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Integrated approaches to literacy and skills development

Examples of best practice in adult learning programmes





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Foreword

The integration of literacy, vocational and life skills into adult learning programmes is not a new approach – it was already a component of the Experimental World Literacy Programme (EWLP), a joint collaboration between UNESCO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and various national governments, which ran from 1966 to 1974. The aim of the EWLP was to develop adult literacy programmes that not only improved participants' literacy and numeracy skills, but also contributed to socio-economic development. As such, in addition to providing literacy instruction, the EWLP offered life skills and vocational training. Today, with its goal to 'leave no one behind', the Education 2030 Agenda calls for a comprehensive approach to learning that is at the same time equitable, inclusive and sustainable.

Within this framework, the UNESCO Strategy for Youth and Adult Literacy (2020–2025), which was adopted by Member States in 2019, highlights the concept of literacy as 'a continuum of learning and proficiency' and an integral part of 'a larger set of skills, including digital skills, media literacy, education for sustainable development and global citizenship as well as job-specific skills' (UNESCO, 2019a, Annex I, p. 2). The integration of basic literacy, life skills and vocational training into education programmes for youth and adults forms a key part of the strategy.

More recently, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced many countries to either suspend adult education programmes or shift their focus to more pressing issues, such as health awareness and services for disadvantaged families. The loss of learning experienced by many children and youth during nationwide lockdowns has also increased the probability of a rise in dropout rates as social-distancing measures are lifted and schools reopen. Consequently, the number of adults who lack basic literacy skills – an estimated 773 million globally before

the pandemic – is anticipated to rise in the coming years. For the millions of people who have lost their livelihoods due to lockdown measures and the shrinking economy, it is of vital importance that continuing education and training programmes, comprising basic literacy, life skills and vocational training, are prioritized. Youth and adults who are not in the formal education system should also receive basic health and citizenship education to safeguard a future society that is sustainable and cohesive.

Effective integration of basic literacy, life and vocational skills in adult learning programmes often results in overall better learning outcomes for programme participants. The literature indicates that such integrated approaches are consistent with the principle of adult learning, and that adults are generally more motivated to participate in an integrated education programme when the content is felt to be more relevant to their immediate needs and personal goals and ambitions. Thus, adult learners' desire to develop new skills, improve their job prospects and/or alter the trajectory of their professional and personal lives is a motivating factor to participate in adult learning programmes.

The integrated learning approach is also consistent with the principle of lifelong learning. Changing technologies, global issues such as the COVID-19 pandemic, and the increase in human mobility globally require citizens to upgrade their skills to improve their employability. Integrating literacy learning with other skills development empowers adults to become independent lifelong learners and active citizens, thereby securing a better life for themselves, their families and the community as a whole.

To this end, this compilation showcases examples of adult education programmes that demonstrate

promising approaches to integrating literacy, life skills and vocational skills in various country contexts. These programmes highlight key features of combined programmes and identify strategies to support better integration at the curriculum, instructional and learning-outcome levels. As importantly, they shed light on the diverse intersectoral partnerships that are needed to develop such programmes. Lessons from these programmes can be adapted for different country contexts by adult educators and programme providers around the world.

It is my hope that this compilation contributes to a better understanding of the importance of linking literacy, life skills and vocational training in adult

learning programmes. I hope, too, that literacy stakeholders, including policy-makers, programme providers, researchers and practitioners, will see from the programmes showcased herein the value of consolidating their efforts and resources to improve adult education provision.

Although all of the programmes existed before the pandemic, they offer insights into how integrated learning programmes can be designed and implemented for the post-COVID-19 recovery period and beyond.

David Atchoarena

Director, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning

Introduction

Although significant progress has been made by almost every country in the last 50 years, 773 million youth and adults around the world still lack basic reading, writing and numeracy skills, two-thirds of whom are women (UIS, 2020). In addition, despite an increase in education enrolment, approximately 100 million youth between the ages of 15 and 24 also lack these basic skills (ibid.). This data point is concerning and underlines the importance of designing and offering high-impact and effective youth and adult literacy and education programmes by governments, civil society organizations, industries and companies, and private foundations.

To improve the knowledge base, the UNESCO Effective Literacy and Numeracy Practices Database (LitBase) has been collecting promising cases and practices from around the world for the last 10 years. Periodically, the database programmes are analysed using a thematic approach and, based on this analysis, a compilation of cases is produced and disseminated to improve programmes. The current compilation is about one of the recurring issues in literacy programmes: the integration of literacy with vocational and life skills. The relevant literature is also reviewed to analyse existing programmes, identify key attributes of good practice and recognize further challenges when integrating literacy, vocational content and life skills.

In the context of international development education, the integration of literacy teaching into vocational and workplace learning programmes, or the inclusion of

other development goals and life skills into literacy programmes, are not entirely new concepts. The explicit integration of literacy skills into vocational content appeared in the Experimental World Literacy Programme (EWLP), a joint project of UNESCO and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which ran from 1966 to 1974 (for further information on this project, see UNESCO, 1976). It is worth referring to such documents to understand specific historical contexts of the rationale for and importance of the issue at hand. In the framework of the EWLP, several country experiments led to discussions about methods of integrating literacy into workplace and industrial training and linking (or the challenge of linking) these to the overall economic and social development of a country.

Fast-forward to today: many countries in which youth and adult literacy remains a challenge still refer to the need for integrated literacy provision in their national development policies and strategies. For instance, in his report on delivering vocational training and skills development in Afghanistan for the periods 2005–2006 and 2010–2012, Rogers (2014) noted that many developing countries combine skills development with literacy programmes. More recently, countries with a large proportion of youth and adults with no or low literacy skills, such as Bangladesh,¹ Ethiopia,² Gambia³ and India,⁴ have included integrated literacy teaching with life skills and skills training in their recent national education sector plans and human resource development strategies.

1 Ministry of Education (MoE) of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. 2010. *National Education Policy 2010*. Dhaka, MoE. [pdf] Available at: https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/bangladesh_national_education_policy_2010.pdf [Accessed 27 October 2020].

2 MoE of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. 2015. *Education Sector Development Programme V (ESDP V)*. Addis Ababa, MoE. [pdf] Available at: https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/ethiopia_esdp_v.pdf [Accessed 27 October 2020].

3 Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education (MoBSE) and Ministry of Higher Education Research Science and Technology (MoHERST). 2016. *Education Sector Policy 2016–2030: Accessible, Equitable and Inclusive Quality Education for Sustainable Development*. Serrekunda, MoBSE and MoHERST. [pdf] Available at: https://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/gambia_education_policy_2016-2030.pdf [Accessed 27 October 2020].

4 Ministry of Human Resource Development of the Government of India. 2019. *Draft National Education Policy 2019*. New Delhi, Ministry of Human Resource Development. [pdf] Available at: https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/Draft_NEP_2019_EN_Revised.pdf [Accessed 27 October 2020].

The integrated approach to literacy and skills development is also consistent with the principles of adult learning; that is, adults are more motivated to participate in educational and learning offers if they are relevant to their immediate needs and personal goals (Knowles, 1980). In response, focused research studies have emerged in Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, and the United States of America on the integration of literacy instruction in workplace learning and technical vocational education aligned to the immediate needs of adult learners (Derrick, 2012; Terry and Seeling, 2013; Roberts et al., 2005; ETS, 1990; Comings et al., 2001).

On the other hand, in the context of developing countries, some reports, such as those from Senegal, Guinea, Uganda and Kenya (Oxenham et al., 2002), also reviewed the impact of programmes that combine livelihood skills training and adult literacy education on social and economic development. Such an emerging body of literature continues to provide more evidence for improving programme design, instructional models and the training of educators in integrated approaches to literacy and skills development. In the following sections, the rationales for integration, for defining skills, and for developing approaches to integration of literacy and other skills will be discussed in more detail.

The importance of integrating literacy with other skills

According to adult learning theories, there are several benefits to integrating literacy and skills development in adult education programmes (Knowles et al., 2005; Knowles, 1980, 1984). The approach of embedding literacy and skills increases, first and foremost, **adult learners' motivation** to participate and remain in adult educational programmes. Adults are more likely to enrol in such programmes to improve vocational skills to find employment or other opportunities to improve their own financial situation and that of their families. Adults with low literacy skills are also more motivated to improve their reading, writing and numeracy skills if these are taught as part of a vocational or skills training programme and closely linked with and complement the vocational content or skill (Carpentieri, 2014). Moreover, such integrated programmes mitigate the social stigma

associated with low or lack of literacy skills. In sum, when literacy learning is embedded into vocational and skills development programmes, it tends to be less intimidating to adult learners and more positively viewed by others (Casey et al., 2006).

Further, when literacy and skills are integrated into one programme, the quality of learning outcomes in both areas is enhanced equally. Such improvements are associated with the adoption of **relevant learning content and literacy skill levels**. In embedded literacy programmes, the learning subjects and content are closely related to a certain profession or to technical skills that will enhance adult learners' work skills and develop positive attitudes. Moreover, basic literacy skills are a prerequisite for acquiring relevant vocational content knowledge and skills. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2012) argues that literacy is a component of 'foundational skills' that are essential for adults to be employed (p. 10). Falk and Millar (2001) point out the close relationship between low literacy skills and unemployment or underemployment. Even among employed adults, low literacy skills often result in lower participation in any kind of industry training and workplace learning (TEC, 2009). Hence, participants in skills development programmes have to enhance their literacy skills to sustain their employment and keep up with today's changing workplace requirements.

In recent years, the integration of literacy, language and skills training has become more prominent in discussions on the social and economic integration of migrants and refugees in host countries. According to the UNHCR (2018), the worldwide number of people forced from their homes stood at almost 70.8 million in mid-2019. This has led to an increased demand for integrated job-related language and literacy training (UNESCO, 2019b), since not only would this enhance opportunities for employment and economic independence but it will also promote better social integration of migrants and refugees (UNESCO, 2019a). Additionally, a recent study in Germany that analysed the fiscal and macroeconomic effects of increasing investment in the language, literacy and skills training and educational qualifications of refugees found that it can lead to higher economic returns (Bach et al.,

2017). Furthermore, the possible socioeconomic impact of providing separate literacy and skills programmes for youth and adults necessitates some level of embeddedness in the implementation of relevant policy, practice and research. Therefore, the conventional separation between literacy training and skills training becomes blurred, given that people are moving from one linguistic and economic context to another more frequently than in the past.

An integrated approach to promoting literacy and skills development has also been highlighted at the global policy level. The theme of the 2018 International Literacy Day was 'Literacy and skills development'. In the background paper, UNESCO (2018) argued that 'skills can and should be an entry point to literacy instruction; literacy instruction can and should be an occasion to strengthen and expand skills; and work can and should provide incentives, conditions and a space for skills training and/ or literacy instruction' (p. 3).

Defining literacy and skills

Before elaborating on the issue of integrating literacy and other skills in adult education programmes, we must define the concepts of literacy and skills and the way that they have evolved over the years. Treating literacy separately may imply that it is not counted as a 'skill', and so needs to be treated as a different concept. In the following two sub-sections, an attempt is made to define and problematize the boundaries of the categories 'skills' and 'literacy'.

Literacy

Defining literacy is a challenging task. On the one hand, it is seen as an autonomous or discrete set of cognitive skills which may be taught independently with the help of a step-by-step instructional approach. On the other hand, it is defined beyond mere cognitive skills to encompass the social contexts, purposes and relationships in which literacy is actively used. With the emergence of the concept of 'functional literacy' in the late 1960s and early 1970s in adult literacy programmes, the need for expanding our understanding of how we define literacy took on new dimensions (UNESCO, 1976, 2017). More specifically, the notion of literacy began to be seen as a continuum of different proficiency levels of literacy and numeracy skills,

as reiterated in Hanemann (2015). Dichotomous states of being either 'literate' or 'illiterate' no longer applied. This notion of a continuum emphasizes that 'literacy' entails a gradual progression of different proficiency skill levels, from basic to more advanced literacy skills and competences. This approach helps us to also understand the significance of utilizing and practising literacy skills throughout the life course. Importantly, it also infers that individuals have to upgrade their literacy skills periodically in order to keep abreast of changes in society, particularly in the labour market and social participation.

Ideally, educational programmes that integrate literacy and skills development should employ a broad concept of literacy which includes all types of skills. However, many educational programmes that integrate literacy and skills development still restrict the concept of literacy to reading, writing and numeracy skills at a very basic level of proficiency, while other skills are seen as distinct. It seems that only those programmes that fully integrate reading, writing and calculating skills into the learning of other skills, particularly technical skills, adopt this broader concept of literacy. Fully recognizing the broader concept of literacy, this introduction will use the word literacy to refer to different proficiency levels as well as to reading, writing and numeracy skills.

Skills

If the definition of literacy is not straightforward, neither is the definition of skills. There is no single way of defining and classifying skills. They can be analysed and categorized from several perspectives, such as levels of proficiency or the nature of a particular skill. In terms of level of proficiency, a skill can be divided into high, medium, low, and foundational or advanced; while in terms of nature and content, there could also be technical, vocational and life skills. Another method of categorization is the context in which skills are acquired and applied, such as formal, non-formal or informal; rural, urban, or semi-urban areas; or in the formal or informal economy. Skills have also been categorized on the basis of programme delivery, such as school-based or work-based skills, or on-the-job training (European Commission, 2013). The complexities of defining the term 'skills' make it almost impossible to provide a simple, universal definition.

Nevertheless, to better guide readers in analysing the programmes featured in this publication, this introduction had adopted the three main types of skills presented by UNESCO (2012) in the Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report: foundational, transferable, and technical and vocational skills.

Foundational skills comprise the literacy and numeracy skills that are essential for securing livelihoods, promoting well-being and being active citizens. These fundamental skills are a 'prerequisite for continuing in education and training, and for acquiring transferable and technical and vocational skills that enhance the prospect of getting good jobs' (UNESCO, 2012, p. 23). Learners can acquire and upgrade foundational skills by participating in formal school education (primary and secondary schooling), non-formal adult literacy programmes or through informal learning.

Transferable skills include the ability to solve problems as well as to transform and adapt knowledge and skills in continuously changing work and life situations. Such skills often include a range of intangible personal characteristics, qualities, habits and attitudes. In particular, they support the ability to analyse and solve problems, communicate ideas and information effectively, be creative, exercise leadership, show conscientiousness, and demonstrate entrepreneurial capabilities. Once a person acquires these types of skills, he or she can easily transfer or apply them in many types of professions and contexts. Transferable skills correspond to 'soft skills' (IBE, n.d.) or 'generic skills' (NCVER, 2012).

Technical and vocational skills are a set of technical know-how and job-related knowledge required in specific occupations. Such skills can be acquired through formal education that links secondary schooling and formal technical and vocational education, through work-based training, or in a non-formal setting like a traditional apprenticeship. This set of skills is also known as 'hard skills' (IBE, n.d.; Sligo et al., 2007). The content of technical and vocational skills training is tailored to technical knowledge of the target occupation or trade.

Being situated in different country contexts and aiming for particular goals, the programmes featured in this publication reflect the complexities of understanding and operationalizing 'skills'. Every programme presented in this compilation has its own way of defining skills, either from a definite understanding of a skill or a mixture of skills categories.

Approaches to integrating literacy and other skills

Before moving on to approaches to integration, it is important to acknowledge that integration and embeddedness are conceptually slightly different. The concept of 'embeddedness' was used by Casey et al. (2006) to describe the way in which the learners experience the provision of literacy, language and numeracy teaching. Distinct from a policy and design perspective, the concept of 'integration' emphasizes the ways in which literacy is integrated into education programmes, including the cooperation of multiple stakeholders, resulting in a programme that is 'whole' (NALA, 2013). Despite these conceptual distinctions, the terms 'integration' and 'embeddedness' will be used interchangeably in this compilation.

It is important to note that embedding literacy and skills development does not automatically guarantee higher quality and stronger impact for adult education programmes, or better learning outcomes. Instead, there are many decisive factors, such as the model, degree of embeddedness, design and content of curricula, quality of literacy and technical skills of the educators, and collaboration between multiple stakeholders, which seem to affect the quality of embedded literacy programmes. This compilation offers some insights into literacy and skills development programmes, particularly on the integration of the two components in adult education programmes.

Degrees of embeddedness

There are many levels of literacy and skills in these programmes. Applying the criteria provided by Latham (2010), these levels can be categorized into (1) separate elements, (2) partly embedded, (3) mostly embedded, or (4) fully embedded.

Level 1: Separate elements

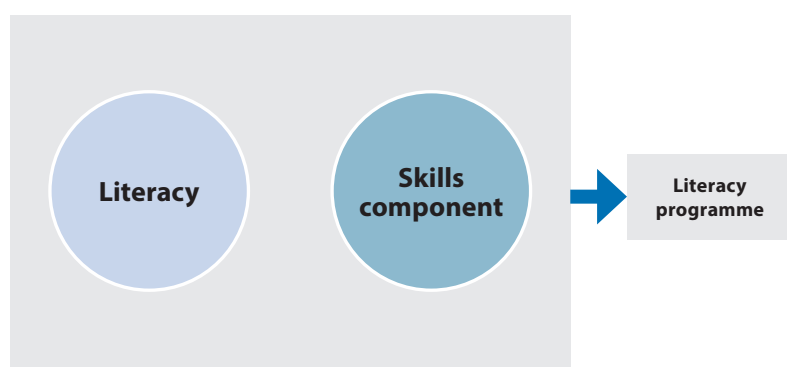


Figure 1: Degrees of embeddedness, Level 1, 'separate elements'. Source: Latham, 2010

Separate elements

The first degree of embeddedness is referred to as **separate elements**. At this level, the literacy and vocational components are offered as entirely, or almost entirely, separate programmes. Literacy is often provided as an additional programme rather than based on skills training content (ibid.). This level is represented in **Figure 1**.

In this context, a literacy programme that serves as both a prerequisite part of a vocational programme or one that is followed by a separate skills training programme can be classified as 'separate elements.' For example, in this compilation, the case of the **Basic Literacy and Vocational Training for Young Adults programme in Haiti** has two very distinct phases of implementation. The first one is for a literacy course provided in Haitian Creole; this is followed by the next phase of the course on vocational skills training (technical skills such as building, carpentry and cookery) for newly literate people.

Partly embedded

Literacy and vocational programmes can also be **partly embedded**. This degree of embeddedness indicates that

the two main components are integrated but only in some respects, as represented in **Figure 2**.

Literacy and skills training may be separate components of a programme, yet some parts of each component are closely connected. This type of integration is strongly illustrated in the programmes in Namibia. In the case of its **National Literacy Programme, Namibia**, after successful completion of Grade 4 of the Adult Basic Literacy Education Programme, learners can move to the Post-Basic Literacy Education Programme, which includes two stages of skills training: post-literacy/

general knowledge training, and adult skills development for self-employment. The case of **Colombia's Obras Escuela: Literacy for Construction Workers** programme also exemplifies this degree of embeddedness: while literacy learning is the main focus of the programme, skills that are important to learners are covered as key content

Level 2: Partly embedded

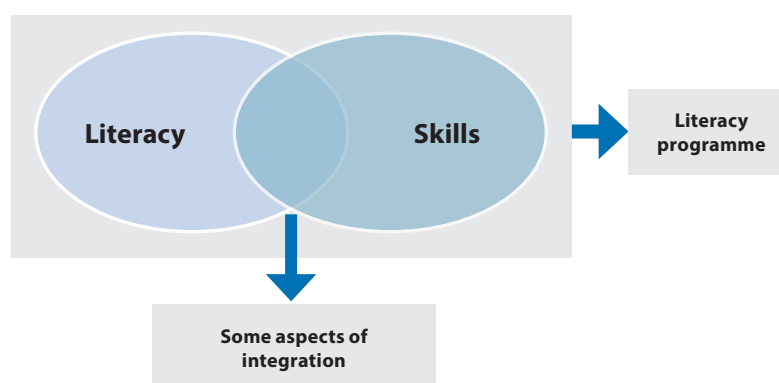


Figure 2: Degrees of embeddedness, Level 2, 'partly embedded'. Source: Latham, 2010

areas. For example, learners read safety and instructional signs and symbols used in construction sites. This helps in improving their daily performance and increases safety at work, since, according to the Colombian Chamber of Construction, 70% of accidents at the workplace can be attributed to poor literacy skills and workers not knowing how to read instructions (cited in *El Colombiano*, 2012).

Level 3: Mostly embedded

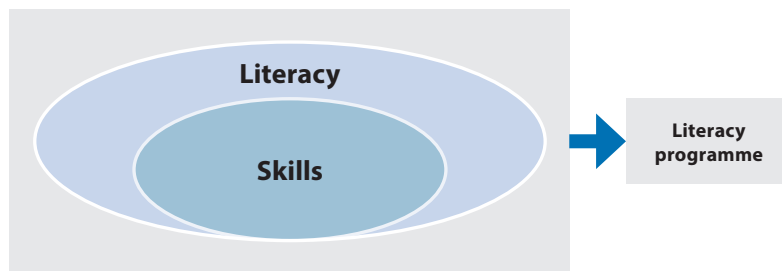


Figure 3: Degrees of embeddedness, Level 3, 'mostly embedded'. Source: Latham, 2010

Mostly embedded

At the **mostly embedded** level, learners experience literacy as an integral part of their skills training, but some aspects of both components remain uncoordinated. This is conceptually visualized in **Figure 3**.

Many programmes selected for this compilation show this level of embeddedness. In the case of the **United Republic of Tanzania's Integrated Community-Based Adult Education** programme, adult learners receive six months of literacy training and simultaneously plan income-generating activities in literacy circles. While the planning and implementation of activities in literacy circles is aided by basic literacy skills acquired by learners during literacy training, the 'uncoordinated' aspect in this case is that the content and nature of the literacy training is not dependent on income-generation activities. In the last stage of the programme, literacy facilitators are not involved, and the learners try to implement their income-generating ideas on their own.

This degree of embeddedness can also be observed in the kind of training programme facilitators receive. For instance, in the case of the **Adult Literacy and Skills Training programme in South Africa**, the facilitators receive separate training on adult literacy and skills for community development, such as personal hygiene, disease prevention, running income-generating activities, and leather-crafting skills. However, facilitators deliver theme-based teaching

that integrates aspects of literacy and skills. In this example, while the training of facilitators is not fully coordinated or integrated, the implementation of the classes is integrated, through thematically coordinated lessons.

Fully embedded

The **fully embedded or integrated** level involves the situation in which learners use literacy competency as an integral part of their skills training. Explicit literacy teaching is

organized in a way that makes it a vital part of the skills training programme itself and improves literacy skills of all learners, not just those with identified literacy challenges. This level is represented in **Figure 4**.

