of. To be a man in this part of the world and in this culture means to have no weakness. If one had a weakness it should be 'manly' meaning it should not belittle him. In the field we met John who told us why he could not make it to FAL.

John is 35 years old married with two children. One of the children goes to school and the other is too young to go to school. He has a small piece of land and does not keep any animals. He never went to school at all. He also drinks alcohol and likes to socialize with his friends in the trading centre. He asked me,

"What will my family eat if I waste time going for FAL? I cannot come home and my wife asks for salt and I pull out my books. She would leave me and take away the children".

When we asked him if he would go if he was given a source of food, he wondered what his friends would say about him. He said he would have to hide from them for many days so that they would not find out that he was going to FAL. When we asked why, he said that they would think him mad? He was a man and men do not accept weaknesses.

[Interview, Rweinyaga 6/07/04]

For John it is not only about the security of his household but also his security among his friends. He said that if he went he would have to get a new set of friends, as he would no longer be acceptable in his group (see 4.4.5).

4.3.5 I have no clothes to wear to the class

In one of the villages, a male respondent said that he could not go to FAL, because he had no clothes to wear. He said that he was seeing all the people who went to class very smart and yet he is too poor to afford good clothes. What is important to note is that the FAL classes in this area established a code of conduct among the members of their group. The class has a disciplinary committee that is made up of nine members from different cells of the parish. They follow up on each of the members looking at how they dress, and carry themselves in the community. In this group people are required to dress decently and this means not coming to class with tattered or smelly clothes.

4.4 I AM PARTICIPATING IN THE FAL PROGRAM, BUT WHAT IS THE COST?

This came out as one of the very important themes for the participants in the FAL. They were participating happily in the FAL program, but many of them were doing it under very difficult conditions and they or their children were paying the price for taking part in the FAL. For some the cost was financial, while for others it was physical or social. The information on the cost of participation has been drawn from observation, interviews and focus group discussions.

4.4.1 Leaving young children unattended

Most of the respondents who were attending FAL are of childbearing age and many bring their children to class. Those children who stay at home take over the work of the adults in their absence as illustrated in these extracts: -

"It is Monday afternoon and we are walking with an instructor to a literacy class. We pass a house and three children, all less than five years are in the open, in front of the house trying to light a fire and cook food. They are using dry banana leaves to light the fire. They fail because of the wind and their eyes are tearing. We ask where the mother is and they tell us that she has gone to school to

learn. We are told that it is one of the learners' homes. We help the children light the fire and we leave them and caution them not to burn the house. The house is built in mud and wattle and the roof is made out of banana fibres.. (Extract from field notes, Rwenyaga).

This scene was very common in the villages that we visited. In a way the children's lives were put in danger as the mothers went for FAL. Most of these children were left without lunch and they had to cook for themselves and serve the food. In the mornings when the mothers went to cultivate, they took the very young ones to the garden if they were not able to go to school. In the afternoons they had nowhere to put them as they went for FAL.

4.4.2 Being Beaten

Some of the women reported that their spouses beat them up for participating in the FAL program. This issue came out in the Focus group discussion and while other respondents tried to shut the one who expressed it up, she challenged those who were married to say that they were not being beaten. This caused some silence and she went ahead to express thus;

'We do all we can to come for FAL. Some of us are given canes when our husbands come back drunk and they find supper not ready. You come with a swollen face the next day, but you get to learn to read and write'. [Women Focus Group discussion, Rwenyaga]

Some of the women found ways of deceiving their husbands and making them believe that they were economically benefiting from the FAL so that they would be allowed to go. Some of them deceived their husbands that by going to FAL, they would be able to add to the family income and in many cases they justified this by paying taxes for their husbands so that they would be allowed to come, as was expressed in a group discussion: -

'We know how to deceive our husbands so that we can come. Even if it means washing his feet or paying his tax, I will do it and the next day he will say that FAL is doing a good job as women make money from there. He will not know that I dug so many times in different places to make sure I come up with that money'. [Female FGD Ngoma 7/07/04].

4.4.3 Doing the work very quickly.

Most of the respondents reported that they do their work very quickly when they know that it is a day for FAL so that they can come to learn. Doing the work quickly, meant that they left some of the work undone, or half done like some of them explained:

“For me as long as I do all I have to do on time, then no one will have a problem with me. We study from 3.00p.m to 6.00p.m and I make sure that I do all my work on time such that by the time we are going home; I have little left to do. It all depends on how one plans his or her time”.

[Female FGD, Ngoma]

“When it is a day for FAL, I do what I have to do very quickly. For example today because I was digging in the group, we left a bit late. [I ask If she had breakfast] Where do I get breakfast from, the garden? I took a cup of porridge at home and ran here because I know what I want”. [Female FGD, Rweinyaga].

For most of these women, breakfast was a luxury and yet if they were coming for FAL then they also did not take lunch. Compared to the work they did, this was a lot of sacrifice but they said they knew what they wanted.

4.4.4 Absenteeism

Most of the respondents said that they chose to come for some of the classes, but when they were working hard, for example in their fields, they did not come to attend FAL. The instructors said that in many cases the learners did not return and when they did, it was not the same group that came all the time. They said in their opinion that the learners were not serious. However, talking to the learners revealed that they did not absent themselves because they did not want to come; they weighed up their options and decided they would not be able to attend classes. In one of the classes in Rweinyaga, there were eleven learners and yet the total registered number was thirty. In Ngoma, one of the classes that day had thirty learners but we were told that there were supposed to be sixty learners. On average these classes registered a turn up of as low as 15% and 16% of the total learners respectively.

4.4.5 Losing friends

In the interviews, some learners, particularly the men reported that they lost many of their friends because of coming for FAL. They said that at first they used to hide that they were coming for FAL but as soon as their peers found out, they chased them out of their groups. Notably, the men who were in the FAL had become born-again Christians and joined FAL. Only one of them said that he missed being with his friends, but he felt that their refusal to associate with him was more of jealousy than anything else. When they met them in town, they told them that *'you vagabonds of stupid men get out of here and go join women who can not write'* (men's discussion group, Kabura). The men who were in the FAL, however, were proud of their achievements and felt very proud in the village. They said that in church they are counted among people because they own some property, goats and land. Prior to joining the FAL, all the men that I talked to used to drink alcohol in large quantities.

4.5 THE FAL PROGRAM

4.5.1 Funding

The government funds the FAL program under the decentralization system. They are in charge of materials production, supervision and co-ordination. According to the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD)(2002:34), central government's contribution was supposed to be 30%, including the donor funds. The Local governments were meant to contribute 0.8% in 2002 and this would rise by 5% by 2007. The World Bank were meant to make a contribution of 72.7% in 2002 and this would fall to 66.5% by 2007. However as World Bank (2001:95) noted, the government instead has been decreasing its contribution from the original 50% of the total.

4.5.2 The Content in the primers

The content that is being used to teach functional literacy is drawn from the primers. The primers were supposed to be given by the district to both learners and instructors. The Primers that were available and were in use in Mwizi were entitled "Amagyezi n'itungo" meaning "knowledge is wealth". The subject matter looked at the different issues that are related to poverty. In total there were four primers for all the classes I visited, two for each

class. They were a preserve of the instructor. The instructors had instructors' guides for the people who are assumed to know how to read and write entitled "webare kuteeka" meaning "thank you for cooking". The learners had no access to books or primers so they only managed with what the instructor wrote on the blackboard.

The first lesson in the first primer is entitled "*obworo nibubi*" meaning 'poverty is bad'. It has a picture of a woman carrying an emaciated baby, with four other malnourished children around her, one carrying an empty cup. One of the children is squatting defecating on the ground, while the father has his hand on his cheek carrying an empty cup (see appendix 4). The next lesson in the primer is about pests and it shows monkeys eating maize (see appendix 5). The next lesson is about feeding children and it has six children fighting over food, half of them naked, a man seated on a table enjoying a meal and a half-naked woman with her hand on the cheek.

The instructor follows the themes in the primer and when the primer is finished, the class is put on hold until another book is found. Otherwise, they keep on repeating the same content over and over again. Although the primers are produced with the functionality idea, the instructors in these particular classes only concentrate on learning to read and write what is in the primer.

On the day we visited the Rweinyaga class, they were handling the twentieth lesson on the benefits of learning. The teacher wrote the words to be learnt that day and the learners copied them down and then learnt what letters made up the word. For this particular lesson there were pictures of men and women in open place learning about the ten-point programme written in English, a language not understood by any learner in the classroom. There are two groups that are learning and army men in uniform are teaching them (see appendix 6). On another side, there is a man, a woman and a child that are constructing a hut. When the book was passed around on my request, the learners said they were being told to go and learn to be army men.

4.5.3 The Instructors.

The classes I visited had instructors of different caliber. They were all working as volunteers with no pay. All the instructors had got initial three days training on how to teach literacy. One of the classes had two male instructors, one a former primary school teacher;

and the other a catechist. This class had a disciplinary committee and a code of conduct. While telling me some of their problems they said,

“We have no books in which we can draw our lesson plans, we do not have preparation books and wall charts like you see in the primary schools” [FAL instructor, Kabura]

4.5.4 The FAL classes

The church initiated the two classes that I visited. Because of their relationship with the church therefore they were readily availed space. One of the classes was held in a primary school building, while the other was held in a church building that was used as a nursery school in the morning and literacy class in the afternoons. The building for the second class could be used for meetings and any other educational activities.

The space that was a nursery school in the morning had no pictures or any reading material in the class. There was a blackboard, and the chalk that was used was got from what was left over from the morning class. As already mentioned, the instructor carried the primer and a guide to the class. These were the only books that were available to the whole class.

Other classes were held in a primary school. When the lessons for the children were finished, the adults entered to learn. It was well ventilated and well lit but quite small for the learners that turned up that day. The school benches that were used for the primary school pupils were what the adults used. For young children, the seats could easily accommodate three pupils, but for the adults three was too much. The bench was combined with a seat and the majority who could not find seats that day, stood throughout the session (from 4.00p.m to 6.30p.m).

Some women came with their babies to class, who kept playing and running around. This did not seem to go well with the instructors. The class, like any other primary school classroom had wall charts of the Map of Uganda, the human circulatory system, and the skeleton, all written in English.

4.5.5 Dynamics in the Classroom

On the day we attended the classes the session started an hour late because one of the village members had lost a child. Most participants came after the burial. All those who came late, knocked the door very loudly when they arrived. The instructor first pretended that he did

not hear and then after sometime called the learner to enter. When the learner entered, he or she first bowed the head towards the instructor who would then signal her to sit down (if there was a seat) and the lesson continued. If someone wanted to ask a question, she or he would put the hand up and the teacher would pick on who to answer. On this particular day, he chose a section of participants repeatedly and ignored the rest. We later found out that those who were chosen were leaders in this group.

This specific group had a disciplinary committee that ensured that each of the group members did not misbehave outside. If one of the members was found drunk in the community or was the kind who beat up his wife and children, they were brought to the disciplinary committee. We were told that they needed uniforms so that they could also stand out and be recognized in their village.

4.5.6 Timing of the Program

In one class lessons are supposed to run from 2.30p.m to 6.00p.m. However, in effect they run from 3.30p.m and by 6.00pm some learners would have already gone back home to prepare supper.

In the other class, the lessons run from 3.00p.m to 6.00p.m, but in effect most of the members came after 3.30p.m and if the instructor went past the hour of six, the learners would walk out one by one and go home. Some of the learners said that they first run to the gardens in the afternoons before coming to the FAL or they first do the preliminary preparations for supper.

4.5.7 Recruitment of the learners

All the classes that were visited were organized in one group and they used the same books. The learners that had been there for five years were combined with the learners that had spent two months, even though some of their aspirations were different. The recruitment was not based on any specific criteria, but the learner had to be a pure non-literate (can neither read nor write). They were not asked any questions at the beginning apart from their names, which were recorded in a book, if available. If it was not available, people were free to walk in and out of the classes.

4.5.8 Language

The language that was used in instruction was Rukiiga, which was spoken by the majority of the people. The language that was used to produce the primers was Runyankore/Rukiga, where it was assumed that being dialects of the same language, the content would be understandable.

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS.

5.0 INTRODUCTION.

In this chapter I try to find answers to the question of whether “one size fits all” by analyzing the findings. This is done by looking at the participation patterns in the FAL program and considering them in relation to the livelihoods of the participants and the program content.

5.1 PARTICIPATION AND NON-PARTICIPATION

In the FAL program there are two different meanings of participation. The supervisor of the FAL understands participation to mean the number of learners that registered for the program. When asked how many people were participating in FAL, he consulted his registration books (informal conversation, Ngoma, 8/07/04). This was besides the fact that he complained that many of the learners were not attending even though they were registered. These were the books that were used when the learner came for the very first time. He took me through the books so that I could verify the numbers myself.

The program planners on the other hand had a very different idea of participation as applied to functional literacy. The learners were supposed to participate in assessing their needs, formulating the curriculum and in monitoring and evaluation. However in Mwizi, there had never been a study on the FAL program to work with the people based on what they wanted to learn.

In the classroom, participation only went as far as putting up one’s hand to answer a question that was posed by the instructor. When we started using the group methods as we worked on the study, the participants held back because they thought they were doing a test (Field notes, Rweinyaga). They only participated when they realized that they were not going to write anything. This implied that the learners expected to be passive in class and that their instructors had never attempted to use participatory methods for learning.

This contradiction in the understanding of the concept of participation led to the program being implemented as though it was a formal school education programme. Sitting in the adult literacy class in Mwizi was like attending school many years too late. This resulted in the program losing some learners (see 4.4.1), but also attracted some learners who wanted to be “real school children” (see 4.2.7), because of the prestige associated with formal children’s schooling. Those who came and found that the program was not related to their work at home, prioritized and first took care of their fields and came only whenever they had some free time.

5.2 WHY WERE SOME PARTICIPATING AND OTHERS NOT?

Many adult education scholars acknowledge that adults unlike children attend a program to meet immediate needs. In particular, Cafarella (1994:25) has argued that adults are not likely to engage in learning activities unless the content is meaningful to them. Bholá (1994:46) elaborates this further by arguing that poor people have physiological needs, which shape their strongest motivation towards obtaining food, clothing and shelter.