The case of the **Literacy and Life Skills for Herder Families** programme in **Mongolia** is an example of this level of embeddedness. Here, literacy and life skills are intertwined to support enhancement of technical skills such as making coral ornaments and wool processing. Similarly, literacy and skills are fully embedded in the **Integrated Functional Adult Education programme in Ethiopia**. Literacy and skills learning components are combined into one as learners engage in literacy learning on topics that are closely related to their lives. This approach helps the learners to simultaneously enhance both literacy and skills and knowledge in problem-solving, family planning, disease prevention, environmental

Level 4: Fully embedded

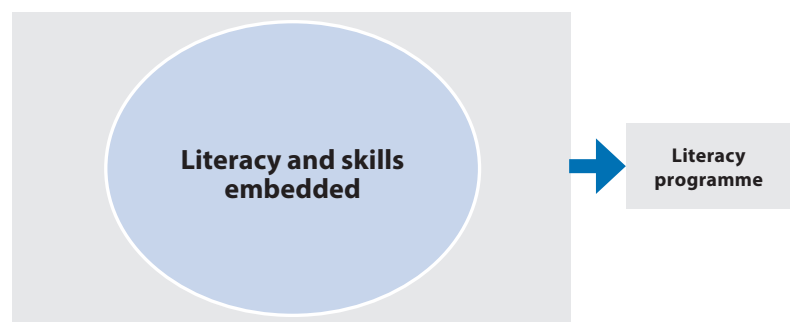


Figure 4: Degrees of embeddedness, Level 4, 'fully embedded'. Source: Latham, 2010

protection, improving agricultural productivity and so on. Another interesting example is the case of the **Pink Phone programme in Cambodia**, where learners' reading, writing and numeracy skills are developed along with their digital skills. In another example from Cambodia, **Educational and Social Development of Garment Factory Workers**, literacy is taught through introducing social issues and current affairs that are important for factory workers' productivity and to improving the quality of their lives.

Although the models described above represent four different levels of embeddedness, the literature suggests that there is no single, all-encompassing model. Instead, there is evidence that 'multiple, not unitary, approaches to provision work best, that more flexible patterns of participation are needed, and that a "one size fits all" approach is not the best' (Leach et al., 2010, p. 4). Therefore, it is important that adult literacy and skills development programmes adopt and tailor a model that best fits their mission and the needs of the learners, as seen in the case studies in this compilation.

Key features of integrated adult learning programmes

A careful review of the programmes selected for inclusion in this publication points towards three key features: integrating at the curriculum, instructional and learning levels; strong outcome orientation; and an innovative outreach process to improve access to and participation in integrated literacy programmes.

Integrating at curriculum, instructional and learning levels

Glaser (1984) suggested that the higher the relevance of the embedded tasks, the better the learning outcome. This is because the learners use concepts and knowledge as tools to thrive in real-world situations (Glaser, 1984, cited in Dawson, 2008). Therefore, it is pivotal that curriculum design and implementation achieve relevance between the learning content of literacy and skills.

The programmes in this compilation exhibit various curriculum design approaches to bridging literacy and

skills learning. Curriculum in the featured programme from **Egypt** was developed and readjusted in the process of implementing a garbage recycling business project that required the application of a range of skills such as basic reading, writing, measuring and digital skills (e.g. using Google Maps). As part of the curriculum, a drama on the life of garbage collectors in Cairo was performed by learners to raise general awareness of the harsh reality that they face in Egypt. The literacy curriculum used by the **Garment Factory Workers' programme in Cambodia** covers topics that are closely related to workers' personal and professional lives, such as hygiene, family planning, money management and safety at work. Although some programmes use two different curricula in which literacy and skills are taught separately within the same programme, concerted efforts are made to link literacy and skills learning. For example, in the **Township Community Learning Centre Service for People with Disabilities in China**, local traditional culture and resources, such as learning fish-farming, were used to create a more localized content within the framework of standard literacy curriculum. The literacy programme in **Haiti** achieves integration by training a selected literacy facilitator in vocational content to provide further support to newly literate adults. In **Slovakia**, the content of literacy learning, particularly reading, is increased slowly as learners progress from beginner to advanced level of their vocational training. In the programme in the **United Republic of Tanzania**, the flexibility of the curriculum allows learners to choose the topics of interest and reflect on their learning with other learners in literacy circles.

Another way to create relevance between literacy and skills learning is through the teaching and learning process. Programmes described in this compilation achieve this in various ways: project-oriented learning, reflective learning, self-directed learning, cooperative learning, and scaffolding of learning. These approaches create authentic learning content and a learning environment conducive to adult learners improving their skills in a more meaningful way. For example, the programme from **Egypt** follows a project-based learning approach, wherein learners set out to run their own garbage-recycling businesses by collecting, categorizing and processing empty plastic bottles and selling them to

local recycling companies. In the process of completing their project, learners acquire new skills and apply these newly acquired skills in practice. Similarly, in **Slovakia**, by involving literacy learning in physical and practical farming activities, learners improve their literacy and their technical skills in gardening and producing fresh fruit and vegetables. In **Mongolia**, as a consequence of the limited availability of face-to-face courses, self-study books and practice materials have been developed and supplied to learners so that they can learn independently at home or wherever they go. In the **Prison Education Programmes for Young People and Adults in Uruguay**, there is an intentional integration of skills and literacy, and a self-directed learning approach is encouraged (see Manning, 2007). The **Garment Factory Workers' programme in Cambodia** encourages workers to engage in self-directed learning by providing them with free access to a special literacy app as well as book-borrowing services provided by the Library Resource Centre of each factory. In the programme from **Botswana**, learning progress is continuously tested through consistent diagnostic assessments, and remedial lessons and personalized teaching are provided to learners who need further help. In this way, adult learners' motivation in learning is sustained as the tasks are scaffolded, with timely guidance and support, working towards a long-term goal of helping learners own their learning (Holton and Clarke, 2006).

A seamless integration of two otherwise separate educational programmes such as vocational or technical skills and literacy skills requires strong relationships and partnerships among a variety of stakeholders. Often overlooked, this critical factor also allows learners to acquire and then implement their skills into a more relevant learning content and context without barriers. For example, building relationships with the community has a central role in the implementation of adult literacy and skill development programmes in Mongolia and South Africa. In **Mongolia**, community relationships are built when the programme facilitators visit learners' homes to provide individual feedback and instructions on homework and deal with any other issues or clarifications that may need to be addressed with the learning materials. In **South Africa**, community relationships are fostered through small-scale business enterprises that actively involve learners in

generating incomes through improving their literacy skills. The programmes from **Cambodia** are good examples of the way that close partnerships and collaboration between various governmental education sectors, employers, international organizations, and civil society agencies work collectively and effectively to ensure the success, impact and sustainability of a programme.

Outcome orientation

The programmes presented in this compilation illustrate the significance of identifying clear project outcomes right from the start. The main goal of these programmes extends beyond achieving basic reading, writing and numeracy skills. The outcomes, almost visionary at times, enhance the embeddedness of literacy and skills in such a way that that learners after or during graduating from the programme can participate in income-generating, community-building, active citizenship and other activities. Some of the main issues to be dealt with in having well-defined outcomes for embedded programmes that seek to impart adult literacy and basic skills are the ambiguity of the embeddedness, the fluid nature of non-formal and learner-centred curricula, difficulty in defining concrete or narrow performance indicators, and the lack of consensus on the definition of success of the programmes.

Keeping these issues in mind, the aims and objectives of adult learning and education can be grounded in the Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education 2015 (RALE). The objectives of adult learning and education we have described underscore four important outcomes for adult learners: enhanced personal development, an increase in job and learning opportunities, self-sustenance, and the ability to contribute to society in a meaningful and sustainable way (UIL, 2016).

The first outcome, **enhanced personal development**, refers to the improved 'capacity of individuals to think critically and to act with autonomy and a sense of responsibility' (ibid., p. 3). The experiences documented in this publication exemplify these outcomes in many ways. For example, in both **Cambodia** and **Kenya**, the programmes included in the compilation are driven by the goal of empowering women in their communities.

Through the **Pink Phone** programme in Cambodia, women participants aspire to become community leaders; in the **Economic Empowerment and Functional Adult Literacy Programme** in Kenya, women participants have shown higher decision-making powers in the household as a result of their participation. The second outcome of a majority of these programmes is an **increase in employment and further learning opportunities**. One of the ways in which the programmes achieve this outcome is by awarding certificates of learning outcomes or participation and by creating a good validation and recognition system. For example, after completion of the programme in **Egypt**, participants receive a certificate which increases their employment opportunities. The programme in **Botswana** enables adult learners to move between vocational education and formal schooling because of the officially recognized equivalency between basic literacy and vocational education. Additionally, participation in such skill-development and literacy programmes builds the skillset and competence levels of the workers. This is demonstrated in the case study from **Australia**, where 78% of the employee participants reported improved skill levels, and were able to make bigger contributions to the company.

Embedded literacy and skill-development programmes at the workplace have also contributed to improving the confidence of workers and hence their **self-sustenance**, the third outcome, as in the case of **Jamaica**, where programme participants became better skilled in negotiating wages. In a number of programmes, concrete outcomes such as these are more motivating than abstract benefits such as higher self-confidence and personal development. This is evident in the **Literacy, Training and Employment for Women** programme in **Algeria**, where women in the community have been able to set up several income-generating profitable businesses such as selling embroidered cloth. Through the programme in **China**, learners with disabilities enhance the entrepreneurship and technical skills which respond to their special needs and the demands of local economic development.

The final significant indicator of the outcome-oriented approach of these programmes is the manner in which

there has been a **lasting impact on the community**. These programmes are only meaningful and sustainable if they have a wider-reaching positive effect. For instance, in the case of **Kenya**, through local libraries and resource centres, all participating communities have benefitted from the programme, not just enrolled learners. As a result of the **Pink Phone programme in Cambodia**, a shift was documented in views about the role of women in society and in community perceptions about technology.

Integration of literacy and skills development improves access and participation

Recruiting and retaining adult learners for basic literacy and skills development programmes can be challenging. Because of the non-formal and voluntary nature of these programmes, adults need to make an informed and active decision to attend. This implies that adult learners need to be convinced by the feasibility and benefits brought by these educational programmes. Hence, to be effective, adult literacy and educational programmes should identify the intentions and aspirations of adult learners and meet these needs (Rogers, 2003). One key step to doing so is to identify and mitigate the three barriers to enrolment presented by Carpentieri (2014): dispositional, situational and institutional.

Dispositional barriers primarily stem from the adult learner's psychological fears that prevent them from attending any educational or literacy programmes. Often, adult learners make decisions based on 'felt need' rather than the actual need rising from a large skill gap (Rogers, 2003). For many adults, especially those who are already employed, it is difficult to admit their lack of basic literacy skills due to shame or fear of losing their jobs.

Emerging evidence also confirms that adults with low skills are less likely to participate in job-related adult learning programmes as compared to mid- and high-skilled adults (OECD, 2019). Mostly, this is because low-literate adults tend to be unaware of major difficulties posed by their lack of skills (Sligo et al., 2007), which consequently keeps them from seeking learning opportunities.

Arising from the circumstances of learners, **situational barriers** include difficulties in finding time for learning due to childcare, transportation and low resources to participate in educational programmes. This could explain why learners from low-income households and who have been deprived of quality education are least likely to participate in adult literacy and skills programmes. The reluctance of employers to invest in the training of employees is another contributing factor (Ananiadou et al., 2004).

The third barrier is **institutional** in nature, where the resistance to participate rises from infrastructural issues. These include logistical concerns like the location of the programme, class schedules, accessibility in terms of language, and the methodology employed in programmes (OECD, 2019).

These barriers call for innovative approaches that address their root causes and encourage adult learners to improve their literacy skills. Programmes in this compilation have attempted to overcome barriers through outreach at the workplace, partnerships with multiple stakeholders, and marketing the core benefits for those taking part.

Outreach through the workplace can be seen in the case studies from **Cambodia** and **Jamaica**. In the **Educational and Social Development of Garment Factory Workers** in Cambodia and the **Workplace Literacy Programme** in Jamaica, the target learners are the workers, and the programmes partner with other organizations to provide literacy and basic skills development training. Similarly, the **Obras Escuela: Literacy for Construction Workers programme in Colombia** takes education to construction sites, reducing cases of dropout arising from difficulties in commuting. Furthermore, by taking the programme to construction sites, Obras Escuela spares the workers expenditure of money and time on travel.

Another way by which programmes are reaching more learners is by partnering with multiple stakeholders in places most frequented by target group adults. For example, potential participants in the **Vocational Skills Development Training and Literacy Equivalency**

Programme in India are recruited from the smallest unit (a village) through partnership with grassroots-level institutions like the Anganwadis.⁵ The **Integrated Functional Literacy and Technical Training for Farmers programme in Senegal** is another programme that demonstrates the success of such a strategy. In this case, the typical learning site is like a village centre that houses the literacy class and is used as a space to recruit other participants from nearby villages. This has led to an increased number of learners as well as local community investment in key thematic areas of learning, such as literacy and rural development, literacy for economic independence, literacy in a multilingual context and literacy for learning throughout life, as well as literacy and sustainable development.

Another key outreach strategy is to collaborate with community leaders or community actors who have links with adult learners (OECD, 2019). Some examples in this compilation show that such community-based methods can help build the bridge between adults with low skills and the available education programmes. For instance, in the featured programme from **South Africa**, recruitment of learners is a community-based activity, where church and community members are actively involved in identifying potential learners. Similarly, in the **Zé Peão School Project in Brazil**, programme providers concentrate their efforts in construction workers' communities to reach learners of this target group.

There are other ways in which the programmes described in this publication attracted potential adult learners. Owing to their embedded nature, the programmes herein have been successful in reaching participants who do not wish to engage in isolated literacy or skills development initiatives (Carpentieri, 2014). This is evident in programmes in which the recruitment of trainers mirrors the recruitment of learners. For example, in the programmes in **Cambodia, Haiti, Egypt** and **Brazil**, the trainers are not externally recruited: they are members of the same community or workplace. In many of these programmes, trainers are recruited from the graduating batches of adult participants. In this way, adult education trainers or facilitators share a better understanding of the context and the lived experience of their learners (Freire, 2005).

Key challenges and conclusion

The selected programmes in this compilation illustrate the complexity and diversity of approaches to integrating literacy learning and skills development. Such integrated programmes may be implemented in various contexts and for different purposes and involve a range of stakeholders and actors. Moreover, embedded programmes can be delivered through the formal education system (mostly vocational and secondary education), non-formal adult education (particularly adult literacy programmes), job-related training programmes or other forms of informal learning. A common goal of these programmes is to prepare adult learners for work through the enhancement of their employability and livelihood skills. In addition, three main programme formats can be identified: functional literacy, workplace literacy, and technical and vocational education (Bhola, 1995). The selected programmes underscore the importance and benefits of integrating basic skills education into adult literacy programmes or vice versa. Improved literacy skills and different forms of financial gains stand out as a common immediate benefit brought by embedded programmes, while there are also far-reaching benefits beyond skill acquisition and improved level of employability. Thus, one can conclude that when integration is well designed and effectively implemented, the two strands will complement and strengthen each other.

Despite the positive outcomes, these programmes also shed light on problems and challenges that need to be tackled and overcome to deliver on their promise, particularly to ensure the transferability of skills in different contexts and the sustainability of such programmes. One of the main challenges with such embedded literacy programmes is that they need to be constantly improved and revised based on learners' evolving needs. It takes concerted effort and resources to integrate literacy and skills learning. Without meticulous planning and dedicated funds allocated to the design and implementation process, there can be negative consequences. Casey et al. (2006), in particular, highlight this danger by pointing out that the benefits of such embedded programmes cannot be accrued

simply by adding some skills to the trainer's curriculum plan. Embedded programmes call for attention to one of the common challenges pointed out by all programmes in this publication – the need for well-trained adult educators/ facilitators. The teaching of literacy and skills (especially vocational skills) require different types of competencies, and hence high commitment from literacy teachers and subject specialists of vocational or trade programmes to teach integrated literacy and skills in integrated ways (Latham, 2010). Thus, well-designed pre-service and in-service professional training and consistent technical support should be provided to educators. In the case where separate teachers for the literacy and skills components are mobilized, a working system that encourages effective communication and collaboration among teachers and facilitators needs to be established.

Another challenge for embedded programmes is how to go beyond the common socio-economic goal of adult education, particularly vocational and technical education. Sligo and colleagues (2007) point out that adult literacy learning should be a lifelong learning process, rather than something 'remedial, short-term, and focused on the most pressing demands of current employment' (p. 8). Hence, embedded programmes should take a humanistic approach in which the well-being of learners and their families are taken into consideration. Many programmes in this publication do adopt such an approach by empowering and providing further support. Nevertheless, all the programmes presented here tend to be short-term and project-based; ensuring sustainability of impact remains a continuous challenge.

Different programmes in this publication show that the practice of integrating vocational and life skills with literacy learning is not a simple or straightforward process. It requires a deliberate analysis of contextual realities, of the skill gap of the learners, the possibility of integrating two or more curricular expectations, and the availability of infrastructure, capacity and resources. The adult literacy and numeracy programmes documented here show different ways in which programme goals and design are adapted to the needs of learners, the

5 Anganwadis are childcare centres, responsible for the provision of health, nutrition and educational services for mothers and the children below the age of six in the community. They were set up by the Integrated Child Development Services programme of the Government of India in 1975 (Kapil, 2002).

local community, national development goals, national education policy and global economic trends. Effective delivery of such programmes requires investment in building the capacity of concerned stakeholders (of different levels with various roles and responsibilities), designing truly integrated curricula, developing a recognition and validation system of integrated learning, and establishing an effective and functioning monitoring and evaluation system.

All the above issues call for a strong policy commitment and dedicated funding. One weakness common to all the selected programmes is the lack of adequate quantitative data and well-articulated qualitative data to corroborate the impact of the integrated approach. Therefore, in order to make a strong case for such embedded programmes, literacy providers need to carry out systematic data collection and analysis. In addition, effective inter-agency collaboration should be built up, linking providers of social and educational services so that they can consolidate their efforts and resources.

By presenting examples of integrated programmes implemented in various social, cultural and economic contexts around the world, this publication hopes to provide educators, practitioners and policy-makers of

adult literacy and education with some insights into the designing and implementing of such programmes. Moreover, it aims to generate dialogue and debate on applying the integrated approach in literacy and skills learning. It also makes evident that further in-depth and systematic research is required to investigate important questions such as how to design truly embedded programmes; how to build up educators' capacity in teaching integrated literacy, vocational and life skills; how to embed literacy and skills programmes into existing adult education services; and how to assess, evaluate and certify such learning.

Finally, it should be noted that some of the case studies in this compilation were developed many years ago. In the intervening years, a few have evolved into different programmes, while others have ceased operations altogether. Nevertheless, the experience and knowledge presented by these programmes remains just as valuable to literacy providers and practitioners. More examples of inspiring adult literacy and learning programmes can be found in UNESCO's Effective Literacy and Numeracy Practices Database (LitBase), a continuously developing collection of high-potential adult literacy programmes: www.unesco.org/uil/litbase.

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BOTSWANA

Adult Basic Education Programme

Key Information

Programme title	Adult Basic Education Programme (ABEP)
Implementing organization	Ministry of Education and Skills Development (through the Department of Out of School Education and Training, DOSET)
Language of instruction	Bilingual: English and Setswana. (Beginner courses may be held in a minority language until the learner group is competent in English and/or Setswana.)
Funding	Government of Botswana (GoB)
Date of inception	2009

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The provision of universal access to basic education, including adult literacy training, has been a key element and priority of Botswana's national development, social empowerment and human rights agenda since independence in 1966. Accordingly, several educational policies and programmes have been instituted over the years, the most important being the National Policy on Education (NPE, 1977, revised in 1994) and the National Literacy Programme (NLP, 1981). The NPE provided the policy framework for educational development in Botswana and was therefore the basis for the implementation of various educational programmes, including the NLP.

The NLP was officially launched in 1981 as the largest government-sponsored programme for non-formal education. It was primarily intended to complement the formal school system by promoting access to education for out-of-school groups and, in particular, by enabling '250,000 presently illiterate men, women and youth to become literate in Setswana and numerate in six years, 1980–85' (MoE, 1979, cited in Hanemann, 2005). Implicitly, therefore, the NLP endeavoured to eradicate historical socio-economic inequalities and high adult illiteracy rates which had been engendered by a colonial education system that had only been accessible to a privileged few.

In addition, the NLP aimed to create a cohort of educated people with skills to meet the demands of a

developing, rapidly changing society and economy as well as to empower previously disadvantaged and marginalized communities in order to enable them to be self-reliant and to improve their standard of life. In order to achieve these fundamental goals, the Department of Non-Formal Education (DNFE) – the government institution which was charged with the responsibility of developing and implementing non-formal educational projects in the country – adopted an integrated and comprehensive approach to the implementation of the NLP. Accordingly, the NLP encompassed a number of components or sub-programmes, including Basic Literacy, the Literacy at the Workplace Project, income-generating projects, the Village Reading Rooms Project, and English as a second language.

Several evaluation reports have revealed that the NLP had positive impacts on educational development in Botswana. Noteworthy, the programme increased access to basic education for out-of-school groups and, as a result, the total youth and adult literacy rates rose from 83.3% and 68% in 1990 to 94% and 83%, respectively, as of 2003–2008. Attendant to this drop in illiteracy rates was also a remarkable improvement in life skills including functional literacy and vocational skills (Phirinyane, M. et al., 2004).

However, in spite of these achievements, the NLP was also riddled with challenges and failures, the most critical being its failure to address participants' basic needs and interests as well as to eradicate youth and adult illiteracy. The failure to eradicate illiteracy as envisaged was caused by several factors, including the lack of resources and high drop-out rates (enrolment figures dropped from 38,660 participants in 1985 to 11,771 in 2001). The high drop-out rates were partly caused by the exclusive use of Setswana and English as the language of instruction. As noted by Lekoko and Maruatona (2006), 'the exclusive use of Setswana for minority communities created a dissonance between their life experiences, culture and literacy expectations' thereby forcing non-Setswana speakers to drop-out of in the programme. In addition, NLP facilitators, mostly volunteers, were ill-trained and endured poor working conditions. Equally important, the programme failed to reach the poorest and remote communities.

The failure of the NLP to improve youth and adult literacy and the attendant negative effects on national development and social empowerment prompted the Government of Botswana to institutionalize the non-formal or out-of-school Adult Basic Education Programme (ABEP) in 2009 as part of its overall Vision 2016 plan and in line with the recommendations of the revised NPE.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The ABEP – known locally as the Thuto Ga E Golelwe ('It's never too late to learn') programme – is a comprehensive, integrated, outcome-based, modularized and fully accredited lifelong educational and skills training programme for out-of-school groups which was officially launched by the Department of Out of School Education

and Training (DOSET) in the beginning of 2010. The programme primarily targets out-of-school youth and adults who never went to school or dropped out before completing primary school and, therefore, have low literacy and numeracy skills, as well as those who failed to access basic education through the NLP. Special focus is also placed on ethnic minorities and people with special learning needs as well as on disadvantaged and often marginalized rural communities. These communities are particularly targeted because half of Botswana's population lives in rural areas with scarce educational opportunities and thus the highest poverty, unemployment and illiteracy rates in the country. For instance, in 2014, literacy rates in rural areas stood at 75%, compared to 9.6% in urban areas. In addition, 69% of the rural population had never attended school, while the percentage in urban villages and cities were 6% and 27%, respectively (MoESD, 2016).

ABEP curriculum

The ABEP's comprehensive and integrated curriculum was developed with technical support from the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) and aims to offer participants/learners with basic educational training that is equivalent to seven years of learning under Botswana's formal primary school system (i.e. Standards – or Grades – 1–7) as well as opportunities for training in a wide range of life skills. To this end, the ABEP curriculum integrates various basic literacy and practical skills training components (see **Figure 5**), including:

- Literacy and numeracy (basic and functional literacy and mathematics);
- Languages (Setswana for non-Setswana speakers and English for all);
- General studies clustered into four broad areas (social issues, health, economy and work, science and technology), which address issues such as civic education, nation-building, human rights, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS awareness, nutrition and sanitation, agriculture and environmental management and conservation);
- Practical and pre-vocational skills training according to demand, relevance and availability.