Rogers J. (1977:49), while trying to understand why adults join learning programs, revealed that some join for self-development, that is to improve their general education or to pursue an interest in a particular subject; and the young mothers and middle aged wives feel isolated and trapped by their families and homes; so they join to get out of such circumstances. While her argument fits in well with many developed communities, it does not help us to fully understand motivation to learn in a context where people are still struggling to meet their basic needs.

Rogers A. (2004:64) argues that adults in literate communities join literacy classes for symbolic reasons, for example social mobility, that is to move up the social ladder. This, he says is mainly because they have a feeling that they are regarded with scorn in society because of their inability to engage in dominant textual communications. Rogers further asserts that other people join the literacy classes for instrumental reasons in which they want to accomplish some literacy task. Rogers contends that some adults join classes not because they want to use the literacy skills but because they want to join the literacy set and have friends in the class.

Furthermore, the Commonwealth Secretariat (1980:26) has argued non-literate adults, particularly those in the rural areas do not care much whether they learn to read or not. If the majority of the population is illiterate, the decision to join an adult literacy class is usually an isolated and individual issue. The one that feels deprived in this case will decide to come. If there is little chance of using the literacy skills, the non-literate might not see him or herself as disadvantaged, hence lack of motivation to join the literacy program. In this study the reasons as to why people were taking part or not taking part in the FAL were varied.

5.2.1 Personal characteristics

In some cases, the reasons that deterred non-literates from attending the FAL program were personal. This tended to affect the male respondents more than the females. The gender imbalance in both groups was very apparent with one male in each group (see Chap 4). The total number of registered males was one in a class of thirty and two in a class of sixty. There were many non-literate males who were not interested in the FAL.

Other respondents were advanced in age and failed to attend due to poor eyesight, because as they said they could not read anything written.

What should be noted, however, is that there were some differences between the participants and the non-participants; especially in as far as their work outside the classroom was concerned. They all cultivated on a small scale, but some had income generating activities that engaged them when the others were in FAL classes. There were respondents that operated bars and restaurants and these clashed with the timing of FAL activities. They felt these activities were more profitable in terms of income than attending FAL because they helped them take care of their families.

There were mothers that had young children who they could not leave at home to go for FAL. Some of those that had children were advantaged in that when the children came from school, they helped with the housework. Those who had children that were in primary two, left them in charge of the younger ones when they went for FAL. (See 4.4.1).

5.2.2 Motivation

Oxenham (2001:111b) reported that learners wanted to learn to read and write in several areas in their lives. In this study I discovered that the FAL participants wanted to learn to read and write, but behind this motivation there were other underlying ones. They wanted to learn to read and write but they were specific about what they wanted to read or write after the FAL program. I met a group of people that simply wanted to learn how to sign their names. These did not mind if they understood the letters that make up the name, but all they wanted was to sign the names (see 4.3. 1). This can be related to the arguments by Rogers A. (2004:64) on joining literacy classes for instrumental reasons. For many of these, their purpose was mainly so that they could join women's groups, stop using the thumbprint instead of a signature or vote for themselves and sign. There were some who could sign their names but could not make out the letters that make up their names. Unfortunately, there were some learners that came to learn to write their names and had been there for a long time but had not yet learnt to sign their names (interviews with the learners in Rweinyaga 7/07/2004).

In the group I worked with, no one said from the interviews that they joined simply to make friends as has been argued by Rogers A (2004). and Rogers J(1977). Each of the people that I worked with had reasons for joining the literacy classes and they looked forward to what they were going to use the skills for when they finally got them.

5.2.3 Attitudes towards illiteracy

5.2.3.1 Illiteracy stigmatized

Wagner (1993:3) has argued that since the Experimental World Literacy programme (EWLP), there have been attempts to claim that literacy has a positive impact on economic productivity. He further argued that without an informed population, democracy can be difficult to achieve, especially in a world where printed material remains the primary source of information about development. However as the World Bank (Lauglo, 2001:12) has argued, there is still caution about investment in Adult Basic Education (ABE) because of

among others, claims of high drop out rates among those that enroll, difficulty in implementation and the association of ABE with politics. Many other countries avoid spending on ABE but still expect the results to meet their economic expectations. Governments are caught in this scenario, because they want foreign aid from the developed countries and end up meeting the objectives of the donors at the expense of what their citizens want. As Piortese (2000:120) argues, the introduction of the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) between 1980 and 1986 curtailed the role of the state in the provision of social services like adult literacy. He further argues that while the initial expectation of the SAPs was that they were going to lead to rapid economic recovery, up to now this intention has not been realized. In Uganda for example, the government reduced its expenditure on the FAL program from 50% of the total cost when it started, to now 30%, (World Bank, 2001b:95) Furthermore, the funds that are supposed to come from the districts and Sub-counties are not released (World Bank, 2002:33). However, the government still expects the program to perform very well and meet its targets. Alongside this meager funding usually is the biased recognition that illiteracy impedes the development of high-level analytical skills, and a modern society (Papen, 2001:46). As Papen (2001:46) further argues, the assumption made here is that literacy can bring about social progress, cognitive development, democracy and economic development which illiteracy will work against. This results in looking at illiterates as a disgrace to society and illiteracy as a disease that needs to be eradicated before many other people catch it, as Hautecoeur (1998:131) expresses it:

“A public alarm is sounded, the pathology is diagnosed, the failure of public or private authorities to take the issue seriously is regretted.the illiterate population are seen as being in urgent need of literacy education. ...”

And following this, a program is designed government and sent to these “helpless people” that are assumed to be too ‘ignorant’ to see for themselves that they need these skills. As long as they are told that it is good for them they should rejoice at the idea and hurry to the literacy classes.

The poor non-literates are continuously told by their governments that they are keeping their countries backward because of the lack of literacy skills, thereby making illiteracy an

individual psychosis (Hautecoeur, 1998:136). And yet in most cases, for the illiterates, as Lyster (1992:15) argues, illiteracy is one of the many problems they have in addition to being poor, hungry, vulnerable to illnesses and they are usually uncertain that their miserable circumstances will not decline to a point where life becomes the major issue. For the providers of the programme, as the Inter-Agency Commission (1990:63) suggests;

“Illiteracy becomes a convenient label that implicitly blames the “victims” for their own victimisation”.

This, as Hautecoeur (199:133) has elaborated has subjected the ‘illiterate stereotype’ to a lot of misunderstanding. In his words he says:

“The stereotype of the illiterate is that of a peculiar individual, lost in town, who scarcely knows how to sign his name; a hybrid of an idiot, peasant, handicapped person, poverty-stricken and simple-minded outside”

In the Mwizi community, the stigmatization of the non-literates was very evident and both the literates and the non-literates did this. The people who have had little formal education looked down on the total non-literates, as observed in the comments that were being used to describe the non-literates, when the two groups were still combined in the literacy class (see 4.2.6). Even if they managed to send the literates out of their class, it was mainly because of their numbers and not their ability. In the community meetings they were told that their opinions did not count for anything because they did not know how to read and write. Outside the classes, their neighbours and friends were mocking them because they could not read or write. Those that were not attending the FAL equated those that were attending to vagabonds, which was very insulting (see 4.4.1). In addition to this, while doing this study many men were running away from us thinking that they were going to be arrested because they were not participating in the FAL. One wonders if they would run away if they had not been made to feel personally guilty and responsible for their own situation.

When the stigmatization is gendered it becomes worse when applied to women, because then it is combined with many other characteristics to paint a dim picture. In a meeting in

Zimbabwe in 1989 on the subject of access of rural women to education, the following portrait was painted of a rural woman:

"A colored person, surrounded by young children, repeatedly pregnant, carrying jars of water from the river or well, with a baby on her back and a pile of faggots or branches on her head; usually speaking a vernacular language but not the official one, unable to write and read, knowing little about modern life and progress. . . . with a husband who spends time drinking beer in the village (Chlebowska in UNESCO, 1990:21).

Although this picture depicts what rural women go through in many African countries, it has some connotations that some poor African women may not want to be associated with. Many of the problems that the women face are caused by cultural and social issues that they have nothing to do with.

5.2.3.2 Personal dignity

For the people that participated in FAL and those that did not, there was a remarkable difference between their attitudes to illiteracy and 'development' (entunguuka). On one hand were those that felt deficient without literacy skills in their community and were doing all they could to join and stay in FAL. On the other hand, most of those that were not in the FAL did not feel that they were deficient because of not knowing how to read and write and those that who felt it thought that the FAL program was not the answer to their problems. This group had found ways of making up for not being in the FAL such that they were accepted in their communities for their economic status. Because of this, many non-participants knew about the program, but did not feel that they were in need of the literacy skills. In this community their main concern was the person using the literacy skills for 'development' (entunguuka-that literary means lifting up). Development, here, was defined as follows:

"A person is able to have an iron-roofed house, children going to school, pit latrine, dressing well, food is enough, nice clay plates in the house, good and clean cups, clean children, a husband that is not drinking and other things that improve the home and when

you see her she generally looks healthy” (translated from the local language). [Women’s discussion, Ngoma, 8/07/04]

In this study as has been mentioned, there were people that wanted to join the classes so that they could be looked at with respect in their communities, especially while talking in public. Women especially expressed in the interviews that they wanted to join for this reason, because they were already overlooked and their views were not taken as important in society. When this was combined with being non-literate, another vice in this society, their opinions were considered irrelevant as expressed by one of them:

“If you are a woman and at the same time non-literate, people might take you and throw you in the river because you are nothing. At home your husband does not give you any respect and in the community, people will ignore you as though you do not exist. [Interview, Ngoma, 9/07/04]

However to differ from the argument that is espoused by Rogers A. (2004) for the learners in these classes, it was not just a feeling they had but they were regarded with scorn. It was what they were told all the time by their neighbours and blamed for the backwardness and underdevelopment by their government. Their communities looked at them as ‘second-class’ citizens such that they were denied a chance to interact with people they wanted to because they were not literate. Some chose to hide their illiteracy, but others chose to join the FAL classes and show the others that they were ‘deficient’ but they were going to uplift themselves so that they could be looked at with respect. While talking to the literate members of the community it was clear that they regarded non-literate people with scorn [see 4.3.1].

Mention must be made of the fact that the women worked very hard to make sure that they attended FAL classes. The workload of these women was seen to be extremely heavy and yet some found time to come for FAL. Furthermore, they walked very long distances to collect water and firewood, and this walking for miles prevented them from performing other activities that would be of great benefit to them (see daily activity clocks, 4.1.5.1). The activities that they were involved in while participating in the adult literacy classes were only a very small bit of all the others they needed to live their lives better.

5.2.3.3 Social status

Some of the respondents wanted to take part, for what Rogers A (2004:64) called symbolic reasons. They felt that literacy was going to elevate their level and status in the community. Some women wanted to be seen in their communities writing their names and for them it did not matter whether they learnt to read all the letters of the alphabet. What mattered to them was to be able to sign their names so that others could see them.

On the other hand there were non-participants that would not attend FAL program because this would expose that they were non-literate, pulling their social status lower. As already mentioned, some of the non-participants felt that it was not a manly thing to participate in the FAL program. When a man in this community accepts that he has a weakness, his social image is affected negatively. And this has been influenced by the way literates and the society at large look down on non-literates as people that shame society, therefore making non-literacy something to be ashamed of. So this forced the non-literates to go into hiding, scared of being revealed and ashamed of their inferior image, only known to the local council officials.

5.2.3.4 Citizenship

Closely linked with the reasons that have been mentioned so far, was the need to play an active role as citizens of the community in the decision making process. There was a group that wanted to learn how to vote because they had been used by agents to vote for a wrong candidate in one of the elections (see 4.2.3). They felt that they had been irresponsible to vote for the wrong candidate, so they wanted not only to regain their status in society, but also to vote knowingly the next time elections were held. In addition to this, there were those that wanted to learn to sign their names so that they would be listened to in public. In a way they would have power to talk in meetings and other public places, hence playing a role as active citizens in their communities.

5.3 THE ROLE OF LITERACY IN EVERY DAY LIFE.

For a long time now, it has been acknowledged that literacy especially for the rural poor is more meaningful if it helps them to learn about their daily activities so as to perform them

better (Kahivere in UB, 2004:181). Chlebowska in UNESCO (1990:14) argued that usually people will not attend literacy classes for the sake of acquiring the simple basic skills of reading and writing, unless they are forced to attend. Otherwise, if the literacy programs are not adapted to the requirements of everyday life or survival, women especially will be reluctant to participate (Chlebowska in UNESCO, 1990:55). Non-participation was observed in the 1960s in the EWLP, in which there were widespread failures that were attributed to the idea that what the learners wanted was ignored (Fordham et al, 1995:11). The learners in the EWLP had had some experiences, which shaped what they needed to know from the EWLP. But as the World Bank (2001:114) has explained, although the curriculum designers know that learners experiences are valuable, they do not take trouble to find out what is already known, which results in boring their own participants. As the World Bank (2001:114) has further suggested, a major cause of a disappointing performance of literacy programs is their focus on the mechanics of literacy, neglecting what is interesting, useful and immediately relevant to the participants.

5.3.1 Where was literacy useful in the daily activities?

In the daily activities of the respondents, there were several activities that became easier if one had literacy skills and these occurred in church, in the market and in the women's groups. This, however, did not mean that they could not perform these tasks without literacy.

The only regular exposure of respondents in the FAL classes to literacy, was in the classroom and that was twice a week. Most of the women in this community however, had posters and old newspapers plastered on their walls, written in English or the local languages. However, they reported that they were just for decoration and were not associated with what was done in class (observation, Ngoma & Rweinyaga).

For those that were Christians, they interacted with print in form of bibles and hymnbooks. However, most of them had mastered the songs by heart and so never needed hymn books to sing. Nevertheless many of them went with the bibles and hymnbooks to church, especially those from the Anglican Church, as part of the church tradition. Not all of them could afford these religious books, so they were a preserve of a few and were a status

symbol, in that people who could neither read nor write also carried them to church (observation, Ngoma).

In the women's groups, members needed literacy skills to sign their names. Some of the women were leaders in other domains in their communities and kept membership cards, forms and other literature of the organizations, which they served. For example a Lady was the chairperson of the Red Cross group at the time this study was conducted. She has been in the FAL for five years. She could write her name, but said she could not read well and understand what was written on the Red Cross brochures and materials that were in her house. This meant that for this particular learner, she learnt FAL issues in her class, but they were never related to one of the activities in her life that required her to use printed communication.