In short, the curriculum is designed to provide participants

with integrated and holistic learning opportunities that address their basic human development needs, related but not limited to knowledge, food, health, sanitation, shelter, clothing, work, liberty, identity, reasoning, self-expression, communication and participation.

However, apart from the core learning areas (languages and mathematics), which are compulsory and are

programme facilitators and learners have the latitude to interpret and adapt the curriculum to suit their context-specific developmental needs and aspirations. This openness and flexibility allows communities to actively participate in curriculum development, an aspect which not only ensures that the programme content is relevant to their daily lives and is culturally sensitive but also fosters greater motivation in learning and promotes social empowerment.

Learning levels

The ABEP curriculum has three basic learning levels, which are equivalent to seven years' primary education. Thus, while formal primary education in Botswana is split into two levels – lower primary (Standards 1–4) and upper primary (Standards 5–7), the ABEP extends over three levels: Level 1 (Standards 1–2), Level 2 (Standards 3–4), and Level 3 (Standards 5–7).

The curriculum of each learning levels is as follows:

Level 1 (Standards 1–2)

The focus of instruction at this level is on basic literacy and numeracy skills, taught through the two core learning areas, languages and mathematics, with additional content in the four areas – social issues, health, economy and work, science and technology (see 'ABEP curriculum') – provided as

part of general studies and optional practical and pre-vocational skills curricula.

English lessons are gradually introduced according to learners' motivation and capabilities, but writing in English only begins once the learners have developed foundational literacy skills. At Level 1, the themes taught in the English curriculum cut across the other learning areas and, in this way, provide a scaffold for teaching these areas in the third level. The use of calculators and mobile phones is encouraged to support learning.

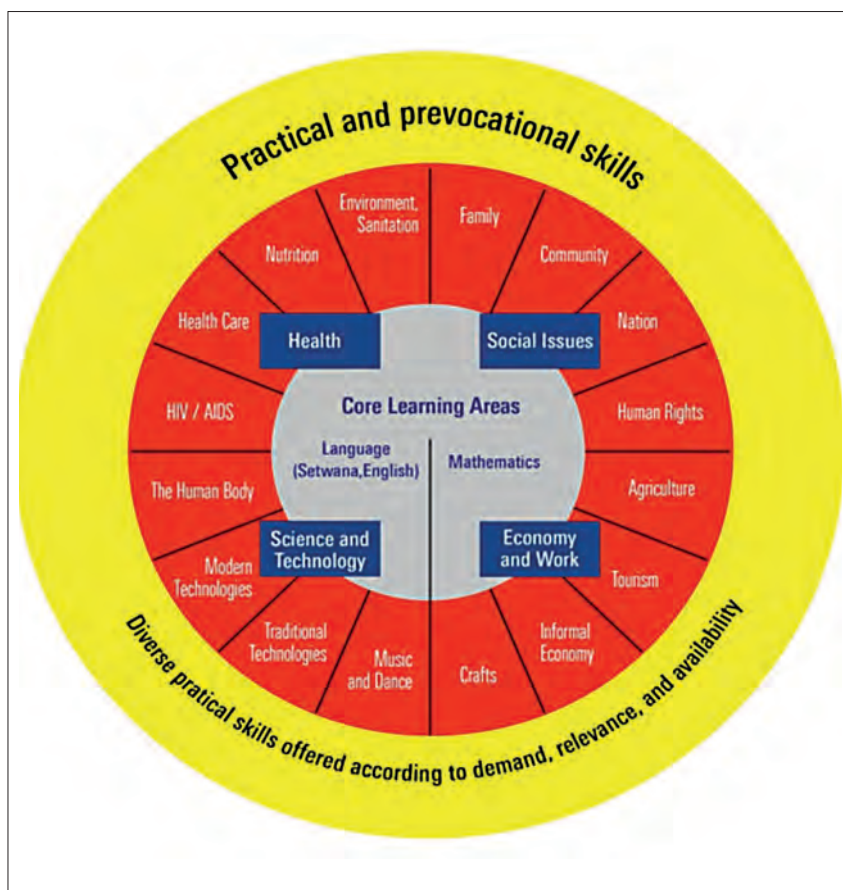


Figure 5: The ABEP curriculum. Source: DOSET

progressively developed throughout the curriculum and across the three learning levels (see 'learning levels'), and the compulsory use of standard teaching/ learning materials, the ABEP is generally conceived as having an open curriculum that does not prescribe or detail contents and activities for participants but rather provides broad criteria and guidelines for practical teaching and learning at every learning level and area. For instance, practical skills are optional and may be selected by learners according to their preferences and to the relevance of such skills for their specific context. Essentially, therefore,

Level 2 (Standards 3–4)

The focus at this level is to further strengthen the competencies in the core learning areas while expanding the scope of general studies and adding one or two practical and pre-vocational skills courses. Reading and writing in English is also introduced at this level and taught in a more systematic way. The use of real-life reading materials, such as newspapers, magazines, comics, street signs, calendars and posters, is encouraged.

Level 3 (Standards 5–7)

This level aims to consolidate the skills and competencies acquired in the three domains of Level 1; in addition, learners have the option to choose skills training to be further developed into income-generation activities. At this stage, English is taught intensively in order to facilitate the transition from using Setswana and/or minority languages to the use of English as the medium of instruction. In order to facilitate this transition, certain concepts are introduced in the learners' first language as well as in English.

Class attendance

In addition to adapting the programme to their local contexts, needs and aspirations, facilitators are also responsible for designing an appropriate class attendance timetable that enables learners to participate in the programme while, at the same time, continuing to carry out everyday responsibilities. However, as a general rule, DOSET recommends that the total weekly teacher/student contact hours should be between eight and 10 hours across the three levels (i.e. participants should attend classes four-to-five days a week for an average of two hours per session). Such a timetable is deemed necessary for optimum literacy skills acquisition.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The ABEP is guided by Botswana's overall long-term policy framework, *Vision 2016: Towards Prosperity for All* (Paris21, n.d.), in which the country committed to work towards an educated and informed nation, and to promote the Education for All (EFA) goals,¹ and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults

in particular. Thus, in accordance with this vision as well as other international commitments, such as the Dakar Framework for Action (UNESCO, 2000), Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning (UIE, 1997), and the Belém Framework for Action (UIL, 2010), the ABEP aims to:

- establish a learning society in which education is seen as a lifelong process;
- create opportunities for out-of-school youth and adults to learn as they continue with other aspects of their lives;
- guarantee all school-aged youth and adults access to basic education in order to promote equity and social justice;
- enable people to earn a living with dignity and thus to improve their standard/ quality of life;
- provide opportunities for young people and adults to further their initial education to higher stages in order to raise the general level of education of the population;
- provide opportunities for adults to acquire work-related skills that will improve their productivity and standard of living, thus promoting national economic growth;
- promote social empowerment and transformation;
- equip the population with skills and knowledge in order to enable them to participate actively and meaningfully in family, community and national development.

APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

ABEP facilitators are trained and encouraged to use various learner-centred participatory teaching–learning methods. Group debates/discussions, simulations, and question and answer strategies are central to the teaching process but are complemented by other approaches, such as self-learning. This emphasis on the use of participatory teaching–learning methods is intended to encourage learners to actively participate in the learning process and, in so doing, improve their communication and critical thinking skills. In order to help learners to develop sustainable reading and writing competencies, teaching materials are supplemented with a wide range of 'real literacy' materials such as newspapers, magazines

¹ The EFA goals ran from 1990–2015. To read more about the EFA, visit <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/en/glossary-curriculum-terminology/e/education-all-efa> [Accessed 21 July 2020].

and audio-visual media. Learners' own experiences and creative writing are also encouraged to facilitate the recognition of words and phonemes as well as the acquisition of written language.

In addition, and unlike the approach used in the implementation of the NLP, facilitators are also encouraged to use the most commonly spoken local language as the medium of instruction in the initial learning stages of the learning process in order to enable learners to effectively acquire basic literacy concepts and skills. Thereafter, Setswana and English (the widely spoken national and official languages, respectively) are progressively introduced as the medium of instruction and as taught subjects so as to create the necessary linkages between the programme and the general (formal) education system.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF FACILITATORS

The DOSET programme facilitators comprise professional teachers, including holders of diplomas in education, retired professional teachers, untrained undergraduates and, in the majority, people with secondary school qualifications. Apart from academic qualifications, the DOSET often appoints as facilitators people with a demonstrable record of social commitment who are therefore ready to become autonomous and lifelong learners themselves. However, regardless of their qualifications, all facilitators are provided with formal induction/ formative training and ongoing in-service training and mentoring in various aspects of adult education, including:

- participatory adult education teaching–learning methodologies;
- the theory and practice of adult education;
- classroom management;
- the use of teaching modules to conduct lessons and to moderate the learning process;
- assessment and evaluation of learning outcomes.

Each facilitator is engaged on a part-time basis and is, on average, responsible for about eight learners. Facilitators receive a stipend of BWP 3,840 (around USD 335) per month. Apart from providing teaching

services, programme facilitators also assist the DOSET and the adult education programme committees with mobilizing communities and potential learners.

ENROLMENT OF LEARNERS

In order to facilitate the effective and sustainable implementation of the ABEP, the DOSET employs various social mobilization strategies to encourage the communities to support the programme and potential learners to enrol. These strategies include:

- public announcements and advertisements in community newspapers and over the radio;
- production and distribution of posters and pamphlets;
- advocacy programmes, including public meetings with community-based organizations.

In addition, the DOSET has also helped communities to establish adult education programme committees and committees targeting out-of-school youth and adults. With support from adult educators and adult education officers, these committees are responsible for adapting the ABEP curriculum for local contexts. They also work with the DOSET to coordinate programme activities at the local level, mobilize learners and provide physical spaces where learning can take place.

Learners wishing to enrol into the ABEP are assessed for appropriate placement within the programme. Each placement assessment includes a personal interview with the learner to determine his/her learning needs and aspirations. By recognizing both their prior learning and overall life experiences, this strategy ensures that learners are placed at the correct learning level.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

In keeping with the outcomes-based approach and lifelong learning paradigm which informs the ABEP, ongoing programme monitoring, assessment and evaluation by DOSET field officers are central aspects of the implementation strategy. Ongoing programme monitoring enables implementers to foresee negative outcomes and to make amendments to the programme plans and to rectify deficiencies. It also contributes in

helping educators to adjust their teaching methods and to improve curriculum contents.

In addition, ABEP learners are continuously assessed at all learning levels through a range of formative strategies including class tests, oral presentations and self and peer assessments. Ongoing diagnostic assessments also enable facilitators to ascertain the learners' literacy skills and competencies as well as to recognize learning difficulties in order to respond with appropriate support such as remedial lessons and personalized teaching-learning strategies. The DOSET also encourages programme implementers to actively involve all participants and stakeholders in the implementation of the monitoring, assessment and evaluation processes. For instance, because village or community education committees play a critical role in the implementation of the programme, they should be involved in its evaluation. This strategy allows the stakeholders and especially the beneficiaries/ learners to critically reflect on their experiences, the strengths and weaknesses of the programme, and its significance in their lives as well as in the community.

IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

The ABEP has achieved a number of positive results. For example, it is now considered one of the most progressive curriculum frameworks for adult literacy and basic education in the region. The programme has also enabled DOSET staff to develop and strengthen their capacities. In addition, through the programme, institutional partnerships were built with key stakeholders, such as the University of Botswana, the Botswana College of Open and Distance Learning (BOCODOL), the Botswana Examinations Council (BEC), the Botswana Training Authority (BOTA), and the National Library Service of Botswana.

The UNESCO Institute for Education's (UIE) evaluation of the NLP (2004) highlights a number of challenges with adult learning and education (ALE) in general, which also apply to the implementation of the ABEP programme; these include low and irregular attendance rates, limited infrastructure outside the DNFE national and regional offices, poor home literacy environments leading to learners' lack of engagement, failure to enforce policy

recommendations, failure to follow through on planning, lack of cooperation among ministries and institutions, lack of a comprehensive educational framework for non-formal learners, insufficient implementation frameworks and guidelines in the non-formal sub-sector, insufficient funding, poor working conditions of literacy group leaders, and the programme's single language policy in a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society in which more than 20 languages are spoken.

One of the main challenges of the ABEP is the building of stakeholders' capacities. Despite its efforts to promote a paradigm shift in learning, the DNFE has been slow to transform its practices. Encouraging facilitators to change their teaching methods from the traditional teacher-centred to a more learner-centred approach has also proved difficult.

Insufficient budget allocations and the development of appropriate assessment procedures has also proved problematic, but the DNFE has recently established an assessment unit which is solely responsible for assessment, monitoring and development.

SUSTAINABILITY

The structure of the ABEP is intended to offer learning opportunities to all, even those who cannot access formal school, up to Standard 7. The establishment of a unifying umbrella assessment body in the form of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) will be a significant move towards the attainment of the lifelong learning paradigm. Once approved by the government, the framework will facilitate learner mobility within different sectors of education and training and enable the effective implementation of ABEP.

The strategic plan of the DOSET anticipates that the provision of new topics, such as business and management skills, environmental conservation, reproductive health, crafts, indigenous design and civic education, among others, will attract more learners to enrol in the programme. The linkage of the ABEP with income-generating projects will further increase the programme's sustainability. Furthermore, six resource centres are in development across the country, which will provide resources and information

on adult literacy programmes and help learners enrol in the programme.

Finally, the Government of Botswana has developed new systems for sharing the DNEP's limited resources. For example, classrooms are repurposed for ABEP lessons once the normal school day is finished. However, an effective system of monitoring and evaluation is still needed, in particular with regard to participation and learning outcomes of the ABEP, which will eventually generate evidence for the effectiveness of adult literacy and education in the country.

LESSONS LEARNED

The lessons learned not only take into account the achievements made, they also show what elements failed and what adjustments were required.

The development of the ABEP curriculum and learning materials was largely based on the outcomes of UIE's evaluation of the Botswana NLP in 2004, which attests to the impact research and evaluation studies can have on national policies and programmes. It is therefore important to systematically link research and evaluation findings to implementation practice. In addition, with regard to curriculum development, it is crucial to involve a broad range of stakeholders from the outset in order to promote a participatory and creative approach to the programme development process. This strengthens ownership, efficiency and further possibilities for partnerships to implement the programme. However, such a process takes time. Furthermore, identification of evolving learning needs is an ongoing task, and adjustments in the curriculum materials and learning approaches should be considered as part of quality assurance of any learning programme.

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ETHIOPIA

Integrated Functional Adult Education

Key Information

Programme title	Integrated Functional Adult Education (IFAE)
Implementing organization	Silt'e Zone Education Department
Language of instruction	Amharic and Siltegnä (a local language mainly spoken in the SNNPR)
Funding	Government; the private sector; a national NGO; and target communities (which currently cover a third of the costs)
Programme partners	Addis Development Vision (ADV, a local NGO), ActionAid Ethiopia; Azernet Berbera Programme; and the following Silt'e Zone government agencies: agriculture, health, trade and industry, women and youth affairs, and the agricultural products exchange and cooperatives department
Annual programme costs	Approx. ETB 3,661,000 (around USD 100,000)
Annual programme cost per learner	ETB 40 (or USD 1)
Date of inception	2010

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Ethiopia is the second most populous nation in Africa after Nigeria, and the fastest growing economy in the region. According to the World Bank (2019), the main challenges facing Ethiopia include maintaining its economic growth and accelerating poverty reduction, two issues that have been on the country's development agenda since the beginning of the decade. More recently, to address these issues, the Ethiopian Government introduced a five-year development plan in 2016: the Second Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP II 2015/16–2019/20) (FAO, 2016).

The main goal of the GTP II is to transform Ethiopia into a lower middle-income country by 2025. To achieve this, the Ethiopian Government allocated a significant share of its budget to poverty alleviation. These efforts led to improvements in the standard of living of most Ethiopians; for example, the number of people below the national poverty line of

USD 0.60 per day decreased from 38.7% in 2005 to 23.4% in 2010. Despite this progress, however, Ethiopia continues to face major challenges to issues including universal access to primary education and food insecurity. For example, the total net enrolment rate for primary education stood at around 85% in 2015, and, as of 2017, there were still 17.5 million adults (aged

over 15) in the country who lacked basic literacy skills (UIS, 2020). The Integrated Functional Adult Education programme, implemented in the Silt'e Zone in the country's Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region (SNNPR), attempts to address these challenges in line with Ethiopia's overall development efforts (World Bank, 2012).

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The Integrated Functional Adult Education (IFAE) programme is a functional literacy programme that reaches out to adults and young people aged 15 or older and is available to women, people with disabilities, and minority groups. The main goals of the programme are to increase literacy rates, to promote women's empowerment, to improve participants' health, and to raise the general standards of living within communities. The programme consists of two eight-month courses that participants complete within two years. Topics taught include literacy, gender issues, environmental protection, civic and ethical education, health, disease prevention, family planning, and agriculture.

To date, the IFAE programme has been implemented only in the Silt'e Zone. It has reached approximately 165,000 adults and young people, including 76,500 women, since its launch in 2010.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the programme is to increase the adult literacy rate in Ethiopia's Silt'e Zone. Besides improving literacy, the programme also aims to teach participants fundamental skills and knowledge to increase their standard of living in communities; this includes:

- gaining an understanding of their (national and international) rights and obligations;
- promoting productivity and creativity;
- improving life skills such as family planning, agriculture and disease prevention;
- teaching participants how to obtain and use information;
- establishing a culture of family learning;
- teaching participants problem-solving skills that

allow them to address and confront daily challenges and local social, economic and political problems.

The programme aimed to reach around 317,000 individuals within its first five years, of which 65% were to be women and young people.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

The IFAE programme is implemented in eight woredas (the third-level administrative division in Ethiopia) and one city administration (Silt'e, Lanfuro, Dalocha, Hulbarege, Sankura, Merab-Azernet Berbera, Mesrak-Azernet Berbera, Alcho-Wuriro, and Worabe Town) in the Silt'e Zone. Specifically, the programme runs in 181 rural kebeles (the smallest administrative unit in Ethiopia, comparable to a neighbourhood) and 71 urban kebeles.

The programme takes two years to complete and consists of two courses, each of eight months' duration. Teaching takes place for two hours a day, three days a week, or, alternatively, three hours a day for two days a week. Facilitators usually conduct classes in schools, alternative basic education centres and other kebele facilities. The programme's partners, Addis Development Vision and ActionAid Azerenet-Berebera, assist facilitators in raising awareness of the programme.

APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

The teaching methodology used is active and participatory. Facilitators often link literacy training to everyday topics. For example, when facilitators teach about malaria, they educate participants about the symptoms, transmission, treatment and prevention of malaria, while also telling learners how to spell words and phrases related to the disease.

CURRICULUM AND TEACHING MATERIALS

The learners' needs are determined through face-to-face interviews conducted by regional facilitators. The curriculum is then developed to reflect the interests of the learners and the needs of the community in question. The needs assessment of learners happens at the kebele level. However, the Ministry of Education

dictates that the learning content in all kebeles should cover its core curriculum.

Facilitators generally base the content on the interests of the participants, which often means combining numeracy and literacy training with income-generating and livelihood topics. The main subjects covered in the programme include literacy, gender, environmental protection, civic and ethical education, health, disease prevention, family planning, and agriculture. Overall, facilitators use around 20,000 textbooks and manuals. Local officers are responsible for translating and adjusting the teaching material in order to tailor them to local circumstances. In addition, programme facilitators use other equipment, such as agricultural tools and cleaning utensils, to conduct teaching.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF FACILITATORS

Paid teachers, volunteers and university students conduct the classes. There are around 50 participants for every teacher. Most facilitators come from the local communities. They are required to know the local language and to be familiar with the traditions and culture of the locality. Facilitators receive training in the form of workshops and seminars at regional, woreda and kebele levels. Training for facilitators includes sessions on andragogy, adult psychology, learning assessments, and classroom management. Addis Development Vision and ActionAid Azerenet-Berebera also help to recruit and train facilitators. Teachers receive an average monthly salary of ETB 600 (approximately USD 16).

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The monitoring and evaluation of the programme is carried out by woreda education officers who regularly collect data to monitor progress. Each officer covers six education centres and conducts a review of the programme on a quarterly basis. In addition, programme implementers distribute an annual census questionnaire on the development of the skills training programme to each woreda.

The local authority issues certificates to participants who complete the first year and to those who graduate

after two years on the programme.

IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

The IFAE programme has had a positive impact on the standard of living, education, income, health and social status of participants, particularly of women, who reported feeling empowered as a result of their involvement. For example, some female participants formed women's groups that offered support when a member of the group became sick or faced other hardships. Women also became more aware of their rights, which enabled them to improve their access to land, electricity and water. The social status of women also increased as they started to gain decision-making power within the family. In 2013, women made up close to 50% of programme graduates (10,083 graduates out of 24,382).

Children also indirectly benefit from the programme, as better-educated parents tend to provide better support to their children, by encouraging them to study and by providing them with educational materials. In participating communities, school drop-out rates decreased from 7.9% in 2012 to 1.5% in 2014.

There are also positive health outcomes associated with the IFAE programme. Parents tend to vaccinate their children more frequently and mothers are more likely to understand the dangers of pregnancy, to receive pre- and post-natal healthcare, and to engage in family planning. In addition, the personal hygiene of participants also improved. For example, after participating in the programme, some participants and their families began to construct and utilize latrines.

Moreover, the programme had a positive influence on the income and nutrition of participants' households. Participants started to use fertilizers and apply new agricultural practices to improve crop yield, and households diversified their agricultural activities to reduce malnutrition. The programme's training in technical and business development skills also contributed to rising incomes, and learners started to save more as they become more familiar with the concept of saving.

Challenges

Challenges facing the programme include:

- high staff turnover due to small salaries;
- lack of trained personnel;
- lack of collaboration among facilitators and partners;
- additional costs for contractors writing textbooks and manuals;
- in some woredas, there is less support for the empowerment of women due to cultural prejudice;
- drop-out rates due to child-raising duties, especially when children go to school and the parents who participate in the programme have to take care of all domestic activities;
- not every learner receives his or her own textbook and facilitators have to share manuals.

LESSONS LEARNED

In the beginning in 2010, the programme ran one learning centre per kebele. Overtime, the number of learning centres per kebele increased to six training centres. In the process, facilitators received more training and additional staff joined the programme, including mentors and supervisors. The government adjusted its financial contributions, and the programme facilitators changed the structure of the programme to clusters consisting of between three and five kebeles. The purpose of these clusters is to share financial, labour and material resources among learning centres and facilitators within the cluster. Most importantly, programme implementers also tried to extend the practices from the best-performing learning centres (in terms of access, quality and participation) to other learning centres. Programme facilitators said that they felt the programme should have been scaled-up in order to reach more poor and vulnerable people; in future, therefore, this will be a focus for government agencies.

SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability of the programme is achieved through an arrangement that organizes participants into different community-level groups and committees. For example, women organize themselves into women's groups. In addition, participants form technical, education, training and supervision committees. These groups receive financial and technical support from the government.

Through their membership in these groups, participants gain a responsible role and a sense of ownership over the programme. The community-based groups promote adult education and contribute material, financial and staff resources to building new learning centres and improving existing ones.

The community-based groups also enable participants to access individual loans and improve social cohesion within a community. Therefore, they play an important role in poverty reduction, which further promotes the sustainability of the programme's positive outcomes. In addition, the improved social status of women, promoted by the women's groups, is especially important in maintaining the positive benefits of the programme. Regional education bureaux further promote the sustainability of the programme by providing political support for further functional literacy education.

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KENYA

Economic Empowerment and Functional Adult Literacy Programme

Key Information

Programme title	Economic Empowerment and Functional Adult Literacy Programme
Implementing organization	Kenya Adult Learners' Association (KALA)
Language of instruction	Official languages (English and Kiswahili); as well as Kikuyu, Maa Dholuo)
Programme partners	CWS; ProLiteracy Worldwide; UNESCO Nairobi Office; Kenya National Commission for UNESCO (KNATCOM); Kenyan Directorate of Adult and Continuing Education; Toronto Adult Student Association (TASA); National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE); Girl Child Network (GCN); International Council for Adult Education (ICAE); Bible Translation & Literacy; learners' associations in Ghana, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Zambia; and partners in literacy ministries.
Funding	Church World Service (CWS), ProLiteracy, self-financing
Annual programme costs	KES 4 million (about USD 37,000)
Date of inception	1990

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Despite remarkable economic growth in recent years, poverty and income inequality are still major problems in the Kenya. In fact, based on measures of health, education and income, in 2012 the Human Development Index (HDI) ranked the country only 147 out of 189 countries (UNDP HDR, 2019). Nevertheless, according to the World Bank (2019), these issues are being gradually addressed: the overall rate of absolute poverty has declined from 46.8% to 36.1% of the population and, in rural areas, the proportion of the population living in absolute poverty declined from 50% in 2005/06 to 18.8% in 2015/16.

Meanwhile, the annual population growth rate in Kenya has remained steady, at around 2.3% (UIS, 2018), but the working-age population (aged 15–34 years) has increased significantly: 9.7 million in 1998/99 to 13.1 million in 2005/2006. Employment in the informal sector has

also increased by 112.3 per cent between 2006 and 2008 (ILO, 2018). This significantly increases the importance of the non-formal sector in creating employment and reducing poverty. In this respect, the Kenya Adult Learners' Association (KALA) plays an important role in

promoting micro-enterprises and advancement in the informal business sector as a way of alleviating youth unemployment and high rural poverty in Kenya. The World Bank (2013) states that strong job growth is only possible with the legitimization of the informal business sector; accordingly, the Economic Empowerment and Functional Adult Literacy Programme implemented by KALA tackles the vulnerability of farmers to climatic conditions – a serious challenge to development in rural Kenya – by equipping participants with skills that allow them to engage in income-generating activities other than farming (ibid.).

Kenya introduced mandatory free primary school education in 2003, which resulted in a 104% gross enrolment rate in primary schools and, in 2008, the Kenyan Government extended the concept of free basic education to include public secondary schools, covering tuition costs only. Yet even with these policies in place, there are still some 1.2 million children who are not attending school (UNICEF, n.d.). Gender disparities in education are also high: the 2012 Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report found that 84% of women in Kenya were literate compared to 91% of men (UNESCO, 2013). It is for these reasons that KALA's

literacy programme focuses on women and youth in rural areas as its main target group, thereby addressing some of the country's major problems: educational shortcomings, poverty, unemployment and social marginalization.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The Economic Empowerment and Functional Adult Literacy Programme has been implemented by KALA in various rural areas of Kenya. The programme aims to provide hands-on training to economically empower adults and youths by equipping them with basic literacy and functional skills. Economic empowerment refers to entrepreneurship and management training, which enables the target group to pursue income-generating activities. Such activities lead to important supplementary income, thereby reducing the dependency of households on weather-dependent work such as farming. One of KALA's aims is to put learners in a better position to make important decisions which influence their general livelihoods. Adult learners are also able to acquire skills in the prevention, control and reduction of health issues that may reduce their working capacities, as well as undertake kitchen-garden programmes that teach new methods of food production.



Empowering women enables them to participate fully in the community. © KALA

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

More specifically the programme aims to:

- improve the lives of women and youth through functional literacy by increasing the enrolment of learners in literacy classes;
- facilitate entrepreneurship and management training for adult learners and facilitators;
- improve networking and sharing of experiences among groups/members through peer learning exchange programmes;
- initiate a capital savings grant to women and youth groups/learners;
- provide learning and teaching materials for the literacy classes;
- monitor and supervise small businesses and literacy classes.



Through KALA, women have an opportunity to earn money in a way other than farming. © KALA

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

The Economic Empowerment and Functional Adult Literacy Programme is divided into four areas, namely (1) basic literacy development; (2) women's empowerment through literacy; (3) the 'kitchen garden project'; and (4) health education.

For the first area, basic literacy development, KALA uses the national adult literacy curriculum developed by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), a state body established by the Government of Kenya in 2013 to vet, approve and develop learning materials for basic and tertiary education and training. Through this curriculum, adult learners acquire reading, writing and arithmetic skills; KALA also integrates supplementary entrepreneurship and management training outside the traditional reading and writing context. The general curriculum also takes the wider needs of women into consideration, as it addresses dynamic issues affecting women, such as human rights, economic empowerment, environmental conservation, civic engagement and health education.

The second area, women's empowerment through literacy, focuses on improving women's functional literacy skills so that they are able to actively pursue income-generating activities, in particular those that are not linked to farming. Traditional systems of land tenure, which only granted men and their sons the right to own land, have been largely replaced by laws ensuring equal rights to women and men upon marriage; however, in rural areas of Kenya, these laws are often overlooked (Nnoko-Mewanu and Abdi, 2020). It is therefore important that women develop the skills to engage in self-employment, such as running a small business, as a means of making a living and maintaining a consistent income. In general, empowering women is seen by KALA as a continuous process, which raises their social position and enables them to participate fully in decision-making processes at the community level.

The third area covered by the Economic Empowerment and Functional Adult Literacy Programme is the 'kitchen garden project'. Due to unpredictable weather patterns, subsistence farming cannot always guarantee sufficient

food supply or a surplus income; KALA hopes to address these problems by teaching the women how to grow and store their own produce.

The fourth area of the programme focuses on health. In order to improve health conditions in rural areas, the KALA literacy programme includes primary health education, as well as information on HIV/ AIDS control, prevention and care. Women enrolled in the programme are also trained in childcare, which enables them to look after their own children as well as children in the community who have been orphaned. In rural communities, orphaned children often live with host families, where they contribute to the household income.

The course design of the KALA literacy programme is principally based on the needs of the learners, which are determined through individual or group assessments. Each learner has to complete a basic entrance examination consisting of simple literacy and arithmetic tests to determine their literacy level. These tests are conducted in English, Kiswahili and other languages,

depending upon the community. Participants are thereby able to articulate their interests and perspectives on literacy and take an active part in their education. Once they have successfully completed the programme, participants are accredited by the national examination body and can continue to secondary education. At this stage, KALA helps the best students to find a sponsor. This support is designed so that he or she can contribute meaningfully toward the programme in future, for instance as a programme facilitator.

The Economic Empowerment and Functional Adult Literacy Programme is taught in two modalities: formal and non-formal. The formal classes are taught full-time, with a break in the morning and one for lunch, while the non-formal system – rather than following a strict timetable or curriculum – takes place when the participants are available and is led by a facilitator. This non-formal approach is more popular with learners. It involves peer exchange, providing participants with the opportunity to network, share experiences and knowledge, and textbooks developed by the KICD and



KALA determines the needs of learners through group assessment. © KALA



Textbooks developed by KICD are distributed to new learners. © KALA

other organizations specializing in adult education. The international non-profit organization ProLiteracy Worldwide, for example, provides a basic literacy textbook in Kiswahili and English that is intended to serve as a means of self-orientation for new participants, and are not a formal requirement of the course.

Non-formal courses are designed to fit learners' busy schedules. The basic literacy course normally takes place in the afternoons for a minimum of two days per week to a maximum of five days per week, two hours per session. KALA also runs courses targeting young people who have dropped out of primary education or did not finish secondary education. These courses take place five days per week and can take up to three years to complete.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF FACILITATORS

The programme facilitators are part-time and receive a monthly remuneration of KES 3,000 (about USD 28). They

receive training from the Kenyan Directorate of Adult and Continuing Education in partnership with KALA. To qualify for training, facilitators must have completed secondary education; they are then given structured training in adult education, including methodology and delivery, which lasts for up to three months. The present facilitator/ learner ratio is 1 to 40.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The monitoring and evaluation process undertaken by KALA is also an opportunity for learners to take an active role in the design and implementation of the programme. KALA assesses the result of the programme mid-way and at the end, and also monitors the literacy levels of learners on a monthly basis through feedback sessions with learners and facilitators.

The impact of the Economic Empowerment and Functional Adult Literacy Programme on a learner's life and on communities as a whole is evaluated using a bottom-up approach. It is an opportunity for

participants to voice criticisms about the project or point out flaws in its delivery. In doing so, they develop a sense of ownership over the programme.

The indicators used to judge the effectiveness of the programme include the number of adult learners enrolled, how many go on to secure employment and whether they feel they have been empowered and involved in decision-making processes, among others. All learners at both the primary and secondary level are provided with a mandatory certificate of achievement once they complete the course. KALA also conducts monthly follow-up visits to monitor the progress of the learners.

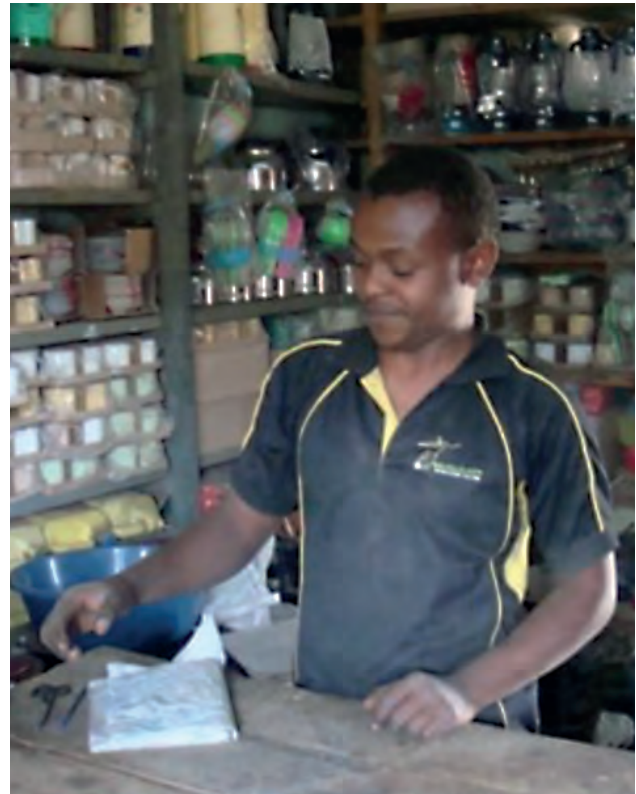
IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

Since its inception, the KALA literacy programme has benefited over 75,000 participants, and it reaches around 2,500 learners annually. The programme has particularly benefited women and youth with low incomes. KALA was successful in reaching out to grassroots communities and in establishing groups of people who learn together and mobilize their efforts to undergo income-generating activities. It also managed to influence policy-makers in the government to put an emphasis on community and gender education, a feat achieved through continuous partnership between the government, the private sector and key development partners.

The empowerment of women through literacy has meant that women have become more actively engaged in



The KALA literacy programme teaches women how to work their land more effectively. © KALA



Learners who complete the KALA programme are often able to find work in the non-formal sector. © KALA

decision-making at the household level, allowing them to pursue and advocate their own interests. One impact of the programme has been the alleviation of women's marginalization within society, as improved literacy has given women a greater level of social, economic and political status.

In order to better the economic prospects of women in rural communities, the Economic Empowerment and Functional Adult Literacy Programme teaches women how to work their land more effectively, which raises their agricultural productivity and improves their income. Women who complete the programme also have a greater chance of pursuing self-employment as a means of generating supplementary domestic income. The focus of the programme is generally on literacy because it has a positive effect on learner's employment opportunities. Generating and promoting micro-enterprises has a lasting effect on people's independence and it increases their chance of surviving food shortages and their associated health issues. Literacy is therefore an integral part of the sustainability aspect of KALA's economic empowerment programme.

In addition to economic empowerment and the teaching of functional literacy skills, KALA has also been successful in disseminating information about the programme through newsletters, increased collaborations, and networking with key stakeholders and partners.

There has also been a transformation of national management systems at the classroom level – part of a two-way undertaking between KALA and the adult learners. In an innovative measure, each class now has a voluntary management committee, comprised of both adult learners and the class facilitator. The facilitator is responsible for articulating the concerns of the class to the committee, which discusses and responds to issues collectively. This allows adult learners to take a managerial role in their class and make important decisions. As a requirement of each class, the committee is responsive to the needs of learners and puts adults in the position to measure how much they have achieved.

Communities participating in KALA's efforts have also benefited as a whole from the community libraries and resource centres set up in aid of the project, thus promoting a culture of lifelong learning.

Challenges

Due to high enrolment rates, KALA is unable to provide enough facilitators for all 22 adult learning centres across the country; in addition, a lack of funding has led to a shortage of material and human resources. The high cost of petrol also makes it difficult for programme providers to conduct monthly monitoring and evaluation visits to each of the learning centres, as does the poor road network in rural areas of Kenya – especially during the rainy season. Moreover, the effects of climate change on Kenya's agricultural sector has, naturally, also affected learners with agricultural-based businesses.

Another significant challenge for learners is the long distances they must travel in order to reach a learning centre; this has naturally led to a demand for more learning centres closer to where learners live. A prevailing sense of insecurity in certain areas may also prevent participants from taking part programme: adult learners forced to walk at night are prone to attacks by others or wild animals.

For programme facilitators, their poor remuneration has at times led to a lack of motivation. It is also difficult for the facilitators to advance KALA's objectives due to shortages of both relevant materials and personnel to provide them with continuous training in the provision of adult education.

SUSTAINABILITY

There is an urgent need for adult education in Kenya, but the means of making the Economic Empowerment and Functional Adult Literacy Programme a success in all parts of the country are limited. This jeopardizes its sustainability. The major challenge, as noted previously, is a shortage of funds to reach all the earmarked learning centres.

As of November 2013, KALA has secured funding for six of the 22 learning centres, which are achieving sustainable progress due to their involvement in small-scale businesses. This process has harnessed close working partnerships among community members, who are able to share their problems, encounters and experiences. Given the programme's success, it is likely to spread to other areas if enough funding is available.

At present, funding for the remaining 16 centres must be renegotiated annually, leading to a sense of uncertainty for learners and facilitators alike. Learners are not officially obliged to make any financial contribution towards



A KALA learning centre. © KALA

their learning, but, when they do, the money is held in savings. KALA estimates the annual costs to run these centres include USD 10,080 for materials, USD 15,172 for facilitators' honoraria, and USD 11,592 for monitoring and evaluation.

A final obstacle to be overcome is a lack of trained personnel to handle adult education. The facilitators in these centres need constant training, both in the field and in the classroom. As most of the facilitators are men, more female facilitators are encouraged to take part in the programme.

LESSONS LEARNED

By adding an economic dimension to its Economic Empowerment and Functional Adult Literacy Programme, KALA boosted not only the enrolment rate, but also the overall literacy rate of its participants, as it provided them with the incentive to 'learn to earn'. This, in turn, also had a positive impact on household relations in the rural communities. In addition, the entrepreneurial training provided adult learners with a sense of ownership of the programme and enabled them to better manage their household incomes. Since most of the adult learners have varied knowledge and skills but lack formal education, KALA provided them with the opportunity to participate in the decisions that determined the kind of education they received.

Motivation of adult learners and facilitators alike can be achieved when they are allowed to share their experiences and ideas freely. By being provided with a sense of ownership of a programme through measures such as shared class committees, adult learners feel committed to their progress and reaching their goals. Involving adult learners in the design of a programme, from its inception to the development phases, ensures its success.

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NAMIBIA

National Literacy Programme

Key Information

Programme title	National Literacy Programme
Implementing organization	Ministry of Education, Government of Namibia
Date of inception	1992
Language of instruction	Mother-tongue languages and in English
Programme partners	NGOs and private sector organizations
Funding	Government of Namibia

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The majority of Namibia's population of almost 2.5 million (World Bank, 2020) depends on agriculture and the informal sector for subsistence. Societal problems mainly arise from and are reflected by the disparities in income distribution, unemployment and poverty. In 2009/10, the proportion of Namibians living below the national poverty was 28.7%; by 2015/16, that number fell to 17.4% (ibid.).

More recent estimates provided by the Namibian Statistics Agency (2019) suggest that 43.7% and 48.5% of young men and women, respectively, are unemployed. Furthermore, the unemployment rates as of 2018 for rural and urban areas of Namibia are approximately identical, at 33%. **Figure 6** reflects the change in the total and youth unemployment rates in Namibia from 2012–2018. Linking literacy to livelihood skills development, particularly in poor rural and peri-urban communities, is therefore critical for the enhancement of Namibia's communal subsistence economy and its integration into the mainstream national cash economy as well as for the improvement of people's living standards.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The National Literacy Programme in Namibia (NLPN) was officially launched in September 1992, two years after Namibia gained independence from South Africa. The programme was built on a long tradition of literacy and adult education development dating back to the early activities of missionaries, as well as, more recently, the literacy campaigns of the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO)¹ and NGOs such as the Council of Churches in Namibia (CCN). All of these programmes were initiated during the country's struggle for liberation. NLPN targets out-of-school youth as well as illiterate and disadvantaged adults. Its aim is to enable them to participate effectively in national

¹ SWAPO, officially the SWAPO Party of Namibia, is a political party that began as a liberation movement in Namibia (formerly South West Africa) and became the country's leading party following independence in 1990. See <https://www.britannica.com/topic/SWAPO-Party-of-Namibia> [Accessed 19 August 2020].

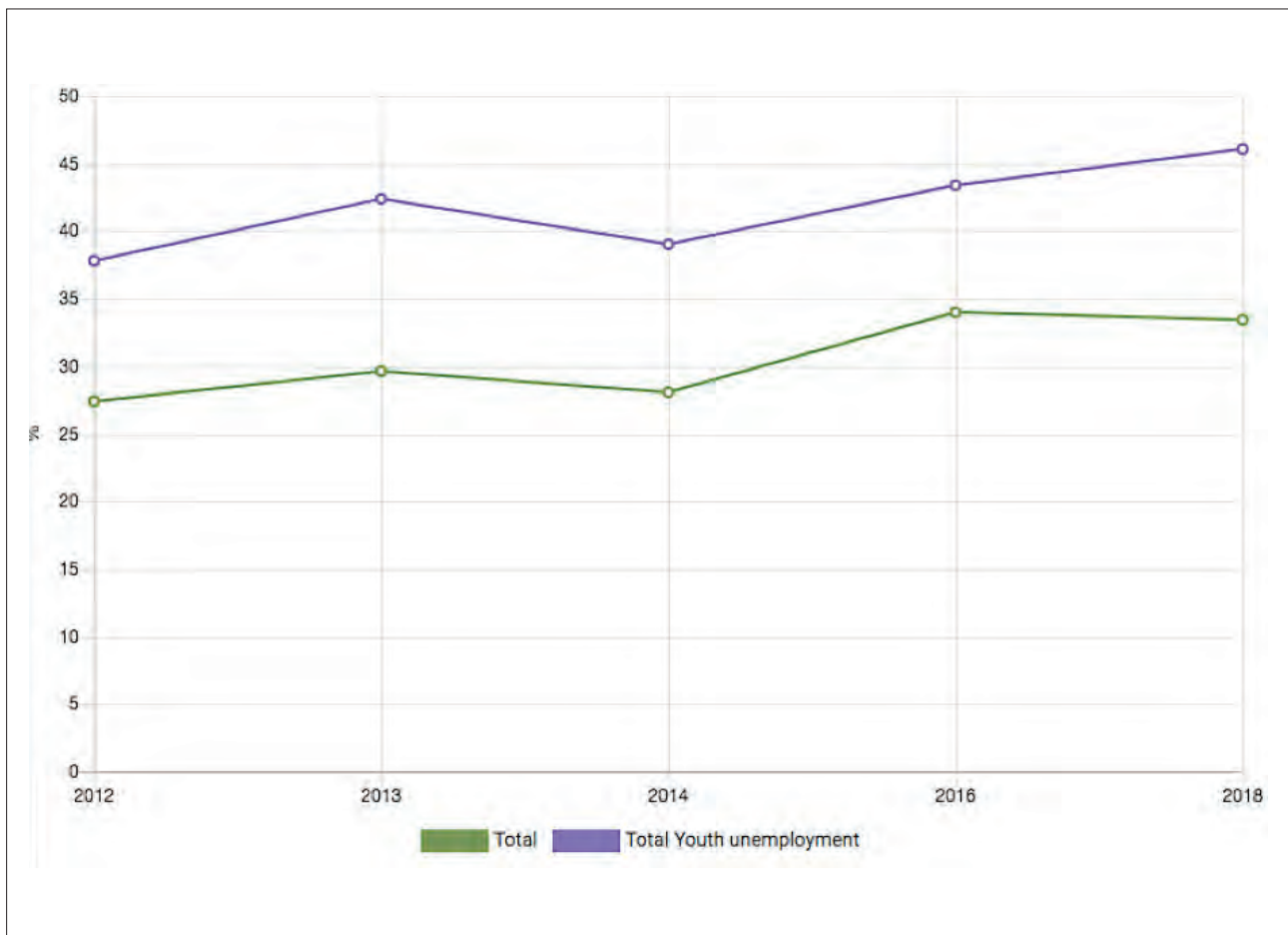


Figure 6: Change in total unemployment rate and total youth unemployment rate from 2012–2018. *Source:* NSA, 2019

development. NLPN was initially funded by the Dutch, Swedish and Namibian governments, but is now wholly funded and facilitated by the Government of Namibia through its Ministry of Education (MoE). However, the ownership of the programme rests with the community, which is expected to participate actively in the planning, directing, monitoring, recruitment of learners and evaluating of all programme-related activities through its regional and community literacy committees.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The National Literacy Programme in Namibia is driven by the broader national vision, which is to facilitate national development and transformation. The government's specific and long-term vision for educational development is for Namibia to become a fully literate nation with a workforce that is capable

of driving and sustaining national development. In the short term, however, the programme aimed to achieve a total youth and adult literacy rate of 90% by 2015.² The overall qualitative goal is to use NPLN to promote social, cultural, political and economic development nationwide in order to improve the quality of life for all people. To this end, the NPLN aims to:

- promote literacy and numeracy skills in local (mother-tongue) languages and in English in order to enhance multicultural and multi-religious tolerance and understanding;
- promote further learning among out-of-school youth and adults with a view to reducing existing educational inequalities;
- improve people's communication capacity and self-confidence in order to create a well-informed citizenry;

² Details on the regional pass rates of the NLPN programme as of 2017 can be found in the EMIS Education Statistics report, at: https://www.moe.gov.na/files/downloads/d15_EMIS%20Education%20Statistics%202017%20-%20web%20quality.pdf [Accessed 3 September 2020].