Most mothers reported that they had children in school but none of them had ever read with them or looked in their books. This was because, as they explained, by the time the children come from school there is a lot of work to do both for the mothers and the children. At night, they can not read together because kerosene, the major source of lighting is very expensive.

5.3.2 The link between literacy and daily activities.

From the observation made, the instructors' focus was mainly on the primers without making a deliberate attempt to relate it to every day life. It was as if the literacy activities were found in the class and ended when the learners went back to their daily activities. Because of this, the learners' lives were not changing in any way resulting in people mocking them and overlooking them. Some of those who were not participating were not seeing the significance of FAL in the lives of the learners to motivate them to participate (see 4.3.1). Furthermore, the learners seemed to be involved in FAL as another activity in their lives that had nothing to do with their daily activities. One of the instructors expressed concern about the learners' absenteeism because he felt that it was one of the reasons that led learners not to learn anything.

5.3.3 Achievements from the program

Although all the learners said that they had gained something from the program, they were still expecting much more. As one participant expressed: -

"I have been in the FAL since it started (in 1999). I joined the FAL because I wanted to learn how to write my name. I was tired of using the thumbprint and abusing myself. Even though I have not yet learnt that, I know that with people like you visiting these classes, we are going to learn much more". [Interview, Ngoma 9/07/04]

Sadly, they could neither read nor write even though they had been attending FAL classes for more than two years. In the two classes, when they finished the primer that they had, they still went back to the same primer after realizing that they were not getting other books. However for the people who came for specific reasons that had no themes in the primer, their reasons for coming were not yet fulfilled.

If we take an example of the group that came to learn to vote, some said they could sign their names, but might not be able to read what is on the ballot paper (Discussion, Ngoma 8/07/04). In the primer there is no lesson on voting and the instructor of this class had no idea about such issues. It was not because she did not want to find out but because she did not know that she was supposed to perform such a role. If we can imagine for a while, that someone comes to learn to vote and his or her first and subsequent lessons are on poverty, something participants are overly familiar with and the state they would like to leave behind, then we will acknowledge that this can be very demotivating.

5.4 CONTRADICTION BETWEEN IDEOLOGY AND IMPLEMENTATION

As has been observed in the findings, the FAL program was planned as a functional Adult literacy program, but in Mwizi, it is being offered as a purely literacy program, even though the learners have not acquired any literacy skills. This is attributed to various factors, like the planning process and the contradictions between planners of programs and those that implement them. This section highlights some of the contradictions that were found in the field. It also explores why there is a tension between the ideology behind the FAL program and its implementation.

5.4.1 Content in the primers

Kahivere (2004:182) has argued that members of rural communities are engaged in a struggle for survival, but even they have an integrated pattern of life they follow each year. Kahivere further asserts that, in their struggle for survival, the poor are already experiencing poverty and so do not need any new introduction to it.

In the primers, the major theme that runs through is poverty and related issues (MoLG, 1993). Furthermore, the focus on poor people represents the preconceived idea we the elite have of rural communities, where most of the scenarios are extremes that many poor people will not want to relate to. The people are in a way being told about poverty, something they know intimately, without being guided on how to get out of such situations. Some of the people who were not attending FAL could not see themselves as being in a state of deficit at all. By being involved in other activities like running a business or being part of a cultural group they were building social networks and reciprocal relationships in which the need for literacy was replaced by other valuable skills. These they could perform without literacy skills.

The primer that was being used in the FAL classes in Mwizi, was mainly visual, using pictures to show what the lesson was about. In one of the lessons there was a picture of a house falling on a family with many children, meaning that the person had been irresponsible to have more children than they could look after (MoLG, 1993:45) (see appendix 4). Some of the FAL participants had many children (for example the participant that had fifteen children) that were not going to school. Considering the obstacles that the learners face in the process of attending FAL, this portrayal of poverty was an insult to them. There were no pictures that showed a happy family of a learner that has attended FAL and was displaying his or her certificate.

In another section of the primer the theme is pests and animals that destroy crops. The picture shows monkeys eating plants (see appendix 5). This scenario is unfamiliar to the people in the Mwizi community many of whom have never seen monkeys. The instructor

who was supposed to handle the section felt it was very strange and was asking if a monkey can really eat crops. In this area, the people are used to birds and rats.

Such representations of poor people's troubles are a result of trying to combine messages that embrace all regions, cultures and practices in one primer. The assumption is that literacy learners will be able to pick out what is relevant to them and leave out what is not. However, the primers are creating a lot of confusion and unhappiness.

5.4.2 FAL: a program with the wrong name

The FAL program was supposed to integrate learning and life, with learners working on content that is directly related to their lives. That is why it was named the functional adult literacy programme (for explanation of the functional approach refer to chapt 1.6.3). What the integration meant was that the instructor was supposed to invite other people knowledgeable in different fields to handle the functional skills. However, many of the instructors did not know that they were supposed to carry out such activities.

There is nothing about the programme that shows that it is a functional literacy program, apart from the pictures in the primers and the name. This does not serve as a motivation for people to attend the literacy programme, but rather serves more as a demotivating factor.

5.4.2.1 Inadequate training and supervision of the instructors.

As was observed in the evaluation of FAL (Okech et al, 1999:36), most of the instructors were not trained in the functional literacy methodology. And in many cases, their own level of literacy was so low that they could only handle reading, writing and simple arithmetic (Okech, 2004:201). Because of the lack of training, the instructors could not ably handle the content the way they were supposed to. Many of them had no idea about the methodology of functional literacy and therefore could not apply it to teach literacy.

In Mwizi, only two instructors were trained in adult learning methods at the most basic level, for three days. Most of the others tended to teach the way they were taught in school. In addition to lack of training, there was no mechanism for supervision of the instructors at work, as is supposed to be the case. In Mwizi, the supervisor was one of the instructors and

so on top of teaching he had to ride his bicycle to see what was going on in the FAL classes in the whole sub-county. For someone working as a volunteer, this was too much work without pay. What was surprising, though, was that even with inadequate training, lack of logistics and no pay, the instructors are expected to work and deliver like any other educators in the formal education systems.

This lack of training contributed to the poor organization and delivery of the programme, which in turn did not inspire potential learners with confidence in their abilities.

5.4.2.2 Inadequate teaching/learning materials and facilities.

Okech (2004:204) has observed that school classrooms are not physically and psychologically suitable for adult learners. Some classes were being held in primary schools, which exposed the learners a lot to the public, especially their children. This caused some learners to hide their exercise books as they came to the classes. In some cases, they played delaying tactics coming late so that they would not find the school children in the playground.

Furthermore, as reported, there were no primers and other learning materials that caused the learners to interact with what they learnt once they left the classroom in between sessions. There was no provision for chalk so some classes would find they had a blackboard with no chalk. While infrastructural and resource issues are something that might be dismissed without much thought, they can hinder some interested adults from coming and in some cases drive away some that might have already come to attend. This lack of provision is a result of poor planning and implementation on the part of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and social development and the Mbarara District Local administration.

5.4.3 FAL Programme rivaling another government program.

The FAL program is supposed to be based on the functional adult literacy approach that emphasizes literacy skills as integrated with other skills relevant to everyday life. With the functional approach it was hoped that different government programmes would feed into each other and support each other, through establishing collaborations. The FAL programme in Mwizi runs alongside another government programme called the National Agricultural Advisory Services Programme (NAADS).

The NAADS program is a government programme that was started in 2001. Its vision is to increase farmers' access to agricultural information, knowledge and technology (NAADS Secretariat, 2005). It is hoped that by doing this, there will be profitable agricultural development. The guiding principles of the NAADS include among others, farmer empowerment, fostering participatory processes, mainstreaming gender, deepening decentralization and market oriented farming (NAADS Secretariat, 2005). It is meant to promote farming as a business. The primary target of the NAADS is poor farmers and in particular women, youth and people with disabilities, the same primary target as the FAL program. The NAADS targets farmers that are organized in groups. They are supplied with seeds and some farm inputs that enable them to plant on a large scale. It is hoped that in the long run, the donors will pull out and these groups of farmers will be able to purchase their own seeds, materials and extension services.

According to the NAADS secretariat (2005), the funding for the programme is from co-operating partners (donors) contributing 80%, the government 8%, the local governments, 10% and the farmers, 2%. Among the donors is the World Bank that also supports the FAL program by contributing 50% of the total budget.

Sadly, these two programs (NAADS and FAL) run more like business competitors than government programs that are targeting somewhat the same clientele - the poor people. The NAADS program carries out training for farmers on some days. In order for the NAADS trainers to train, farmers must be organized in groups. In the NAADS there are tangible benefits, the people attend the NAADS meetings rather than the FAL classes. The meeting time is the same and the NAADS participants are given free advice and seeds. The people that manage the NAADS program are technical people in agriculture that could have an input into the FAL program if they were asked and they knew what it was all about. This is a sad scenario considering that if there were a form of collaboration, the two programmes would benefit from each other.

5.4.4 FAL; A tool to achieve National Economic Goals or improve people's lives?

Fisher and Ponniah (2003:264) have argued that with neo-liberalism⁴ comes intensified subordination and exploitation. Piertese (2000:120) adds his voice to these two and argues that this subordination is felt in the policies that are made for the people. They are mainly policies that are more concerned with market forces than with the people's needs. The result according to Fisher and Ponniah (2003:203) is that education, a right guaranteed and provided for by the state, is privatized and it becomes a commodity. Education is looked at as an investment that must have returns in a short time. This has caused adult education to be measured in terms of what it contributes to the economy. Adult literacy is looked at as contributing to 'modernizing' or 'civilizing' its participants, who are seen as backward and in need of help (Robinson-Pant, 2001:79). This obscures the recognition that adult learners are key players in their own learning and know what literacy is best for them (MoGLSD, 2002: x). If there are no tangible benefits that are seen to come from literacy, the funds are reduced and the program is implemented haphazardly. This in turn discourages potential participants from taking part, and those that take part withdraw their participation whenever it suits their circumstances.

5.4.4.1 FAL Programme and the Poverty Eradication Action Plan

The FAL program above everything else was supposed to lead to the fulfillment of the goals of the PEAP (ref to chapter 1.4) that are purely economic goals and at the same time empower poor people through participation to raise their incomes. This in turn would contribute to the eradication of poverty as said by the Minister of Gender Labour and Social Development thus:

"The overriding goal of the government is that of eradication of poverty under the guiding Framework of the PEAP. The problem of illiteracy among the poorest people and the need to provide the kind of education that would reduce their poverty is widely acknowledged. . . . Literacy is a key still in helping the poor extract themselves from the conditions causing poverty particularly through access to information" [MoGLSD, 2002:v]

⁴ Neo-liberalism as used here refers to an economic ideology characterized by free market policies, free trade, minimum government spending on social services, and minimum restrictions on trade.

In addition to the government looking at literacy as a disease to be eradicated, the goals of providing literacy have more to contribute to the overall national statistics than to the lives of the people. As the findings indicate, the poor are not near to 'extracting' themselves from conditions that cause poverty. If anything, it is those that are not in the FAL program who manage to engage in income generating activities and improve their living conditions.

Furthermore, the community tended to look at literacy in terms of the social benefits it would bring rather than the economic function it was supposed to play. Learners wanted to elevate themselves from an overlooked group in society to a recognized one. For example, with literacy skills they would join women's groups, sign in public without fear, vote knowing they would not make mistakes that would deny them interaction with other people. All these are more focused on their social image than the national vision of eradicating poverty. It clearly shows that the government, which is the major player in the implementation of FAL, has never listened to these non-literates since the inception of the program in 1999.

5.4.4.2 Structural Adjustment Programmes and reduced funding to FAL.

The FAL programme was supposed to be implemented under the decentralization policy, one of the Structural Adjustment Programs (SAPs) introduced in 1992. In here the central government, the district and the Sub-county were supposed to contribute financial resources to the FAL. The findings however, showed that in Mwizi there were no such resources. For example, in the Mwizi Sub-county plan for three years, there was a budget to allocate funds to the different government programmes, but FAL was not allocated anything (Mbarara District, 2004:3). Some of the people at these levels who were supposed to oversee this resources' allocation were not aware what the FAL was all about. The sub-county chief of the area in which we worked asked what the FAL was about and said he hears people talking about it. This was one of the people that were supposed to make sure that different programmes including the FAL are budgeted for and financed at the sub-county level

As has already been mentioned, the government has reduced support to social services including adult education (MoGLSD, 2002:33). Half of the budget of the FAL was

supposed to be covered by the government while the other half was to come from the World Bank (World Bank, 2001a:95). Since the inception of FAL, the contribution of the government has reduced to thirty percent with the hope that the local governments will be able to top up the rest. This has not happened in the FAL as planned and has led to a lot of planned activities not to be implemented. It was echoed in the evaluation of the FAL in 1999 (see World Bank, 2001:96) that the local governments did not attach as much importance to literacy as did the central government. In Mwizi, the three year development plan (2004-2007) showed that there was acknowledgement that they had high rates of illiteracy, but in the budget there were no funds allocated to FAL.

This reduced funding to FAL has led to poor implementation of the FAL with most of the activities that had been planned undone. This has been mainly as a result of a lack of understanding between what FAL wants to be about which greatly impacts on its organization. For example, at the local level where the classes were being held, the instructors had not been trained, the methodology that was being used ignored functional skills, making the programme very irrelevant; and the materials that were supposed to be provided were not available. The results of poor organization were also seen in the unsuitable infrastructure for the learners. And in light of all this, the need to support learners and instructors became the last thing on the minds of the implementers (Okech, et al, 1999:181).

In the final analysis, for this study, this has been seen to result mainly from the government's focus on achieving economic goals and putting less emphasis on improving people's lives. The major focus being on meeting the goals of PEAP is not linked to any of the strategies being used and obscures the fact that adults come to learn for different reasons, some of which are extremely personal. Most of these reasons are the motivating factors for engaging in FAL without expecting tangible returns at the end of the programme and yet they are the most ignored because messages and lessons are pre-packaged.