Literacy classes are held on a part-time basis, usually meeting three times a week for two hours. © MoE

- enhance the participation of all people in the democratic process, including the exercising of their rights and responsibilities as citizens;
- enhance the capacity of both youth and adults to become more productive and self-reliant;
- enable parents to participate in the improvement of their children's lives, particularly by exposing the parents to useful health practices and enabling them to share the knowledge, skills and educational practices gained through NLPN with their children.

APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

The Directorate of Adult Education (DAE), which is part of the Department of Lifelong Learning in Namibia's Ministry of Basic Education, Sport and Culture, is responsible for coordinating the development of the NPLN curriculum, developing and distributing learning resources/ materials and providing learners with literacy and numeracy skills training. To this end, DAE works in close cooperation with the National Institute for Educational Development (NIED), Regional Literacy Officers (RLOs) and District Literacy Organizers (DLOs). This decentralized structure

of programme development and implementation has made it possible for NLPN to strike a balance between national, regional and/ or local interests and needs as well as to develop learning materials in the 11 languages that are indigenous to Namibia, as well as in English. In addition, DLOs and RLOs are responsible for implementing the programme in their regions and districts by recruiting and training literacy promoters (teachers).

Literacy classes are attended by 15 to 30 learners and are held on a part-time basis, usually meeting three times a week for two hours. The teachers are also employed on a part-time basis and the programme recruits about 2,400 literacy teachers annually. Newly recruited promoters go through an initial three-week pre-service training course in adult literacy. Thereafter, they participate in monthly in-service or refresher training courses. A learner-centred methodological approach is used for literacy teaching and learning. Group discussions, simulations, drama, song and dance and storytelling are some of the most commonly used methods.

The NLPN consists of two broad components: (1) the adult basic literacy programme and (2) the post-basic literacy programme.

Adult basic literacy programme

The literacy phase of the NLPN comprises three formative one-year training stages, each averaging about 240 lesson hours:

- **Stage 1:** Basic mother-tongue literacy

Emphasis during Stage 1 is to foster the development of mother-tongue literacy skills among learners. As such, learning is mainly conducted in the language of particular regions/districts.

- **Stage 2:** Intermediate literacy learning

In the second year (Stage 2), the medium of instruction is still the mother tongue, and the key objective is to enable learners to improve, consolidate and sustain the literacy skills and experiences acquired in Stage 1. In addition, Stage 2 also introduces learners to functional literacy and life skills, incorporating issues related to agriculture, health, small-scale business entrepreneurship, environmental awareness and civic education. It is hoped that functional activities like this will empower learners to improve their quality of life and that of their communities.

- **Stage 3:** English for communication

Stage 3 is equivalent to Grade 4 in the formal primary education system and is the last stage in the adult basic literacy programme. It is dedicated to developing basic and functional English skills for general communication, and the task of literacy promoters is to create an environment conducive to the development of these skills. In addition, an emphasis is also placed on reinforcing developmental and livelihood activities.

The post-basic literacy programme

Following Stage 3, there is a need to bridge the gap between it and the level required of a secondary student. Hence, a fourth stage has been introduced. This stage (which is not necessarily linked to the three years

of adult basic literacy learning and is open to anyone who has achieved the required level of literacy) primarily serves to equip learners with general knowledge, life and livelihoods skills. Graduates from the basic literacy classes can therefore continue their education by choosing one of the following options available in the NLPN programme's post-basic literacy component:

- **Adult Upper Primary Education (AUPE) programme**

This is a three-year course of post-literacy/ general knowledge training for those who have completed Stage 3 or Grade 4. Unlike the basic literacy programme, AUPE has its own curriculum which includes general knowledge in addition to language and numeracy. The 'language of business' is also an important component of this curriculum. Learners take two subjects per year. There are four compulsory and two optional courses. The programme endeavours to equip adults with knowledge and skills equivalent to Grade 7 in formal education.

- **Adult Skills Development for Self-Employment (ASDSE)**

This project was piloted in Namibia's Karas and Oshana regions with the objective of providing adult non-formal training activities at national, regional and district levels. The main goal of the project is to provide a better service to the community by harnessing adult education to create employment and income-generating opportunities. It also contributes towards national efforts to alleviate poverty by affording those who have acquired basic literacy the entrepreneurial skills needed for self-employment and employment in both urban and rural areas. Accordingly, graduates from the literacy programme are trained in various entrepreneurial skills which eventually enable them to acquire finances to establish small-scale businesses. Some of the learners go on to study at Community Skills Development Centres (COSDEC), where they learn skills such as plumbing and bricklaying. Many of these centres are being established in rural areas where there are no libraries for those who have acquired reading and writing skills. The aim is to provide access to reading material and promote a culture of reading and learning in the country.

IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

The NLPN employs continuous assessments and external evaluations in order to determine programme impact and challenges as well as the achievements of the learners. To date, three external evaluations have been undertaken, in 1995, 1998 and 2008. Learners are also formally examined at the end of the literacy academic year.

The programme has expanded rapidly since its inception in 1992. Crucially, most of the learners are literate after completing the adult basic learning programme. Between 1992 and 1995, for example, the number of learners increased from about 15,000 to 36,000, while the number of promoters (trainers) grew from 700 to 2,000. By 1999, about 46,000 learners had enrolled in and benefited from the programme. Recent statistics for the period 2011–2017 indicates promising progress in each stage of the programme, as shown **Table 1**.

The programme's literacy achievements are equally impressive: national literacy rates have risen from 65% in 1991 to 81.3% in 2001, while the total youth literacy rate rose to 92% between 1995 and 2004 and the adult literacy rate rose to 85% during the same period. In addition, many participants have been empowered to participate actively in national developmental activities including entrepreneurial activities and democratic processes.

Challenges

One of the main challenges facing the National Literacy Programme in Namibia is its ability to grow and improve – a difficult task in view of the limited funds available for the programme. In order to ensure the sustainability of the NLPN, there is a need for sector-wide and cross-sectoral support, including support from political leaders at all levels, employers in the private and public sectors, government ministries at the central and regional levels, trade unions, churches, youth and women's organizations, donors and the media. Furthermore, the programme needs to forge working partnerships with international organizations to ensure a constant flow of technical and financial assistance. Lack of formal employment opportunities has also discouraged some learners, as most still prefer to be employees rather than support themselves through self-employment and income-generating activities. There is also a need to improve the working conditions of trainers in order to keep them motivated.

LESSONS LEARNED

Overall, the literacy programme has a very high turnout of women, both as learners and promoters, but there are few male participants. This is partly due to the traditional labour demands for men (e.g. fishing, mining and labour migration into neighbouring countries). Conventional gender norms influence participation rates

Programme Stage		Total	Year of Enrolment						
			2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Stage 1	Enrolment	42,315	5,153	6,352	6,087	5,342	8,064	6,369	4,948
	Tested	27,257	3,393	3,804	4,200	3,659	4,834	3,889	3,478
	Passed	22,548	2,847	3,171	3,417	2,859	3,960	3,147	3,147
	% Passed	82.7%	84%	83%	81%	78%	82%	81%	90%
Stage 2	Enrolment	46,942	6,231	6,561	6,854	7,046	6,078	7,296	6,876
	Tested	28,842	3,990	4,436	4,435	4,211	3,252	4,344	4,174
	Passed	24,212	3,334	3,682	3,639	3,479	2,793	3,672	3,613
	% Passed	83.9%	84%	83%	82%	83%	86%	85%	87%
Stage 3	Enrolment	52,011	7,633	8,350	8,410	8,362	7,008	5,760	6,488
	Tested	30,169	4,824	4,877	4,625	4,242	4,101	3,267	4,233
	Passed	25,683	4,130	4,224	4,037	3,529	3,504	2,634	3,625
	% Passed	85.1%	85%	87%	87%	83%	85%	81%	86%

Table 1: Enrolment and pass rates of the programme for the period of 2011–2017. *Source:* EMIS, 2017

of the programme, and this is an area of development for the programme.

There is a need to gradually develop post-literacy programmes to a level equivalent to that of Grade 7 in the formal primary school system, which will enable learners to proceed to the secondary level. There is also a need to establish a mechanism for increasing awareness and support for adult skills development. Community empowerment through the development of skills and the promotion of income-generating enterprises is one strategy that would enable the country to address its social and economic challenges. The establishment of Community Learning and Development Centres has contributed towards sustaining the literacy skills that learners have acquired. Therefore, in the future, community-based approaches for literacy and skills development will be continued to be employed as a key strategy.

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SENEGAL

Integrated Functional Literacy and Technical Training for Farmers

Key Information

Programme title	Integrated Functional Literacy and Technical Training for Farmers
Implementing organization	Société de Développement et des Fibres Textiles [Textile Fibres and Development Company] (SODEFITEX)
Language of instruction	Pulaar, Mandinka and Wolof
Programme partners	Bamtaare Services, a SODEFITEX subsidiary in charge of literacy provision in national languages; the National Federation of Cotton Producers (FNPC), a member of the National Council for Rural Dialogue and Cooperation (CNCR); and the country's Ministry of Basic Education and National Languages, Department of Professional and Technical Training, and school inspectorates
Funding	SODEFITEX (self-funding)
Annual programme costs	CFA franc 72,000,000 (USD 127,069)
Annual cost per learner	CFA franc 250,000 (USD 441) (From 2016–2019)
Date of inception	2003

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The development of the Senegalese education sector is guided by its educational strategic plan, the Programme d'amélioration de la qualité, de l'équité et de la transparence de l'éducation et de la formation (Programme for the Improvement of Quality, Equity and Transparency in Education and Training) (PAQUET-EF, 2018–2030). To achieve the goals of this plan, the government has been making tremendous efforts to expand and improve its education system. The PAQUET-EF has eight priority areas,¹ including universal basic education, vocational and technical training, and improvement of the quality of teaching and learning.

Figure 7 shows a positive upward trend in the levels of literacy for the Senegalese population aged 15 years and over, at an average annual rate of 13.28%. However, in order to understand the current priorities in education

for this sub-sector, it is important to understand the reasons for the steep drop in the literacy rate from 2011 to 2013, following which the 2013–2025 Education Sector Plan was developed. The objectives

¹ To read more about these priority areas, visit <https://www.borgenmagazine.com/progress-senegalese-education/> [Accessed 19 June 2020].

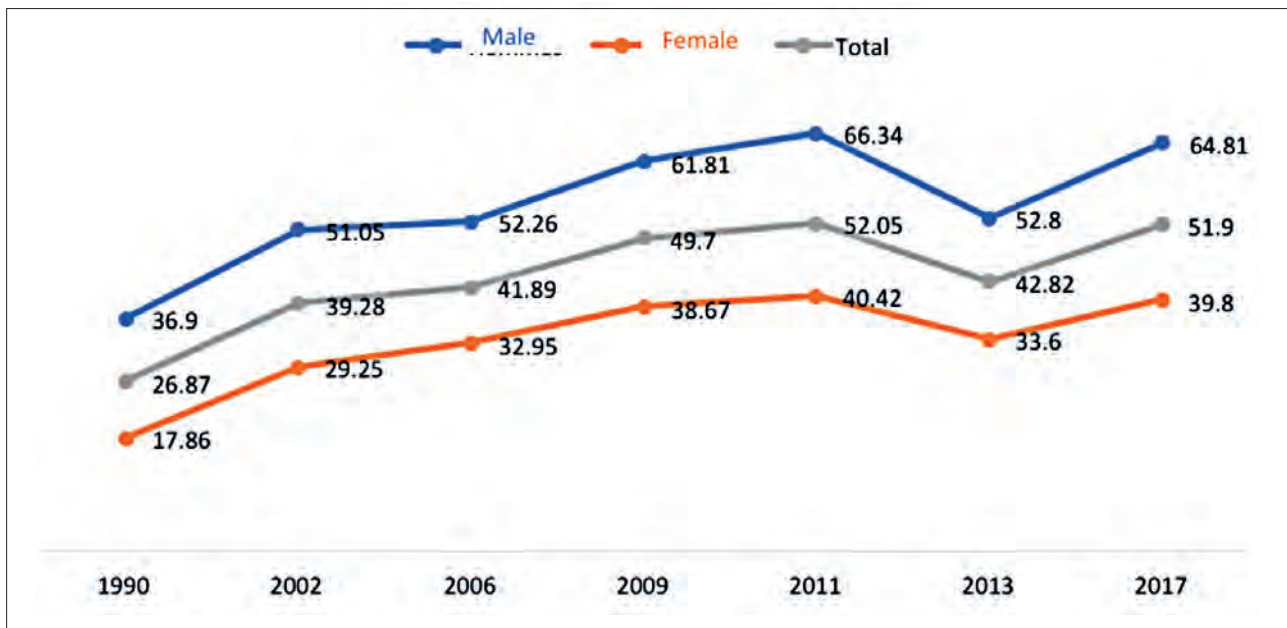


Figure 7: Literacy levels for the Senegalese population aged 15 years and over. *Source:* UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS)

in enrolments per year were never achieved for several reasons (République du Sénégal, 2013). The first was the phasing out of key partners and consequent reduction in financing. Secondly, funding was never adequate to mobilize resources for the non-formal sub-sector nor was it adequate for the needs of the sub-sector. In fact, compared with the original enrolment target of 7,144 adult learners, only 91 learners were registered in 2011. Thirdly, there were no explicit indicators to measure the quality of the basic education programmes for youth and adults. The lack of a recognition and validation system, weak implementation of the education policy, and poor coordination mechanisms in governance seem to have further worsened the situation. This analysis led to the formulation of key strategies in PAQUET-EF (2013) for this sub-sector: diversifying and optimizing high-quality educational offers, training and capacity-building for educators and, finally, the integration of basic skills and life skills for citizenship education and lifelong learning. There was also a renewed focus on better funding strategies and governance (République du Sénégal, 2013).

Steady progress has been made since 2013, as illustrated in **Figure 7**, in particular owing to higher completion rates for primary schools, which are reported to have increased from 34.7% in 2012 to 39.5% in 2015. With

regard to general secondary education, the overall attendance rate for 2015 was 43.06%. Also of note is the percentage of qualified school leavers who went on to higher education, which increased from 98% in 2013 to 100% in 2015. These numbers suggest a reduction in the stock² of over-age children lacking basic literacy skills, and therefore a fall in the number of potential beneficiaries of youth and adult literacy programmes.

Nonetheless, there are still shortfalls within the system that continue to be of concern. For instance, school attainment remains unsatisfactory at all levels (PAQUET-EF, 2018), particularly with regard to internal efficiency – that is the achievement of learning targets and pass rates for basic secondary school exams. Furthermore, by 2017, the number of youth and adults aged 15 and over who could not read and write at the basic level was much higher for women than for men (see **Figure 7**). Mingat et al. (2013) contend that, while the proportion of youth and adult populations lacking basic literacy skills may appear to have decreased in recent years, population growth in Senegal means that their number has increased.

To overcome the aforementioned challenges, 17 partner organizations have endorsed the updated programme PAQUET-EF, which aims to ensure quality education

² 'Stock' refers to over-age children who could not complete school or had to drop out. These children are therefore not enrolled in schools because of their age and are often too old to follow the traditional formal school curriculum. The need for non-formal education for this age group is critical to planning and provision (UNESCO IIEP-Pôle de Dakar, UNICEF, World Bank and GPE, 2014).

and lifelong learning opportunities for all. In this plan, the Government of Senegal has established education and training as a priority sector for human capital development, the second pillar of Senegal's national development programme, Plan for an Emerging Senegal (PES). This has a direct positive implication on increasing the employment opportunities of youth and adults. The unemployment rate in Senegal has seen a sharp increase, and stood at 19% in the first quarter of 2019.³

The agricultural sector is the largest employer of the Senegalese working-age population. Even so, food-deficit and nutrition insecurity is still a prevalent problem in many parts of the country (WFP, 2018). Addressing this issue, it is important to support farmers in increasing their agricultural productivity by equipping them with enhanced knowledge and skills in sustainable farming and marketing. In this context, literacy as a foundational skill will greatly facilitate the process of training farmers in improving their knowledge and skills. There is a pressing need for integrated educational programmes that simultaneously meet adult learners' literacy needs as well as providing entrepreneurial, agricultural-technical and other skills.

Against this backdrop, SODEFITEX initiated its Integrated Functional Literacy and Technical Training Programme (IFLTTP), which provides farmers with basic literacy and technical skills in order to improve agricultural productivity and enhance their quality of life.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

In 1982, SODEFITEX⁴ started a functional literacy programme in response to particularly low school enrolment rates in rural areas of eastern Senegal and Casamance, in the south, through BAAMTAARE Service SA, a wholly-owned subsidiary of SODEFITEX. The programme involves a variety of stakeholders through innovative and participatory approaches, including the state, producer organizations, development projects and/or programmes, private individuals and other institutions. The work of BAMTAARE Service SA is part of the plans for

strengthening rural development services in support of the new rural economy. The organization launched IFLTTP, its first literacy classes in national languages in support of farmers, designed for the professionalization of farmers' associations.

The services provided by IFLTTP include literacy training, technical training, support for new rural professions, rural development, development of cereal and oilseed crops, management advice to rural farms, and production of certified seeds among others. BAAMTAARE has three main areas of work: capacity-building, agro-industrial support through consultancy, and research and development.

Capacity-building: Implementing new models of production requires farmers to be better trained to ensure high-quality produce and improved productivity on their farms, and make a good return on their agricultural loans and other investments. This area of work addresses the improvement of skills through functional literacy, rural communication, the structuring and professionalization of the various rural actors, and capacity-building of leaders. BAAMTAARE Service SA comprises a coordinator, supervisors and literacy facilitators who draw on their 40 years of experience in the field to produce a number of good-quality instructional and learning resources.

Agro-industrial support through consultancy: The core objective of this area of work is to provide technical advice and support on structuring and running family farms as well as production techniques. The company provides agricultural advisory services, input and equipment to thousands of family-run farms to ensure their optimal productivity.

Research and development: The main activities under this category include piloting all project studies and writing BAAMTAARE service offers. Additionally, other activities such as executing

³ See <https://tradingeconomics.com/senegal/unemployment-rate> [Accessed 24 June 2020].

⁴ The organization was established in 1974 as public limited company and was privatized in 2003.

thematic studies and socio-economic surveys and action plans are also included here.

As of 2019, BAAMTAARE Services' IFLTTP was operational in the regions of Kolda, Tambacounda, Kédougou, Sédhiou, Kaffrine, Kaolack and Fatick in southern Senegal. More than 100 learners enrol in the literacy programmes each year.

PROGRAMME GOALS AND AIMS

The goal of IFLTTP is to foster sustainable social and economic development in rural agricultural communities of Senegal. More specifically, its aims are to:

- enhance farmers' basic writing, reading and numeracy skills in their mother tongue and national languages such as Pulaar, Wolof and Mandinka through functional literacy courses;
- provide farmers with technical skills, modern knowledge and tools to maximize their agricultural productivity through vocational training courses;
- create a literate environment to apply and practise newly acquired skills;
- increase the contribution made by family-run agricultural holdings to the emergence of food sovereignty in Senegal;
- support professionalization of relevant stakeholders and their associations through recognized training courses and formal certificates.

TARGET GROUP

The programme is designed for people aged 15 and over, in particular young people who have dropped out of school or who have never been enrolled in the formal education system. It is aimed at members of family-run agricultural holdings (usually engaged in polyculture farming or animal husbandry), professional agricultural organizations and other farming bodies working in the area covered by SODEFITEX. The programme also supports people living in remote locations or villages that need technical assistance.

Specifically, contractual agreements are established between SODEFITEX and the family-run farms that

benefit both parties. Through the IFLTTP programme, SODEFITEX provides farmers with literacy skills in combination with technical training and advice on managing the farm and increasing productivity. The family-run farms in turn supply high-quality cotton and grain at prices that are negotiated before crops are sown, and that SODEFITEX commits to purchase, with some exceptions with regard to grain production.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

The programme includes two phases of training: functional literacy courses, and technical skills training courses.

Phase 1: The functional literacy courses

The functional literacy courses cover basic reading, writing and numeracy in the learners' mother tongue (Pulaar, Wolof or Mandinka). It includes 10 weeks (around 400 hours) of literacy instruction at a rate of five days a week and eight hours per day (usually from January to March). This phase enables learners to master reading and writing fluently, and to take notes, learn basic arithmetic (the four elementary mathematical operations, percentages, the 'rule of three',⁵ simple problem-solving) and simplified bookkeeping. The topics developed during the learning sessions are inspired both by learners' main areas of activities, e.g. farming activities, and by the kind of practical knowledge that will be of use to them in their everyday lives, such as civic awareness, preventive measures regarding the use of pesticides, and hygiene. Furthermore, training provision touches on other important themes, such as literacy and rural development, literacy as a means of securing financial independence, literacy in a multilingual context, literacy for lifelong learning, and literacy for sustainable development.

Literacy classes are usually hosted by the village centre that acts as a focal point for surrounding villages speaking the same national languages (around 10 to 20 villages). Since 2014, on-site accommodation has been provided for learners during the literacy courses.

⁵ The 'rule of three' is a mathematical rule for solving problems based on proportions. For further information, see http://www.mathspadilla.com/2ESO/Unit4-ProportionalityAndPercentages/rules_of_three.html [Accessed 24 June 2020].

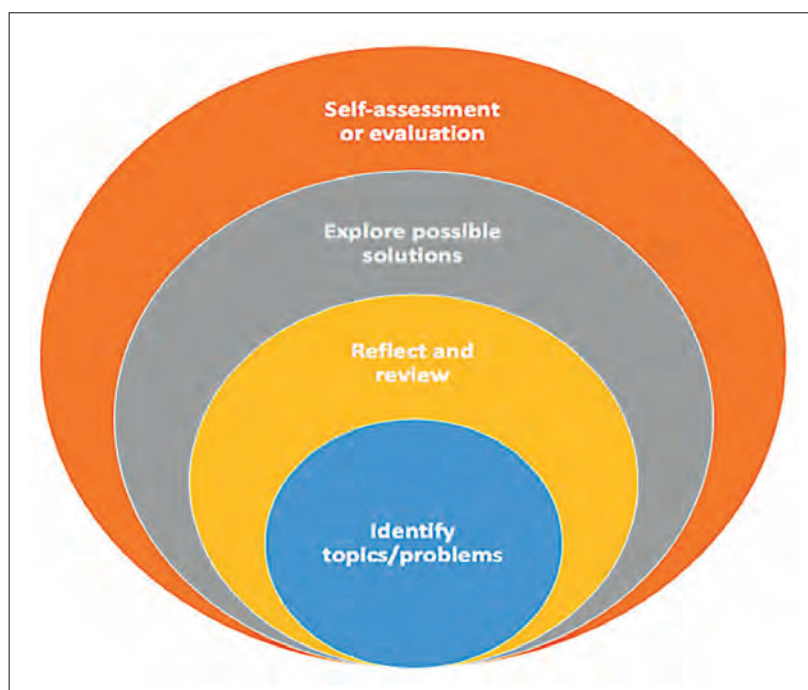


Figure 8: A visual representation of the teaching process based on an experiential learning approach. *Source:* Compiled by the authors using information obtained from SODEFITEX.

Along with the classroom-based literacy courses, further learning activities identified by each basic community organization and family-run agricultural holding are carried out using materials developed by trainers and learners themselves. These learning activities revolve around topics such as cash registering, data recording, keeping a campaign balance sheet, financial-flow management, business planning, reporting, meeting, organizing and structuring OPs,⁶ drafting minutes of a meeting, credit management, and so on.

Phase 2: The technical training courses

A test to assess learning outcomes is taken after the completion of the literacy phase, which is immediately followed by the second phase, residential technical training courses. This phase lasts four weeks (between 120 and 150 hours) and caters for neo-literates who have successfully completed the first phase of the programme. It is supported by SODEFITEX's expertise and bodies such as the National Institute of Soil Science (Institut national de pédologie) and the national agricultural loans bank (Caisse nationale de crédit agricole).

The technical and vocational training courses include components focusing on knowledge of the organizational and functional aspects of agricultural production, multiple crop farming and crop management, and rainfall data collection and analysis. Technical skills and knowledge acquired by learners during this phase allow them to assess the economic and financial profitability of their activities, and adopt sustainable production practices centred on protecting the environment and implementing measures to identify toxic risks in the community.

APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

The instruction in literacy skills places a strong emphasis on skills development. Among other instructional methods,

integrative pedagogy is applied throughout the teaching and learning process. The integrative learning approach encourages teachers and learners to make connections between curricula and learning content so as to find an interdisciplinary understanding and solution to problems at hand (Huber et al., 2005). Connections between the learning of writing, reading, and numeracy skills and learners' work and life are intentionally created so that learners find the learning more meaningful and engaging.

Figure 8 provides an example of a teaching process based on the experiential learning approach. The five sequences covered in a session illustrate this approach: in the first step, learners identify topics/ problems that need to be solved, based on an analysis of their situation; in the second step, learners reflect and review on what has been done and experienced by reading relevant materials and sharing their knowledge and ideas; in the third step, learners explore possible solutions to their problems; in the fourth step, learners plan concrete actions by applying skills and knowledge (note-taking, solving mathematical

⁶ Producer organizations (POs) or associations of producer organisations (APOs) help farmers reduce transaction costs and collaborate when processing and marketing their products. For further information, see https://ec.europa.eu/info/food-farming-fisheries/key-policies/common-agricultural-policy/market-measures/agri-food-supply-chain/producer-and-interbranch-organisations_en [Accessed 23 July 2020].

problems, plotting charts, using existing resources used in the market, etc.) acquired in this or previous sessions; in the fifth step, learners carry out a self-assessment or evaluation of the skills acquired during the training session. The process reflects the principles of Experiential Learning Theory, which recognizes the great potential benefit of learners' experiences to their learning. Planning and teaching of literacy skills is greatly influenced by the experiential learning cycle, which includes concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation (UOL, 2020).

The technical training phase employs a competency-based approach that places the acquisition and application of demonstrated skills and knowledge at the heart of the educational process (Johnstone and Soares, 2014). Specifically, through the IFLTTP programme, expected competencies or skills of learners are identified through an assessment of institutional and organizational capacity in the context of farmers' associations and family-run agricultural holdings. The vocational training curriculum, then, is developed and re-written to fill in learners' knowledge and skills gaps so that they will become competent in increasing the quality of their agricultural products and bringing improvements in practice to their agricultural communities.

The advantage of competency-based education (CBE) here is clear: it reorients the educational process toward demonstrated mastery and the application of

knowledge and skills in the real world, thereby building a bridge between academics and employers and resulting in a better understanding of the knowledge and skills that students will need to succeed in work and in life.

CURRICULUM AND TEACHING MATERIALS

Phase 1 literacy courses use the National Basic Education Curriculum (Curriculum de l'Éducation de Base or CEB) developed by the national Ministry of Basic Education for general adult literacy education. This curriculum covers literacy learning in national languages, and has been used as a key curriculum for adult literacy programmes since the introduction of the Ten-Year Basic Education Development Plan set out by the Ministry of Education.

Supplementary materials for literacy training are developed by the literacy and rural communications team at BAMTAARE Services. The team develops the following documents for training purposes: literacy manuals (reading, arithmetic); guides for instructors and supervisors; training standards; and training modules. They also produce further training documents, as well as tools and resources for collecting data, managing a class, creating pictograms, preparing fact sheets, and so on. Learning materials and tools are adapted to suit the context and needs of the target groups, and drafted in Pulaar, Mandinka, and Wolof as illustrated in **Figure 9**, which shows a selection of sample learning materials.

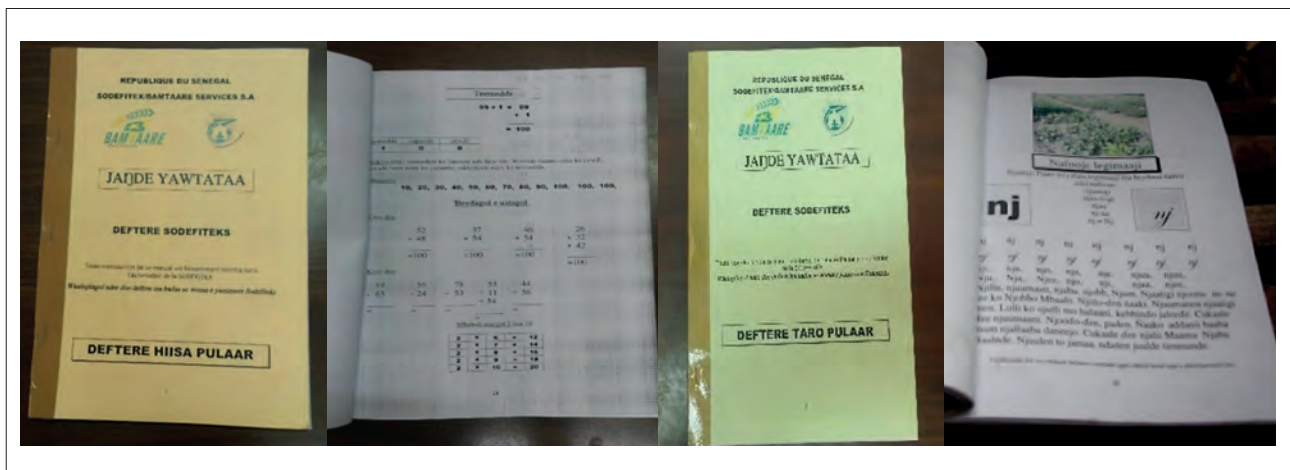


Figure 9: Samples of training materials. © SODEFITEX

Table 2: Skills matrix for plant production teams.

Skill no.	Description
1	Carry out the tasks and roles of plant production teams.
2	Clarify the organization and operation of production chains at the national level.
3	Manage agricultural loans granted to farmers.
4	Apply concepts relating to crop fertilization and organic compost.
5	Apply crop management practices for cotton farming.
6	Apply crop management practices for corn, rice and peanut farming.
7	Identify agricultural statistics.
8	Maintain and repair phytosanitary and agricultural equipment.
9	Communicate in a professional context.

Source: Compiled by the authors using information obtained from SODEFITEX.

Table 3: Skills matrix for crop managers.

Skill no.	Description
1	Carry out the tasks and roles of crop managers.
2	Apply concepts relating to crop fertilization and organic compost.
3	Apply crop management practices for cotton farming.
4	Apply crop management practices for corn, rice and peanut farming.
5	Plan farming activities.
6	Set up agricultural holding accounts for farmers.
7	Maintain and repair phytosanitary and agricultural equipment.

Source: Compiled by the authors using information obtained from SODEFITEX.

The Phase 2 technical training courses use curricula developed by SODEFITEX with the technical support of the national Directorate of Vocational Training. For this purpose, the existing curriculum for vocational education was rewritten by applying a competency-based approach, as discussed in the previous section on instructional and teaching approaches. This is in line with the new reform pertaining to the strategic focus of the professional and technical training sub-sector. The rewriting of the standard curriculum for vocational education will be guided by these expected skills for different types of technical training. **Tables 2** and **3** give examples of skills that are expected to be covered by technical training courses for plant production teams and crop managers.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF FACILITATORS

A new approach to training has been adopted, comprising a core functional literacy course immediately

followed by a residential course providing specific professional and technical training, to replace two separate and far more costly literacy and professional training sessions.



Dictation exercise during a literacy course in Pulaar.
© SODEFITEX

Facilitators are recruited from the pool of programme learners, and to date comprise around 350 literacy class facilitators and supervisors. Each year, the programme draws on this pool depending on the number of courses on offer. In most cases, future facilitators will be drawn from cohorts of literacy programme graduates or other neo-literates holding a diploma attesting to their literacy proficiency in one of the national languages. They are selected based on their profiles and accepted after passing a series of aptitude tests. They then receive three weeks of training led by a teaching team made up of experienced facilitators and literacy programme managers with proven skills in the following areas: adult education, presentation techniques, knowledge of topics connected to learners' everyday lives, linguistic expertise, grammar rules for local languages, phonetics, documents pertaining to classroom management, etc. They will later become independent providers, paid to work part-time with classes of between 25 and 30 learners.

Each year, a one-week revision phase takes place to strengthen the skills acquired by the various facilitators and supervisors while simultaneously introducing them to innovative adult education practices so as to equip them to work more effectively on the ground. This period of training also enables them to consolidate their knowledge of new methods and approaches, particularly with regard to literacy-related integrative skills and teaching methods; the integration of learning outcomes; teaching evaluations



A group of participants enrolled in one of the IFLTTP literacy courses.
© SODEFITEX

and remedial measures; adult education worksheets; and specific points of grammar pertaining to languages of instruction.

The programme awards certificates of continuous training to facilitators who complete the training course and at the end of each revision phase. Subsequently, and most importantly of all, steps are taken to ensure that the number of facilitators employed matches the number of literacy classes on offer, which varies from year to year depending on budgetary allocations. Finally, facilitators are posted to communities that may host several classes, and are themselves managed by a supervisor.

ENROLMENT OF LEARNERS

Learners are chosen according to specific criteria, chief among them being their age; their good standing within the local community; the approval of the farmers' association, village or farm manager; their status as farmers; and the surface area of farmland to be managed according to the trades selected initially. In addition, candidates with previous training (at all levels and in all languages) are given preference. The average number of learners in both the phases is 30 per class per one facilitator.

Moreover, agricultural producers, village leaders and farm managers also suggest potential learners for the programme. These learner recommendations must comply with eligibility criteria and candidate profiles for selected trades. There are no registration fees.

ASSESSING LEARNING OUTCOMES

After completing the literacy phase, learners are assessed and receive a mark out of 40 for reading and writing, and a mark out of 20 for arithmetic. An average of 12/20 is needed in order to pass. A formative evaluation is carried out halfway through literacy courses to provide learners with support should they need it. Once learners have successfully completed the literacy phase, they are awarded a certificate of achievement that is recognized by the government.

The programme's main innovation lies in the fact that SODEFITEX has actively collaborated with Senegal's



A young literacy course graduate with her certificate of achievement. © SODEFITEX

Department of Literacy and National Languages to certify its literacy training courses in national languages, based on the acquisition of functional literacy and numeracy skills. Measures to certify technical training in national languages are currently being finalized by departments within the Ministry of Professional Training, Learning and Crafts, so that learners are eligible to apply for public funding.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The programme conducts periodic operational analyses to monitor the relevance and technical efficiency of its training programme. In doing so, the training programme meets the changing needs of learners, and is adapted to changes in production strategies and innovation plans. In most cases, these analyses result in proposals for new programme guidelines and improvements to existing training provision.

A further practical assessment is carried out after a given period in order to monitor the technical efficiency and social relevance of the grassroots professional

training led by SODEFITEX. It draws on the experiences and practices of individuals who have received professional training, and aims to propose ways of improving the programme.

The skills gained upon completion of the literacy and technical training phases are validated by means of certificates of achievement, which are highly regarded in southern Senegal and guarantee certificate holders a job as a qualified agent under contract to farmers' associations, agricultural holdings, NGOs and local development programmes.

IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

Once learners have completed their training, around 90% are employed by farmers' associations in their villages. Since the inception of the programme, more than 63,735 people living in rural areas, including 15,032 women, have received literacy training from SODEFITEX. This number includes 40 literacy facilitators and supervisors, 1,647 technical plant production team members, 600 technical livestock production team members, 72 crop managers, 58 farm

managers and 18 agricultural advisers chosen from among the best members of the various technical production teams.

With regard to literacy skills, the programme has had a measurable impact, and training statistics indicate that learners' achievements have remained stable over time. In 2016, for example, learners' marks according to skill averaged 89.6% for reading and 82% for writing. Two years later, in 2018, the average mark was 83.55% for reading and 83.5% for writing. Finally, in 2019, the average mark was 89.6% for reading and 90% for writing.

The programme has increased learners' confidence in their own abilities and talents, and equipped learners with skills for communication, analysis and problem-solving. Moreover, farmers under contractual agreements with SODEFITEX are able to improve their agricultural productivity and increase their incomes. For example, skills and knowledge, such as timely

harvesting methods, proper drying and storage practices, and productivity with regard to cotton and crop diversification (rice, corn, peanuts), help learners to better control the quality of agricultural production. Accordingly, they are able to identify the technical and economic constraints hindering their farm productivity and use agricultural planning tools, adopt techniques for combating soil erosion, implement organic fertilization processes, manage loans and data-harvesting tools, practise toxic-vigilance, combat pests in an environmentally friendly way (threshold measures), and harness modern techniques to measure the surface area of their wheat fields using GPS (geo-referencing).

LEARNERS' TESTIMONIES

'My name is Ousmane Kambassé Kandé [below]. I'm a literacy facilitator and I live one kilometre away from the Pakour agricultural centre. I took literacy classes during the 1982–1983 campaign. From 1991 to 1995, I was a Pulaar-language literacy facilitator. Since 1996, I've been working



SODEFITEX literacy facilitator Ousmane Kambassé Kandé. © SODEFITEX

as a supervisor for the SODEFITEX literacy programme in the Pakour region, where I train production team members and SODEFITEX training programme managers. Literacy is hugely important because learners are ready to use what they've learned straight away, especially as they are adults who never attended school or who dropped out very early on.' *Ousmane Kandé, Pulaar-language literacy facilitator and supervisor.*

'It's important to us to be literate because, as well as being able to read documents in Pulaar, literacy lets us gain the skills we need to do arithmetic. So, the aim of literacy is not just to become a member of a production team. In the past, when I had a book, I used to just look at the photographs, but today I can read and understand what I'm reading, and it's all thanks to SODEFITEX's literacy classes. Now I'm able to measure out the exact amount of produce I need to be using per farming lot. When I have a sack of rice, I know that it's a kilo of rice, which lets me calculate the amount I need, how much I have left over, etc.' *Ibrahima Diao, Pulaar literacy course participant, 2019.*

Awards and accolades

- Recipient of the UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize (2019).
- Validation of new training programme curricula by the Department of Professional and Technical Training within the Ministry of Employment, Technical Training and Crafts (2019).
- Recipient of financial support from IIEP–UNESCO Dakar, the Africa-based office of UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning; awarded from the support fund for innovation in the field of professional training (2017).
- Official recognition for the programme by the Commission for Youth, Education, Training, Employment and Work, overseen by the Republic of Senegal's Economic, Social and Environmental Council (2017).

Challenges

A number of factors still hinder ongoing efforts and significantly limit the programme's scope and performance. These include a lack of stable and convenient funding for the programme, which receives no financial support from the state, as well as a lack of

technical and financial partners since 2009.

Furthermore, the Ministry for Employment, Professional Training and Learning has yet to take steps to validate programme curricula for technical training in national languages, despite the fact that it would be within its remit to certify this innovative model of integrating literacy and technical training and thereby make it eligible for public funding.

SUSTAINABILITY

This programme, which was set up through various public projects, has been in place for 37 years. Since external funding was withdrawn in 2009, it essentially depends on the company's annual output and resources. Its success can be attributed exclusively to:

- SODEFITEX, which manages each year to set aside the resources needed to continue the programme using its own funds;
- farmers who themselves select the most motivated learners best suited to receiving training and thereby guaranteeing its future.

Learners and communities who benefit from the programme contribute to its sustainability. For instance, some villages host literacy courses and contribute in kind by building shelters and accommodation for out-of-town learners.

Rolling out the current model nationally in the near future would significantly boost the economy and productivity levels for traditional crafts in the informal sector. A rollout of this kind would enable the government to transition from a fragmented vision of human capital to a holistic vision of education and training, especially of rural populations.

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SOUTH AFRICA

Adult Literacy and Skills Training Programme

Key Information

Programme title	Adult Literacy and Skills Training Programme (ALSTP)
Implementing organization	Operation Upgrade
Language of instruction	Mother tongue(s) and English as second language
Programme partners	The National Lottery; ProLiteracy; Oxfam Australia; Rotary Club of Umhlanga (RCU); and the Rotary District Literacy Committee

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Although South Africa has made significant progress in providing universal access to education, in 2017 more than 5 million adults in the country still could not read or write (UIS, 2020). A vast majority of these people are adult women living in poor and remote rural areas. For example, two districts of the province of KwaZulu-Natal, namely Umzinyathi and Umkhanyakude, have the highest rates for illiterate adults with over 49% and 45% respectively; moreover, the literacy rate for women is lower than men in the most districts of KwaZulu-Natal (Stats SA, 2017). High rates of illiteracy among most adult South Africans are a result of the apartheid-era segregationist policies and have been further exacerbated by a continued lack of development in rural areas.

Illiteracy has a profound socio-economic impact on rural families, perpetuating cycles of poverty. This is because illiterate and low-literate populations lack the skills needed to gain formal employment, are unable to engage in learning with their children, and are less likely to access basic social services and practise health awareness. The challenges facing women are compounded by the migration of males to urban areas in search of employment. As a result, women struggle to sustain their families and are forced to eke out a meagre livelihood from family land.

Recognizing that illiteracy is both the cause and the effect of numerous social challenges, Operation Upgrade

– a national NGO founded in 1966 to assist marginalized and socially disadvantaged rural communities through development projects – initiated the Adult Literacy and Skills Training Programme (ALSTP) in KwaNibela (a peninsula located in remote rural area in KwaZulu-Natal province) in 2003.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Since 1966, Operation Upgrade – with financial and technical support from Oxfam Australia, ProLiteracy and local chapters of Rotary International, among others, has been working with disadvantaged South African communities. In 2003, Operation Upgrade launched the ALSTP; one of its initiatives, the KwaNibela Project,

went on to win the 2008 UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy, an annual prize that is awarded to individuals, governments or governmental agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in literacy serving rural adults and out-of-school youth, particularly women and girls.

The ALSTP emerged as a proactive response to the practical needs of and challenges facing poor, rural-based households. It is a multi-faceted family-based literacy and development project that primarily targets women aged 25 to 50 years. Using an integrated approach to literacy skills training and community development, the programme offers mother-tongue literacy, English as a second language, numeracy and theme-based training in:

- livelihood development, i.e. income generation, food production/ security and preservation;
- health education, including HIV/ AIDS awareness and prevention, childcare, home-based care for the sick, reproductive health, nutrition and sanitation;
- civic/life skills education, including human rights, gender relations, and conflict management and resolution;
- sustainable environmental conservation.

Operation Upgrade sees literacy not merely as the ability to read and write, but as a major vehicle for holistic social change and community development. In light of this, it developed ALSTP to promote literacy among learners through developmental activities that addresses their basic and practical needs, thus helping them to break out of the cycle of poverty.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

More specifically, the ALSTP endeavours to:

- promote social change and development through adult literacy and adult basic education;
- improve the literacy rates of women from rural areas in order to improve their access to the labour market and earn a liveable wage;
- empower women to be active agents of community development;
- improve public awareness of fundamental and constitutionally guaranteed human rights, including

access to basic health and education services;

- increase health awareness, including nutrition and HIV/ AIDS prevention.

In order to achieve these goals, the Adult Literacy and Skills Training Programme:

- develops and implements a structured literacy curriculum that is relevant to learners' needs;
- trains literacy facilitators and harnesses their social contacts and communication skills to spread information about community development, education, and HIV/ AIDS prevention and care;
- produces literacy learning materials that support HIV/ AIDS prevention and care, human rights, family health and livelihood development;
- increases food security in the area by constructing polytunnels to extend the region's growing season and water systems, including rainwater-harvesting systems.

APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

The ALSTP endeavours to teach learners fundamental literacy and livelihood skills over a minimum period of 10 months. While the ultimate objective is to make learners functionally literate, the initial focus of literacy classes is to develop mother-tongue literacy skills, which are in turn used as the basis for learning English and numeracy skills. A variety of interactive and participatory teaching-learning methods are employed during literacy classes, including problem-solving; roleplay; drama, dance and music; and storytelling and group discussions.

Facilitators are also encouraged to use real-life and relevant examples as the basis for teaching and learning. For example, during lessons, learners are often divided into groups and encouraged to discuss issues of relevance to their respective communities. The discussions are then used to nurture speaking, writing, reading, comprehension and word recognition skills. Often a topic is first presented and discussed in the mother tongue; thereafter, groups of learners are instructed to work on exercises designed to develop English-language vocabulary, accompanied by reading and writing activities on that topic. Plenty of dialogue work, roleplay and

learning games are used. A similar approach is also used in teaching numeracy, with examples often being drawn from livelihood or income-generation activities.

The following project activities illustrate the way in which the within the Adult Literacy and Skills Training Programme links literacy skills training with community development.

The vegetable polytunnel project

This project uses the production of vegetables that can be sold at the market as a basis for literacy and numeracy teaching. Operation Upgrade provides groups of up to 20 learners with a polytunnel that they then manage as a cooperative business venture. The groups are taught how to manage group dynamics, organize work rosters, keep sales records, deposit money in the bank, and pack and market their produce. Apart from being a source of secure and nutritious food for their families, the polytunnels also represent a small-scale business enterprise that generates income for the learners through the sale of surplus produce. The capacity to generate extra capital has enabled women to improve their families' living standards and support their children's education. Furthermore, and equally importantly, cooperative engagement has improved communal/ social relations.

Leather crafts

Leather products – belts, earrings and bags – are made by the learners and then sold to tourists, while traditional leather garments reflecting the local culture are sold to the local community. There is also a strong local demand for leather Bible covers.

Literacy for health

The biggest challenge in South Africa and for Operation Upgrade in recent years has been the need to harness literacy classes as a vehicle for promoting public awareness of and addressing the HIV/ AIDS crisis. Returning labour migrants have fuelled the HIV/ AIDS pandemic in most rural areas and women are often forced to act as primary caregivers. Women are also at risk of being infected and it is therefore imperative to provide them with information on HIV/ AIDS prevention and access to medical services. Thus, literacy classes provide

concrete educational opportunities for behavioural change, prevention and caregiving.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF FACILITATORS

Operation Upgrade's community-based programmes are promoted through a network of literacy facilitators, with each facilitator responsible for a group of 15 to 20 learners. Since the inception of the Adult Literacy and Skills Training Programme, the organization has trained around 350 community-based literacy educators as HIV/AIDS educators and home-based caregivers. To become literacy and community development facilitators, applicants must fulfil certain criteria, including:

- being nominated by their communities (i.e. they should be local people recruited through community structures);
- having a school-leaving certificate, called the National Senior Certificate, with passing grades in Zulu, English and mathematics. (In reality, most facilitators do not hold such certificates; OpUp therefore provides them with equivalent basic training, particularly in English and mathematics);
- proof of previous voluntary community work;
- demonstrable social and attitudinal maturity.