Observations have been made in this chapter; conclusions and recommendations will be made in the following chapter.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to find out why some people participate in literacy programmes and others do not. The approach used was to look at the people's lives, the programme, and the infrastructure in the context of how they were related to participation and non-participation. In this chapter conclusions are drawn from the findings and recommendations made. Areas for further research are also suggested towards the end of this chapter.

6.1 CONCLUSIONS

6.1.1 Participation

It was revealed in the findings that participation in the literacy program is low and erratic. People participate when it is convenient for them to do so. As the findings indicate, this is because the program is detached from the participants' daily lives and activities.

There is a tension between the national goals of FAL program and the learner's goals. While the national goals are purely economic, the learners' goals are social. Ignoring these reasons for participation makes the program bore its own participants and fails to attract other non-literates.

6.1.2 Delivery of the FAL program

Findings indicate that while the FAL program is meant to be offered as a functional literacy program, in Mwizi it is being run as a basic literacy program. This mode of delivery has not attracted non-literates to enroll in the FAL classes. Participants who attend classes regularly find that their expectations and hopes are not being met; their skills do not develop sufficiently for them to participate knowingly in voting and in leadership positions, or even to write their names, fluently. Any practical application of literacy learnt to practical problems in daily life is not part of the program.

6.1.3 Gender and participation

The largest number of participants in FAL classes in Mwizi was women. Although this fulfilled one of the goals of FAL which is to be accessed by women, the non-literate men were not being attracted to classes. What is surprising to note, is that men had more free time than the women, but they chose to spend it in the trading center with their friends.

Women on the other hand go through a lot of trouble to attend the FAL classes. The women's daily workload was heavier than the men's but they still found time to come. This left very little time for the learners to attend FAL classes in the short run. And in the long run, after periods of high absenteeism, some participants dropped out to attend to other activities that would bring immediate returns.

6.1.4 Literacy in everyday life.

In their daily lives, the respondents only needed literacy occasionally and they had found ways of coping without the required reading and writing skills. Furthermore, the content in the primers did not build much on their daily lives, to enable them practice what was learnt. This led to participants becoming bored and demotivated, avoiding classes whenever the opportunity arose.

6.1.5 Stigmatising non-literates.

In the FAL in Mwizi, there was a lot of stigmatization of both non-literates and the learners in FAL. This was observed in the "tags" that were used to describe them, for example being called vagabonds. Some of these were very insulting to both the learners and the community of non-literates. The labeling of participants affected attendance in such a way that many potential learners did not enroll because being identified as non-literate carried a lot of stigma with it. In particular, men decided to keep out of the FAL classes because the group of the non-literates was regarded as having a very low status.

6.1.6 Getting the target right

In the Mwizi FAL classes it was observed that the programme was getting the target right. The classes that were being conducted had attracted pure non-literates, that is, people who

had never been to school at all. However, the sad thing is that the participants often do not attend FAL classes and eventually drop out.

6.1.7 Untrained instructors

The instructors that were doing the teaching on this program were not trained in the methodology they are required to use. They had only received training for three days - even shorter than the usual initial training for FAL that is supposed to be two weeks. The lack of training affected the delivery of the programme and led to some potential learners disregarding the program and not participating because they thought that the learners were only learning vowels, because they were being taught to write and read letters of the alphabet.

6.1.8 Teaching/learning facilities and materials.

In the classes that I worked with there were no teaching and learning materials. It was up to the instructor to look for chalk and if it was not available, the instructor had to buy it or do without it. There were no textbooks and in some cases, the instructors' primers and guides did not correspond. This meant that learners never had books and could only read what was written on the black board. There were no follow-up readers or activities to put into practice the literacy skills acquired for all the classes that I worked with. This led to boredom and eventually relapse into illiteracy as there was no opportunity for the learners to apply what was learnt in real life.

6.1.9 Organization of the classes

The FAL classes in Mwizi were organized in such a way that there was only one class for all the participants. The classes included people ranging from those that had spent five years in FAL to those that had spent a few months, and yet their experiences and reasons for joining FAL varied with circumstances at particular times. This led to some learners repeating what they had already learnt. Eventually, the learners dropped out as the repetition of content became monotonous without the instructors assessing and evaluating their learning.

Furthermore, in combining the learners in one class, the primer that was used over and over again was the beginners' primer. This was used irrespective of whether one had spent one

day or three years. This was a huge demotivator that led to learners attending classes erratically and eventually dropping out.

6.1.10 One size fits all?

In the Mwizi FAL classes, it was clear that one size does not fit all. FAL as planned for the whole country failed to fit in with the lives of the people of Mwizi in terms of organization, content and delivery. While trying to fit the people of Mwizi into content planned for the whole country, some of the content had a lot of information that the participants could not easily relate to, and, in some cases, left the program feeling insulted by the messages conveyed.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.2.1 At the Local level

6.2.1.1 Organisation of the FAL classes

The FAL classes should be organised better with breaks in the study periods, especially in those seasons of the year when the FAL participants are so busy in their gardens. The organization should be done by the learners and their instructors. This will ensure that the learners dedicate their time to their major means of livelihood and the other to FAL and other activities.

Different classes for learners should be set up such that those who have attained a certain level of literacy can progress to another level. This will highly motivate those who have been in the FAL classes for a long time because they will not be put in the same class as beginners.

Classes should be established for the semi-literates instead of chasing them out of the classes. There are those that show willingness to learn, and so their lives should be explored to know what it is they want to learn. Knowing what they want to learn will form a starting point for the planners.

6.2.2 At the district level

6.2.2.1 Creation of awareness

For a start, awareness about the FAL program needs to be created among the local government leaders by the district local government. This will be done with the intention of enabling them to support the program, both morally and financially.

6.2.2.2 Offer more than reading and writing skills

The FAL classes in Mwizi could be organised to engage in other activities that benefit all learners apart from meeting for the purpose of learning. For example, they can be assisted to benefit from the NAADS program or to form a support group of their own instead of waiting to join other people's groups. This might attract other people to join them and because of those activities, the attitudes of other people towards them could change.

6.2.2.3 Learner Support Services

There will be need to provide a clean water source for the Mwizi community that is easily accessible to all people. The Water office in Mbarara District will need to explore the area and see how best clean water can be provided. This will leave some free time for the women, which they might spend going to FAL and their workload will be decreased.

There will be a need for a childcare facility alongside the FAL classes, where children can be taken care of as the mothers undertake their classes. This will ensure that children are kept out of danger when their mothers come to attend FAL.

6.2.2.4 Duplication of government programs

Local governments need to put systems in place to know all the government programs in a particular area and what kind of support they will need. This will ensure that work at different levels is not duplicated and that programs feed into and strengthen each other instead of competing with one another.

6.2.3 At the National level

6.2.3.1 Training of instructors

Instructors of the FAL program will need to be trained so that they can deliver the program better from an informed angle. The training should be initiated by the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development and could include the following essential issues among others: They should be trained in the functional approach to literacy, so that instructors understand how they can use them. The training should take the time it is supposed to. The training of the instructors should also lay emphasis on the principles of adult learning.

Training should also be provided on issues of monitoring, evaluation and giving constructive feedback on learners' attendance and performance.

6.2.3.2 Awarding certificates to motivate learners

The local and central government will need to organise certificates for the learners that will have completed a particular stage. A ceremony should then be organised for the learners at which the certificates are issued to the learners. The local leaders and representatives from the FAL coordinating office should attend such a ceremony. This will elevate the social status of the FAL learners and make them proud of their achievement.

6.2.3.3 Supply of reading and learning materials

The central government through the FAL coordinating office will need to supply reading and writing materials to the FAL classes in Mwizi. This will fill in the gap before all the other changes have been implemented so that the FAL learners in Mwizi have something to work with.

6.2.3.4 Remuneration for instructors

The instructors of FAL need to be given some kind of remuneration. They should be compensated for the time they spend training FAL learners. In addition to this remuneration, they should be recognized as other educators are recognized in their domains by the local government. They should be issued with certificates of recognition or merit for the services they will have rendered to the government. This will ensure that they are motivated enough to teach the learners.

6.2.3.5 Monitoring and evaluation

A monitoring and evaluation system should be put in place. This will inform the planning system of the program in Mwizi.

6.3 Suggested areas for further research

Some questions arose from this study and need further investigation. Because of the scope of the study, time and resources this study was not able to research on them, but they would be very informative in relation to adult literacy.

Most studies that have been done extensively on participation in literacy programs are more relevant to developed economies than to the poor economies. More research is therefore needed to establish participation patterns and why they are as such in very poor communities.

Although there has been some research done on literacy and livelihoods in Uganda and other places, it is not yet conclusive to say that if programs refocused to engaging with livelihoods, it would help. Therefore this creates a need for further research on the link between literacy and livelihoods especially in Uganda. This should be done more locally than nationally.

In this study, it was found out that men were not participating because of various reasons that are related to attitudes and lack of time. However, even though they are part of the target group they are not taking part. Research needs to be carried out to find out what programs would be appropriate for men so that they can also be included in such efforts.

The church has played a role in the initiation of the FAL classes in Mwizi, which has not been recognized by the government. The classes have ended up being supported by the church alone without any support from the government. There is a need therefore to ascertain what the role of the church is in FAL program and where the role of the government starts, so that the two collaborate instead of one doing the other's work.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview Guide

Characteristics of the Respondents

- 4 Age
- 5 Marital status
- 6 Number of children.....
- 7 Level of formal education.....
- 8 Any children going to school.....
- 9 Time spent on the programme.....

The Participants

- 4 What do you feel about the FAL program?
- 5 What does your family feel about you joining the programme?
- 6 How have you achieved by attending the FAL program.
- 7 How do you think people who are not attending the FAL classes can be supported?
- 8 With all the many activities and responsibilities in your life, how do you manage to make time for this program?
- 9 What help do you get and from whom?

The Non Participants

The questions about characteristics of the respondents were the same as those of the participants except for question (9).

Have you heard about the FAL program/ Do you know what the FAL is about?

What do you feel about the FAL program?

When caught in a situation that requires you to read or write, what do you do?

What do you feel about joining the FAL program activities?

What does your family feel about you joining the activities of the FAL?

What kind of support would you need to take part in the FAL activities (for one who feels the need to join FAL)? / What would make it possible for you to attend?

Appendix 2: Observation Guide

Observation guide

Evidence of reading materials around the home e.g. primers, bibles, hymn books.

Reading materials in the classroom

Distance from the class to the home.

Evidence of some of the benefits from the literacy class

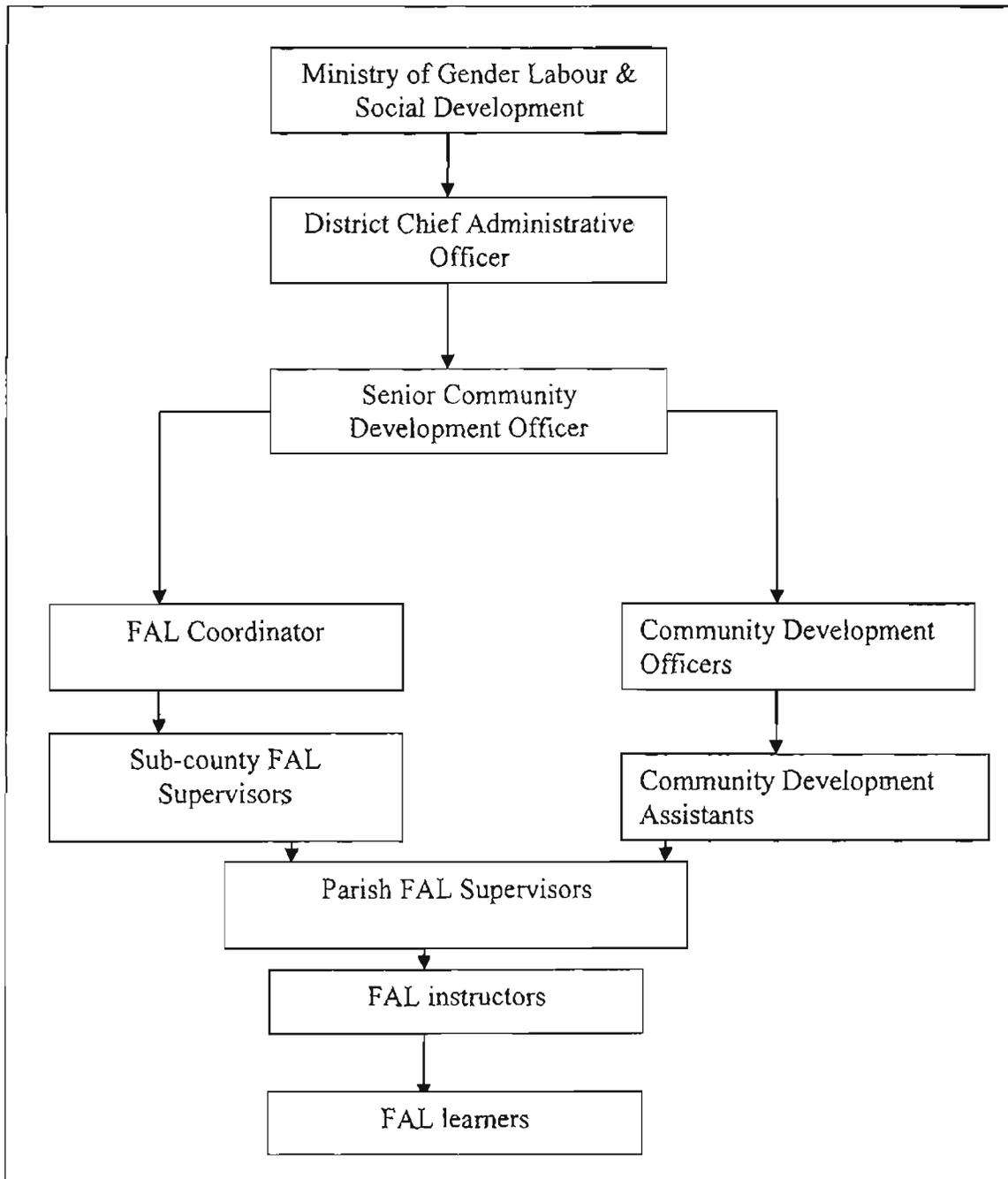
Activities around the village

Classroom activities

State of respondents' homes

Evidence of practical\functional activities outside the class

Appendix 3: FAL Programme Administrative Structure



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