Facilitators receive ongoing training in adult education and literacy and community development for a total of 61 days, comprising courses in how to teach:

- adult basic education and first-language literacy (20 days);
- English as a second language (10 days);
- numeracy (10 days);
- HIV/ AIDS prevention, counselling and home care (12 days);
- polytunnel management (3 days);
- leather crafts (6 days).

Facilitators are also trained in the use of various teaching-learning methods, including the use of cultural practices and a variety of teaching materials. In addition, theme-based instruction on domestic violence, HIV/ AIDS and reproductive health is provided in order to

enable facilitators to promote literacy skills acquisition, health and human-rights awareness, and livelihood and community development practices. Similarly, income generation provides the basis for numeracy instruction so that facilitators can teach participants to recognize numbers and perform calculations. Through the use of these socially relevant themes and participatory teaching-learning methods, learners acquire functional literacy skills and knowledge about a range of issues rather than abstract reading and writing skills, which can be used to address key issues affecting them and their communities.

Apart from the above teaching methodologies, facilitators are also trained to identify learners' concerns and to address them using appropriate strategies and projects. They are taught to design lesson plans and develop appropriate materials based on their needs assessments.

ENROLMENT OF LEARNERS

The mobilization and recruitment of learners is a collective endeavour involving the active participation of community learning centres (CLCs), trained facilitators, local leaders (such as church and community leaders) and Operation Upgrade. Once potential learners have been identified, the facilitators assess their learning needs before placing them in appropriate literacy classes. They also consult with them to formulate a teaching-learning timetable. The active involvement of learners from the outset is necessary not only to ensure community ownership of the programme but in order to design a literacy programme that best addresses the specific needs of the learners. It also cultivates and sustains learners' motivation to participate in the programme.

IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

Facilitators and Operation Upgrade officials assess the programme's achievements and challenges on an ongoing basis. Learning outcomes are partly measured by means of literacy examinations administered by the organization (participants are also free to sit public examinations for literacy learners). Meanwhile, the effectiveness of livelihood programmes is often measured by assessing the extent to which community development projects such as the polytunnels have improved participants' living standards.

The Adult Literacy and Skills Training Programme has had a considerable impact on the lives of rural communities by improving literacy levels, boosting productivity, increasing standards of living and promoting awareness of basic human rights and HIV/AIDS. Each year, 430 learners attend literacy classes and benefit from other integrated projects.

Literacy levels among learners, and women in particular, have also improved significantly and, as a result, they are now able to conduct their everyday activities more independently. The following story bears testimony to the programme's success:

I have five children. Each child has a clinic card bearing his or her name. But if one of the children got sick, I did not know which card to take. I had to take the sick child and all five cards and ask the clinic sister to find the right one. The nurses laughed at me. I would delay taking my children to clinic because I was embarrassed and ashamed. This all ended after attending the literacy classes.

ALSTP learner

Another of the programme's major achievements has been the establishment, by the learners, of income-generating projects such as the polytunnels. These tunnels are now a critical source of food security, providing participating families with both nutritious vegetables and an income. This has raised living standards in rural households and enabled them to access basic social services such as health and education for children. Indeed, the polytunnel project has proven so successful that one of the groups (in KwaNibela) has been given a contract to supply spinach to a major South African supermarket group.

Public awareness of health issues (especially HIV/AIDS, nutrition, sanitation) and sustainable environmental conservation has also improved, as demonstrated by the wide use of rainwater-harvesting systems. In addition, the HIV/AIDS programme has resulted in many infected people from learner families being taken to clinics for treatment or receiving effective home-based care. Overall, the programme has enabled learners to form a new sense of self in relation to

the way in which they now interact with their environment.

The contribution of Operation Upgrade towards combating illiteracy and promoting social change and community development through training has been widely applauded, both locally and internationally. As a result, the Adult Literacy and Skills Training Programme has received a number of awards, including:

- The Rotary Award for Excellence in Service to Humanity (September 2005);
- the ProLiteracy Ann C. Michel Women in Literacy Award (October 2005);
- accreditation for Operation Upgrade's first-language literacy facilitator training course by the University of South Africa (1996).

Challenges

Despite the positive impact that the programme has had, its success continues to be marred by practical challenges arising primarily from a lack of adequate funding. Key challenges include:

- restricted personnel and resources, which limits the amount of follow-up training that programme graduates can receive;
- a shortage of reading materials for home-based study (although income-generating projects were introduced to help maintain literacy and numeracy skills, most learners nonetheless relapse into semi-literacy if they do not have access to adequate reading materials);
- a lack of remuneration for community-based mobilizers and facilitators, which has led to a shortage of personnel;
- the difficulty of identifying income-generating projects that require a minimum investment of initial capital yet are capable of generating enough income to meet learners' needs.

LESSONS LEARNED

The implementation of the programme has revealed critical lessons that apply to any literacy skills training and community development programme.

- **Community participation:** The project depends on wide support from community, religious and political leaders. South Africa's traditional leaders often provide the land where group income-generating projects can take place, while a number of churches have sponsored literacy classes.
- **Investment in the training of facilitators:** Most facilitators are young people, whose commitment to bringing about social change through Operation Upgrade's projects despite receiving little remuneration in return has been the driving force of the organization.
- **Relevance:** Livelihood and health training must be incorporated into literacy programmes, as literacy alone does not address a community's social challenges and needs. Furthermore, relevant programmes sustain learners' motivation to continue learning, while at the same time encouraging their families to obtain an education after having witnessed its benefits first-hand.
- **Follow-up:** Training and the provision of reading materials for home-based study are critical means of sustaining and reinforcing the skills that learners have acquired. They also stimulate family-based, intergenerational learning.

SUSTAINABILITY

The integration of livelihood and HIV/AIDS projects into a literacy skills training programme is an innovative method that attracts learners and motivates them to continue participating in the programme. Moreover, high levels of illiteracy and poverty in rural areas ensure that the programme will continue to attract potential beneficiaries. In order to promote lifelong learning still further, Operation Upgrade publishes and disseminates up-to-date learning materials in South Africa's major languages. It also supports other community-based literacy groups in KwaZulu-Natal and in South Africa as a whole by training literacy facilitators and providing low-cost teaching and learning materials. However, without adequate funding, it will be difficult to continue to expand the programme.

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UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

Integrated Community-Based Adult Education

Key Information

Programme title	Integrated Community Based Adult Education (ICBAE)
Implementing organization	Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) ¹
Language of instruction	Kiswahili
Funding	Government of the United Republic of Tanzania
Annual programme costs	TZS 2 billion (about USD 860,000)
Date of inception	1993

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The United Republic of Tanzania was established in 1964, when the eastern African state of Tanganyika and the Island of Zanzibar merged following independence from British colonial rule and Sultanate rule, respectively. Since independence, the country has focused on improving economic growth and reducing poverty, introducing a number of policies and strategies in order to achieve its aims. In 1999, the government adopted a long-term strategy for the United Republic of Tanzania, the National Development Vision 2025, with the ultimate aim of transforming Tanzania into a middle-income country, with high living standards, equity and a well-educated society.

According to the World Bank, over the past decade, Tanzania's economy has recorded steady annual GDP growth of around 7% (World Bank, 2019). However, this growth did not have a significant impact on poverty reduction: almost half of the population (49.1%) still lives on USD 1.90 per day (UIS, 2020). In addition, gender inequality remains a major challenge to the country's socio-economic development. Many studies have shown that gender inequality is one of the underlying causes of

poverty, as most women do not have equal rights when it comes to assets, employment and access to education (MoEVT, 2014).

Despite efforts between 2007 and 2016 that have reduced the country's poverty rate from 34.4% to 26.8%, the absolute number of poor people has held at about 13 million due to high population growth. The most recent poverty measures based on the Household

¹ The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (MoEVT) was superseded by the Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Vocational Training in 2015; however, for the purpose of this case study, the government agency will still be referred to as MoEVT.

Budget Survey of 2017/18 are still being processed, but it seems likely that the downward trend in the poverty rate continues but has become more gradual. Government efforts to expand access to social services like education, health, and water have been undermined by their declining quality as the population rises faster than the supply of the services.

One of the main objectives of the National Development Vision 2025 is to create a learning society imbued with an ambition to develop. Tanzania established various education plans and strategies, which were also intended to contribute to meeting the Education for All (EFA) goals.² The main focus of the vision was on early childhood care and education (ECCE), equitable access to all levels of education, vocational education, teacher education and adult, non-formal and continuing education.

In 2002, the government made primary education compulsory and free, which increased access and participation: enrolment rose from 4.9 million in 2001 to 8.2 million in 2013 (UIS, 2020). Unfortunately, however, the country was not able to achieve EFA Goal 4: a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults. A national literacy census, conducted in 1992, revealed that adult literacy rates were on the decrease. In response, in 1993, the government launched the Integrated Community Based Adult Education (ICBAE) programme to address, in part, the shortcomings of previous adult education programmes, which often featured a top-down approaches to planning, teacher-centred methodologies, and fixed curricula that were not relevant to learners' needs.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The Integrated Community Based Adult Education (ICBAE) programme started as a four-year pilot project designed to develop learner-centred and community-based learning approaches in literacy and post-literacy classes for adults and out-of-school youth in the United Republic of Tanzania. According to a project evaluation

conducted in 1997, the literacy rates in four piloted areas increased by 13% (Mushi, 2009), which resulted in the gradual expansion of the programme. Currently, the ICBAE operates across the country, striving to ensure equitable access to quality literacy and post-literacy classes for young people and adults.

Four years after the inception of the programme, the ICBAE adopted the REFLECT (Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques) approach, through which it links literacy and basic education to the issues of problem-solving and socio-economic development. Learners are empowered to discuss and analyse key issues in their communities and the programme assists them in starting income-generating activities to bring about social and economic change. Learners do not receive a certificate on the completion of the programme, but, with the literacy, vocational and life skills they acquire, they are able to better support themselves and their families.



An ICBAE literacy class. © MoEVT

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The central objective of the ICBAE is to promote equitable access to quality basic education while increasing participation and enabling young people and adults to acquire literacy skills and reach a sustainable proficiency level. Vocational and life skills are also taught, which helps participants to improve their livelihoods. More specifically, the ICBAE aims to:

² The Education for All (EFA) goals ran from 1990–2015 with an aim to ensure the right to basic education for all; since 2015, the UN Sustainable Development Goals – and SDG 4 in particular – continues to pursue this education agenda.

- place learners at the centre of the learning process;
- provide lessons that are relevant to learners' lives, comprising topics such as health, hygiene, infectious diseases and clean water;
- develop learners' critical thinking and problem-solving skills so that they are able to identify and address social, political and economic issues and find solutions for them;
- promote income-generating activities, through which learners can make use of their literacy skills and sustain themselves;
- create a sense of commitment, responsibility and sustainability by enabling learners to make decisions about curriculum, meetings, goals and activities;
- work towards the achievement of gender parity;
- increase equitable employability and reduce poverty.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

The programme is implemented across all 25 regions of the Tanzanian mainland. Learning centres are located in primary schools. Once learners enrol, they are organized into groups, known as 'literacy circles', which can have up to 30 learners, led by one facilitator. There is more than one literacy circle in each learning centre and the language of instruction is Kiswahili.

Learners meet three times per week for 18 months, usually in the evenings once formal primary school lessons have finished for the day. Facilitators have manuals that cover relevant topics in agriculture and micro-economics, health and hygiene, and socio-politics. However, the curriculum is very flexible, allowing learners to focus



Learners engage in income-generating activities, including farming. © MoEVT

more on the topics that are most relevant to them or interest them the most.

Learners do not receive textbooks; instead, using the REFLECT approach, each literacy circle addresses key issues in their communities, designs learning activities, participates in problem-solving and plans income-generating activities. Learners at different levels of literacy are enrolled in the same literacy circle and work together and learn from each other. Learners who need additional help with their literacy skills spend more time with the facilitator and, as there are no textbooks, facilitators use manuals and newspapers to teach literacy.

Programme content covers knowledge and skills relevant to the acquisition of the literacy, life and vocational skills necessary for conducting the participants' chosen income-generating activities. The main topics and themes include:

- Agriculture and micro-economics, including:
 - crop production;
 - husbandry;
 - environmental conservation;
 - agro-economics, i.e. the economic aspects of agriculture;
 - natural resources.
- Health and hygiene, including:
 - food and nutrition;
 - clean water;
 - infectious diseases;
 - HIV/ AIDS;
 - reproductive health;
 - sex education.
- Socio-political education, including:
 - household finance management;
 - law and human rights;
 - Tanzania: traditions and customs;
 - social services (learners are taught about the social services provided in their community and how they can access them).

Learners with very low levels of literacy skills are offered some additional time, under the supervision of the facilitators, to learn and practise reading and writing. To teach literacy and numeracy, facilitators use different

materials, such as alphabet books, newspapers and ICBAE manuals, which cover the above-mentioned topics of agriculture and agro-economics, health and hygiene, and socio-political education. The materials are also distributed to the learners.

The curriculum of the programme is very flexible and it is based on a needs assessment of the learners conducted through semi-structured interviews at the beginning and/ or during the course. If learners of a particular literacy circle are mostly interested in husbandry (for example) and want to choose that as their income-generating activity, the facilitator will spend more time covering that topic, although he/ she will also teach other topics important for the learners' life.

Income-generating activities

Through the REFLECT approach, learners address issues of concern in their community. Based on their interest and the financial and natural resources available to them, they also take part in income-generating activities to improve their livelihoods. After completing the course, learners spend the remaining months of the learning cycle doing practical work related to the income-generating activity of their choice. The literacy circle facilitators are not employed during this stage; instead, learners are guided by agricultural trainers (employees of the Ministry of Agriculture), known as 'extension officers', who provide learners with information and demonstrations of how to put existing and newly acquired knowledge into practice.

Since the launch of the programme, learners have engaged in a range of income-generating activities, including furniture-making, husbandry, tailoring, shoe repair, baking, crocheting, tree-planting and fishing, as well as running a social centre, women's clinic, hair salons, and so on. They form groups, choose an activity that interests them and work together to generate income. They also agree as a group on how they will divide their profits. The ICBAE programme implements income-generating activities through a revolving loan fund (RLF) system,³ which lends up to USD 300 to each literacy circle. When an activity starts generating income, the learners repay the loan at an interest rate of 1%. Literacy is very important to the successful planning



The teachers who facilitate literacy circles are employed as paid volunteers. © MoEVT

and implementation of an income-generating activity as it enables learners to perform simple accounting and bookkeeping tasks.

APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

In line with the REFLECT methodology, facilitators conduct teaching and learning activities using participatory rural appraisal (PRA) tools, which encourage learners to develop their own learning aids and activities. In course sessions, learners decide what they want to learn, and what actions they will carry out in order for learning to take place. Under the supervision of the facilitator, learners create maps, charts and Venn diagrams, while also developing activities, such as theatre plays, storytelling and songs, to complement their training. Using PRA tools in literacy circles helps to:

- generate discussion;
- increase the level of learner participation;
- motivate learners;
- ensure that learners understand concepts and remember them;
- create a sense of ownership;
- facilitate reflection;

- ensure continuous analysis of issues;
- provide the basis for learning, reading, writing and numeracy skills.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF FACILITATORS

The teachers who facilitate the literacy circles are employed as paid volunteers by the Tanzanian Government through local government authorities. The monthly remuneration is TZS 50,000, which is equivalent to around USD 22. As facilitators, they involve learners and encourage them to participate, share knowledge and experience, and contribute to the development of the class curriculum. Each facilitator is supervised by the head teacher of the primary school at which the literacy circle is based. Head teachers also provide support to the facilitators. In some cases, elementary school teachers are chosen as literacy circle facilitators because of their experience in teaching literacy skills.

All facilitators receive manuals on REFLECT methodology. They were originally expected to attend four weeks of training on the methodology; however, since 2005, funding has not been available to conduct the training,

³ A revolving loan fund (RLF) is a financing measure primarily used for the development and expansion of small businesses. It is a self-replenishing pool of money, utilizing interest and principal payments on old loans to issue new ones.

as adult education and literacy are not among the strategic priorities of local authorities.

ENROLMENT OF LEARNERS

The ICBAE programme is aimed at young people and adults who learn about the programme from other community members. Income-generating activities and the revolving loan fund are incentives for learners to join the programme. When people see learners from the ICBAE programme launching their income-generating activities, selling their products and earning money, they too are encouraged to join. Once the learners are enrolled and the course starts, the facilitator identifies those who lack reading, writing and arithmetic skills.

ASSESSING LEARNING OUTCOMES

The monitoring of the programme's implementation is conducted through field visits by national adult education officers, district adult education coordinators and ward education coordinators. In addition, learner feedback is used to assess the quality of the programme.

Follow-up home visits are conducted with graduates from the programme. During these visits, graduates are asked how, if at all, the knowledge and skills they acquired during the course have improved their daily lives. This is also assessed through observation: for example, if a learner was engaged in a tree-planting activity, does he or she take care of their own garden, and has he or she managed to develop a small business or find work after the programme? This is a way of evaluating the outcomes explicitly adopted by the programme, since learners' progress after graduation is indicative of the programme's success.

In terms of literacy, learners' progress is measured through tasks and activities given to them by the facilitator; there are no standardized tests as of yet.

IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

Since its inception, the programme has increased access to basic adult education, offering educational opportunities to approximately 14 million young people and adult

learners (see **Table 4**). The programme has also achieved a high percentage of female enrolment, at around 55%.

With regards to literacy skill levels, between 2005 and 2014, around 3 million learners with initially very low level of literacy skills managed to acquire literacy skills which helped them in conducting their income-generating activities. As noted previously, this is essential as they need to be able to carry out basic bookkeeping in order to show income, expenditure and profit.

Over the same period, around 6 million learners acquired knowledge and skills in various income-generating activities. Using the money they have earned through these activities, learners have been able to improve their lives through the more balanced diet they can now afford, by paying school fees for their children, and by living in more financially stable households.

Table 4: ICBAE enrolment, all programmes.

Year	Male	Female	Total
2000	440,228	622,850	1,063,078
2001	443,193	630,123	1,073,316
2005	848,777	1,051,478	1,900,255
2006	778,408	890,095	1,668,503
2007	593,980	694,684	1,288,664
2008	507,793	551,331	1,059,124
2009	449,103	508,186	957,289
2010	451,108	473,785	924,893
2011	499,898	550,619	1,050,517
2012	434,466	473,305	907,771
2013	388,062	346,888	734,950
2014	369,143	417,459	786,602
Total	6,204,159	7,210,803	13,414,962

Challenges

Despite these impressive numbers, the ICBAE has faced many challenges, the biggest one being a lack of resources, both human and financial. One fallout of this has been a deficit in facilitator training. Even though facilitators are given manuals on REFLECT methodology, actual training has not been conducted since 2005, when responsibility for planning and conducting training fell to the districts rather than to the national government.

Monitoring shows that the districts have allocated very little or no funds for the training of facilitators, as adult literacy is not considered a priority.

In addition to the lack of facilitator training, and their low and irregular remuneration, the quality of the programme is put at risk by an increase in the facilitator-to-learner ratio (FLR). Available data show that between 2006 and 2013, with the exception of 2009, the FLR was higher than the set standard. The highest FLR was in 2013, when it was 1:48 (MoEVT, 2014, p. 120). On top of that, keeping track of learners' attendance has also proved difficult, as their presence is voluntary and not recorded.

The advances provided by the revolving loan fund – one of the key motivating features of the programme – have also come under scrutiny, as they are not always enough to make a noticeable impact on learners' financial situation.

Learners' testimonies

Challenges aside, many past participants of the ICBAE remark on the positive changes the programme has had on their lives (Bwatwa and Kamwela, 2010, p. 57). For example, an adult learner from Iramba, in the Singida region of central Tanzania, remarked: 'ICBAE centres have greatly improved our lifestyles through the income-generating activities and the credit schemes, and have motivated others to join.'

A female learner, aged 45, from Ilala, Dar Es Salaam, said: 'I did not know how to read and write. But now I can. I can record what I am earning and my expenditure.'

Another female adult learner, this time from the Qudan'gonyi ICBAE Centre in the Hanang district, agreed: 'You can see us participating fully in repairing shoes, which was previously considered a job only for men, because the ICBAE has empowered us. I can read books, newspapers and write letters to my friends. Besides that, we have formed an income-generating activity, we repair shoes for people in the community and earn income to support our families.'

A literacy circle facilitator spoke about the programme's efforts to attract more learners, such as through events

and festivals that foster a positive attitude towards learning: 'The annual Adult Education Week is very important as it encourages the community to discover what goes on at the ICBAE centres and motivates other illiterate adults to join the classes in order to develop their skills and engage in income-generating activities.'

LESSONS LEARNED

The lessons learned through the ICBAE's implementation not only take into account the achievements made, they also show what elements failed and what adjustments were required.

For example, the income-generating activities proved to be a good incentive for people to enrol in the programme: apart from acquiring literacy and life skills, learners also learned an occupation, which not only serves as a motivation to enrol and stay in the programme but enables them to better support themselves and their families. This shows learners that learning is meaningful and can improve their living standards.

In addition, linking literacy to occupational and practical skills development has created opportunities for the acquisition, use, improvement and retention of literacy skills, since learners need to maintain their literacy skills in order to successfully engage in income-generating activities. It also shows learners that literacy and numeracy acquisition is not an end in itself, but a means of improving their livelihoods.

Finally, by placing learners at the centre of the learning process, the programme promotes the development of critical thinking and problem solving, and improves learners' communication skills through class discussion and cooperative work. In addition, involving students in the design of the class curriculum builds their self-esteem and confidence, and shows them that their opinion and voice matter.

One critique is that the programme suffers from a lack of teaching and learning materials. Facilitators would be better able to assess learners' progress through tasks and activities found in high-quality teaching materials.

SUSTAINABILITY

According to the National Development Vision 2025, the United Republic of Tanzania is striving towards both social and economic development, and sees education as one of the tools for achieving it. Through the National Education Act of 1978, which states that programmes for adult education can be located in every educational institution in the country free of charge (Tanzania, 1978), no rent is collected from the programme for the use of primary school premises, which keeps costs down. In addition, the use of the revolving loan fund supports the programme's sustainability, as the learners return the loan with interest.

Over the years, the programme has developed partnerships with governmental, non-governmental and faith-based organizations, including the Tanzania Education Network/Mtandao wa Elimu Tanzania (TEN/MET), an umbrella NGO that coordinates other education NGOs working in the country. This gives the ICBAE programme an opportunity to work with many different partners. The partnerships with government departments, such as the ministries of health and agriculture, are also beneficial; for example, because healthcare is one of the components of the programme, when there is an activity on health matters, the Ministry of Health selects relevant officers to give lectures. Similarly, employees from the Ministry of Agriculture assist learners with activities related to agriculture.

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ALGERIA

Literacy, Training and Employment for Women

Key Information

Programme title	Literacy, Training and Employment for Women
Implementing organization	Association Algérienne d'Alphabétisation
Language of instruction	Arabic
Programme partners	The Algerian Government and town councils; ministries of education, vocational training, social welfare and culture; the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID); Sonatrach, Arcofino, Ooredoo Algeria and Saidal
Funding	Commission nationale consultative des droits de l'homme (CNCDH); Haut Conseil de la Langue Arabe (HCLA); UNICEF; United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); UNESCO; AECID; Embassy of Japan in Algeria; Algerian Government, including the Ministry of Training and Professional Education; private sector companies Sonatrach, Arcofino and Ooredoo Algeria (formerly Nedjma); El Khroub Office of the Mayor; contributions from Association Algérienne d'Alphabétisation and foreign donors.
Annual programme costs	DZD 19 million (about USD 144,000) for the Attatba Centre
Date of inception	2005

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

In 1962, when Algeria became independent, more than 85% of the population was illiterate. Today, despite considerable investment and progress in education, low levels of literacy remain a challenge. According to UIS (2020), as of 2018, 18.6% of the country's adult population (aged 15 and over) could not read or write.

As part of the UN Millennium Development Goals¹ and the United Nations Literacy Decade, which ran from 2003 to 2012, and having already made major educational reforms, the government established a national strategy

aimed at halving the country's illiteracy rate. The strategy defines the role of NGOs in raising Algeria's literacy rate, aims to increase awareness of the importance of literacy, and calls for more training for teachers in both the public

¹ The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which ranged from halving extreme poverty rates to providing universal primary education, ran from 2000 to 2015; the UN, in cooperation with governments, civil society and other partners, built on the momentum generated by the MDGs to develop the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

and private sectors. As a part of the strategy, Association Algérienne d'Alphabétisation (the Algerian Literacy Association; IQRAA) launched a major programme known as Alphabétisation, Formation et Intégration des Femmes (Literacy, Training and Employment for Women; hereafter 'AFIF').

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

IQRAA is a national NGO, established in 1990 to promote education in general, and adult education in particular. At its inception, it covered all 48 of Algeria's *wilayas*,² or provinces, and 952 of its 1,541 municipalities. The organization also employs a large number of volunteers.

IQRAA set itself two major objectives: to foster the implementation of the MDGs and the United Nations Literacy Decade,³ and to promote human development through social solidarity, increased respect for learners and gender equality, and by developing adult literacy and ensuring that all children received an education. Through the AFIF project, IQRAA delivers educational and vocational training and employment programmes to people living in isolated rural areas. It has invested in numerous literacy projects, mainly targeted at women, and has earned numerous national and international awards, including the International Council for Adult Education (ICAE) J. Roby Kidd Award in 1994, UNESCO's Noma Prize in 1997, the Arab League Education, Culture and Science Organization (ALECSO) Arab Literacy Prize in 1998, the Arab Literacy Prize in 2002, and the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy in 2014.

The AFIF programme gives people the opportunity to obtain professional qualifications in such areas as dressmaking and hairdressing, and then go on to make a living from these occupations. The government also provides help in the form of microcredit and office jobs. The programme is particularly aimed at women over 15 and at girls who do not attend school, and has been highly successful in combining literacy with social development and improving the lives of families and communities.

A number of players are involved in the programme, working together to ensure AFIF's success, including:

- local authorities, which provide either land on which to build literacy centres, or existing premises which are then restored and equipped by IQRAA;
- corporate sponsors that provide practical support and equipment for the centres;
- activists who recruit potential learners and assess their suitability;
- teachers, who are themselves taught training skills;
- an education committee, which draws up, monitors and evaluates the curriculum, and has also published textbooks as part of the programme.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The AFIF programme teaches women and girls to read, write and acquire the professional skills they need to earn a living and make a greater contribution to the community. It aims to help those who have not received a proper education and enable disadvantaged groups in isolated rural areas to achieve greater social integration, financial well-being and independence.

More specifically, the programme aims to:

- encourage women and girls to acquire literacy skills and professional qualifications and thus to achieve social and economic integration;
- establish employment agencies to help women and girls find jobs, as well as lending facilities for those seeking to set up their own businesses;
- combat illiteracy, exclusion, poverty and opposition to education.

IQRAA also operates a programme for women who have been excluded and marginalized because they lack the skills required to access education in the first place. It seeks to help these women overcome hardship by developing their everyday life skills, enabling them to play a greater part in the local community, become more independent and acquire professional qualifications so that they can find paid employment.

APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

AFIF is aimed at low-literate women aged 16 to 35, who are chosen on the basis of background studies in

² Since December 2019, Algeria is divided into 58 *wilayas*.

³ The objective of the Literacy Decade was to achieve locally sustainable literate environments by extending literacy to the then 860 million illiterate adults and 113 million children out of school worldwide.

areas where there is sufficient demand, so the number of students varies from one centre to another. Courses run for an average of 18 months; however, depending on their existing knowledge, participants may take as little as three to six months to obtain a qualification. The average number of students per group varies between 15 and 20, and courses may begin at any time of year, depending on students' availability, and are free of charge. IQRAA holds lessons in a variety of locations, including its own purpose-built centres in various locations around the country, and schools that are not used during holiday periods.

Students are taught using both traditional and more participatory methods. Course content is developed in partnership with the government, since IQRAA is responsible for managing Algeria's national literacy campaign, and is drawn up collaboratively by the AFIF education committee, which comprises teachers, psychologists and advocates responsible for developing educational tools in accordance with national and international guidelines.

Literacy teaching is followed by training in specific subjects in order to develop participants' entrepreneurial skills and make them more independent within their communities. The programme is based on the principle of equal access to education and training, and designed in collaboration with the public sector, creating a synergy between public- and private-sector resources.

Lessons are taught in Arabic and cover a variety of subjects, such as gender studies, citizenship, the environment, peace and tolerance, human rights, preventative health, HIV/AIDS, the Algerian Family Code,⁴ the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and social justice. The programme aims to develop participants' skills in three main areas:

Improved literacy

The AFIF project regards literacy as an essential way of reinforcing women's independence. Reading and writing skills enable learners to become informed citizens who play an active part in their communities. IQRAA has

produced a series of booklets on related subjects, such as family planning, citizenship, peace, human rights and the environment, which are used to both develop the reading and writing skills of AFIF participants and inform them about issues relating to their everyday lives.

Employment training

The centres provide a series of courses on specific themes, using teaching methods that have enjoyed proven success around the country because they offer immediate benefits, such as the ability to earn an income from activities like dressmaking, embroidery and silk painting.

Most parts of the country have a long tradition of embroidery and weaving, using popular traditional motifs that vary from one region to another. Embroidered pieces are widely used in everyday life: for example, shawls are particularly popular in Ouargla in the south of the country, while Sidi M'Hammed, in the north, is known for its painted silk cushions.

Trainers in these skills are recruited locally by the association and paid by local authorities. Many are women who have themselves acquired high-level literacy skills from the association.

Earning a living

Students then put their newly acquired theoretical knowledge into practice by setting up small businesses. They receive loans to acquire sewing machines and other equipment, and the association uses the interest from these loans to help other women become more independent. This scheme was first carried out on an experimental basis in the City of Batna in collaboration with UNICEF, which provided the association with 30 sewing machines. Since then, more than 28,000 women have benefited from it, and IQRAA has nine full-time centres providing training to over 1,500 women a year.

TRAINING OF FACILITATORS

Facilitators have varying degrees of qualifications and experience when they are recruited: some have undergone three years of secondary education, others

⁴ The Algerian Family Code is the main codified law that governs matters relating to marriage and family relations of the predominantly Muslim majority population of Algeria. See: http://arabic.musawah.org/sites/default/files/Algeria%20-%20Overview%20Table%20%2803_18%29.pdf [Accessed 22 September 2020].

have a baccalaureate, and others still are graduates. Each facilitator teaches 15 to 20 students, depending on the location, and IQRAA provides them with initial and continuous training once they have passed an interview. They work full-time and are paid the equivalent of USD 153 a month, which is funded by the Algerian Ministry for Education.

Facilitators are recruited by the National Literacy and Education Office, and their training is governed by national standards. Each September, IQRAA provides facilitators with on-site refresher training sessions under the aegis of its education committee. Teaching is ultimately supervised by inspectors appointed by the department.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Students are monitored every three months and evaluated at the end of the year, receiving literacy and training certificates if they pass. Evaluations are the responsibility of the National Office of Literacy and Education for Adults (ONAEA) of the Algerian Ministry of Education.

In addition, IQRAA has carried out studies at a number of centres to measure the programme's impact. One of these, in Tipaza, showed that the number of training centres operating in rural areas had grown at an exponential rate, so much so that the Ministry of Vocational Training and Education has set up its own scheme, known as the *Mécanisme d'alphabétisation-qualification* (literacy and qualifications mechanism), to standardize the learning content and process provided by these training centres.

IQRAA's experience has demonstrated the effectiveness of providing women with training in their local area. The specialist who carried out an impact study at the Attabla centre made it very clear that, through AFIF, women had acquired greater visibility, played a more participatory and responsible role in the community, and changed their patterns of behaviour compared to those living in surrounding villages. These effects should be seen not in isolation, but as a product of mechanisms set up by the government to create opportunities for social integration in rural areas. There

is strong demand for literacy education from women of all ages, thanks in no small part to the flexibility and convenience of the project and the future prospects it offers.

IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

The programme has made a significant contribution to combating illiteracy and improving the socio-economic status of women and girls in Algeria. Each year, more than 130,000 students receive literacy training, and 2,500 women aged 16 to 35 receive specific skills training as part of the AFIF scheme, including dressmaking, embroidery, weaving, silk painting, hairdressing and information technology.

Because of the AFIF project, nine rural literacy centres have been built with the help of significant contributions from local authorities, international bodies and private companies. IQRAA also uses schools outside of normal classroom hours and other spaces owned by local authorities.

The programme places particular emphasis on social issues, and this is reflected in the literature that has been produced for the project, which includes a series of educational brochures and audio-visual programmes on subjects such as family planning, HIV/ AIDS prevention, conflict resolution, citizenship, the environment, and the Family Code. More recently, the organization has published a manual on prisoners' rights and responsibilities.

The AFIF project has enabled women to set up profitable businesses with a system of loans enabling them to buy the equipment they need. The repayments allow other women to obtain loans and buy equipment.

Challenges

The programme has also encountered a number of challenges, including the belief in some circles that women of a certain age are too old to acquire literacy skills and bureaucratic delays in granting access to schools.

But the biggest challenge facing the association is its target audience's general lack of enthusiasm for

the programme. To address this, IQRAA has organized public activities to increase awareness of its aims, including literacy roadshows in villages and isolated areas, and is considering the construction of a mobile school in southern Algeria for nomads and others who have not benefited from the literacy centres. In addition, IQRAA is developing a communication strategy involving the media and businesses to attract more learners.

The AFIF project has also created an awareness of the real problems faced by women in rural areas, such as travelling long distances to school, a lack of transport, and the absence of boarding facilities and canteens. It is one of a number of responses to public needs and expectations.

The project has been evaluated by the Centre National d'Études et d'analyses pour la population et de développement (National Centre for Studies and Analysis for Population and Development; CENEAP), which concluded that 'opening local centres has made women more visible and given them a greater sense of participation and responsibility.' IQRAA believes that such descriptions amply justify the project and the need to continue working in the same direction, particularly in view of the courage and determination shown by women who have achieved independence despite a large number of obstacles.

LESSONS LEARNED

A number of lessons can be drawn from the AFIF programme, such as:

- it is essential to have an understanding of the social fabric and the problem of illiteracy in Algeria;
- overcoming bureaucracy requires a great deal of patience;
- to cope with needs and issues that may arise in the implementation process, flexibility and adaptability is essential;
- providing women with skills training gives them a greater role in their families and communities and helps them to increase their incomes, which is essential for their independence;
- by enabling students to acquire professional

qualifications or carry out business projects of their own, the project also broadens their horizons.

SUSTAINABILITY

The project has become self-sustaining. Since it was founded, IQRAA has helped to provide literacy teaching for over 1.5 million individuals, mainly women, and enabled more than 23,000 women aged 18 to 35 to acquire vocational skills in a variety of areas.

Each year, 140,000 people (again, mainly women) take part in the literacy programme with the help of 4,649 paid teachers and trainers, as part of the national literacy strategy adopted by the government in 2007. IQRAA is a member of several international networks and councils, and has observer status at the United Nations Economic and Social Council. These local and global connections help to ensure the long-term future of the project, whose outcomes are reviewed in June of each year by the Ministry of Education.

Since 1995, AFIF has achieved proven results and continued to attract illiterate and poorly educated women. Its viability has been confirmed by their success in gaining employment, becoming more independent, changing their family relationships, and benefiting from microcredit for students in rural areas. The project's financial viability is ensured by the support of local and national government.

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EGYPT

Learning and Earning in Cairo's Garbage City

Key Information

Programme title	Learning and Earning in Cairo's Garbage City
Implementing organization	Spirit of Youth Association (SOY)
Language of instruction	Arabic
Programme partners	Community and Institutional Development (CID) Consulting, Procter & Gamble, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Hands on the Nile Foundation, and the African Star Foundation
Funding	Procter & Gamble and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (since 2010); additional funding is generated by selling the shredded plastic that results from the recycling programme
Annual programme costs	EGP 220,000 (about USD 13,800)
Date of inception	2001

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Since 2012, as part of its implementation of the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals, Egypt has made enormous progress in developing an inclusive educational system. As a result, 93.3% of young boys and girls are now enrolled in school, while the gap between boys' and girls' enrolment has reduced. However, although the number of formally educated Egyptians has increased, the quality of the country's education system has not. The majority of students leave primary school without being able to read fluently, while poor reading and writing skills contribute to a 30% unemployment rate among young people. Children who never enrol in school are usually prevented from doing so by socio-economic burdens such as poverty or by geographical factors.

Among the largest group currently absent from formal education are the communities that live on the outskirts of Egypt's capital, Cairo: the Zabaleen (Arabic for 'garbage people'), who survive by collecting trash and recycling it. Marginalized from society, facing poverty and low health standards, the Zabaleen's work is, nevertheless, valued

by society, as they recycle between 80% and 85% of the trash the city produces. The Zabaleen waste collection system has even received international recognition and World Bank support as it is considered highly efficient. However, in 2000, Cairo's city municipality introduced a centralized trash recycling system,

placing household waste collection in the hands of multinational companies, a move which threatened the Zabaleen communities' income and socio-economic sustainability. The municipality has offered the community no compensation for this change, despite the fact that the community relies on the recycling business, particularly as it is largely isolated from state schooling.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Founded in 2004, the Spirit of Youth Association (SOY) is an Egyptian non-governmental organization located in Manshiyat Naser, one of the largest Zabaleen community districts in Cairo. Set up by members of the community, the NGO aims to empower young community members through educational projects. SOY's core project is the Recycling School for Boys, which aims to 'provide opportunities for disadvantaged children by educating them about their rights and duties towards their families and community, thereby creating a new generation of civilly responsible youth' (SOY, n.d.). The school is located in Mokattam, the largest village within Cairo's garbage city, and promotes cooperation rather than competition between the Zabaleen recycling system and the multinational companies.

The school was founded by the NGO Community and Institutional Development (CID) Consultancy and UNESCO Cairo Office in response to the socio-economic change felt by the community when the multinationals' trash recycling systems were introduced; it is now a SOY project. The overarching aim of the school is to reduce poverty and marginalization, and improve health standards within the Zabeleen community. These objectives are met through literacy programmes, which are delivered in a work-oriented, practical context. By 2015, 130 boys aged between nine and 17 had graduated from the school; 50 of them enrolled in middle school and 20 in high school afterwards; and four students received high school certificates. Among their parents, 129 obtained a literacy certificate.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

More specifically, the Learning and Earning in Cairo's Garbage City programme aims to:

- offer programmes, projects and activities focused

on the environmental and educational aspects of maintaining a business and increasing income;

- enhance the projects and expertise of SOY beyond its work with the Zabeleen community of Manshiyat Naser;
- develop SOY into a learning organization that continues to improve and build its institutional capacities as well as its human resources;
- build the capacities of the Zabaleen by advocating for their integration into the formal waste management sector in Egypt;
- provide awareness and primary healthcare services to children, youth and women in marginalized communities, assisting them to obtain access to free government medical services;
- offer children and young people working in particularly hazardous conditions alternative and safe work environments related to their skills and experience.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

Learning and Earning in Cairo's Garbage City is designed to be flexible: courses are offered on a variable schedule; that is, students must be present for a minimum number of hours to complete each programme, but may attend whenever time allows. The learners are split into three groups according to their capacity to read and write, ranging from those who are not able to recognize letters to those who are able to read but with difficulty. There is no standard duration for the classes, which are, instead, adapted to the learner's progress and ability to attend classes.

The programme's lessons take place in the Mokattam school, where students have access to a computer lab and plastic-cutting machine. The school curriculum is built around the recycling of plastic shampoo bottles manufactured by Proctor & Gamble and other multinationals. The students collect empty bottles, count them, and fill out forms to indicate how many they have retrieved. The multinationals, which want to end the fraudulent practice of refilling their discarded bottles with soap and water and reselling them, pay students for each bottle recorded.

The students then convert the bottles into plastic

powder, which is then sold to local recycling companies. The school curriculum combines this activity with basic education, computer literacy, practical work experience and the study of environmental protection and workplace safety. The literacy classes are taught in small groups of two or three learners, who, if they enrol for a period of two-to-five years, are awarded with a national literacy certificate and graduation, which enables them to apply for further schooling.

CURRICULUM AND TEACHING MATERIALS

The Learning and Earning in Cairo's Garbage City programme comprises lessons in math, science, music, painting, personal and environmental hygiene and recycling. The programme also covers computer skills, the principles of project management, bookkeeping and simple accounting, and art and drama. The literacy classes use everyday experiences known to the learners through their work as recyclers; for example, a mathematics class might include calculations based on what could be earned given the number, size and price of the bottles they collect. After students collect shampoo bottles, they learn how to count them and read the brand name; they then use their maths and literacy skills to fill out forms indicating how many bottles they retrieved. The forms are then given to the multinationals, who pay each learner for the bottles collected. The courses thus stress technical learning through active work experience.

There is an arts element too: for example, the drama curriculum includes a play about the life and history of the garbage collectors in Cairo, which is performed to educate people about the challenges facing the Zabeleen community.

After completing a basic level of reading and writing, the learners work with information and communication technologies (ICTs) in order to learn how to integrate the internet into their daily work and planning. For example, most students work with their parents in collecting the garbage from Cairo's neighborhoods and streets: to support that work, they are taught how to use Google Maps to identify the area in which they are supposed to work, the name of the streets and the best route to take.

Specialists in education developed a curriculum tailored to the life of the community, and continuously add new elements. The teaching material was developed by Dr Laila Iskandar, a social entrepreneur and politician who was formerly Egypt's Minister of State for Environment Affairs, with support from teachers, and is based on the Montessori approach, which is based on self-directed activity, and hands-on and collaborative learning.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF FACILITATORS

The facilitators, who receive modest salaries, work flexible hours and are drawn from within the community. Given the location of the school in the middle of the garbage collectors' neighbourhood and the low wages, they tend not to come from outside the area but are instead recruited through public advertisement, mainly targeting NGOs and the main churches, and through the efforts of school staff.

Teachers at the school must have a minimum of high school education – but the will to learn and a passionate approach to teaching are much more important – and need to bring a high degree of flexibility to their work. They undergo on-the-job training at the beginning of the programme and continue their development through weekly support and monthly training sessions, as well as by attending various specialized courses when available.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The literacy exams offer one form of evaluation; the school director also provides feedback to the teachers and an external consultant regularly evaluates the project and the learners, then provides informal feedback to the teachers.

IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

The success of the school is best reflected in the stories of its graduates.

At 26, Moussa Nazmy is the first in his family to read and write. 'After graduating from the recycling school, I decided to continue learning through formal schooling; now, I am about to take my final secondary school exams, because I want to go to university.'

Adham Al Sharkawy first came to school when he was 12 years old and illiterate. He gained his literacy certificate and then was home-schooled for middle school. He is now about to finish high school. He achieved numerous qualifications in computing and has worked as a trainer for the school's health and recycling programmes. He was also one of the main characters in *Garbage Dreams* (Iskander, 2009), for which he went for two years to the United States of America, during which he had intensive English courses. After returning from the US, he went to England to attend a forum on recycling. He now runs a start-up for collecting and recycling garbage with a group of friends.

Nabil William first attended school when he was 11 years old. He, too, was illiterate. He gained his literacy certificate and received home-schooling afterwards to equip him for middle school and technical high school. After attending a forum on recycling in England, he now is a trainer of drama and art in the school and volunteers in the animation team for the programme's summer camps. With a group of friends, he has launched a start-up for collecting and recycling garbage.

Roumani Magdi was illiterate when he first attended school aged 10. After gaining his literacy certificate, he received home-schooling for middle school and technical high school, including numerous computer certificates. He worked as a computer trainer at the school for two years and then started his own business.

Challenges

The school's work faces various challenges due to the environment in which it was created. The numerous duties and challenging workload of young people in this community mean that flexibility is needed in school schedules, teaching hours and methods. The school adapts its hours and methods according to the need and level of each learner. It also tries continuously to integrate the day-to-day duties of the learners into the programme and its schedule, as much as it does their vocabulary. At the same time, efforts are made to make older learners co-teachers. Another challenge is to support learners after graduation to ensure they utilize the skills they have gained through the school in further

empowering themselves.

Other challenges include funding, particularly securing it in the longer term, and the need to offer further support to students in setting up their own projects. One way of supporting students in creating their own projects would be by teaching an entrepreneurship curriculum.

Part of the programme's funds could be used to create an income-generating project for the SOY, which could, in turn, contribute to its sustainability.

SUSTAINABILITY

The programme has been running since 2001 with initial co-funding from UNESCO. Today, however, the only income to the project is the price of the cut plastic sold to the market. Consequently, the NGO relies on Proctor & Gamble and the African Star Foundation support to ensure the project is sustained into the future.

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AUSTRALIA

Australian Workplace English Language and Literacy Programme

Key Information

Programme title	Australian Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) programme
Implementing organization	The Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education (DIICSRTE)
Language of instruction	English
Annual programme costs	AUD 35 million (about USD 25 million)
Date of inception	1991

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Australia faces shortages in its workforce, particularly in skilled trades, health occupations and engineering, and because of demographic pressures caused by an ageing population; however, it was recently estimated by the Australian Productivity Commission that improvements in literacy and numeracy could increase labour productivity by 1.2%, a significant contribution.

The Adult Literacy and Life skills (ALLS) survey (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2008) demonstrates a clear link between strong literacy and numeracy levels, and employee benefits such as improved job opportunities, better wages and enhanced career progression, as well as increased productivity. The survey suggested over 40% of Australian workers are without the adequate language, literacy and numeracy skills required to fully participate at work or in society. This lack of workplace foundation skills highlights the need for targeted initiatives such as the Workplace English Language and Literacy (WELL) programme.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Introduced by the Australian Government in 1991, the WELL programme provides grant funding to support the

integration of language, literacy and numeracy education within vocational training, delivered in the workplace.

Funding is available on a competitive grants basis to organizations in all industries and is designed to support employers to cultivate a culture of training in their workplaces.

Operating on a rolling basis, applications for the WELL programme are accepted throughout the year. The programme is financed through a combination of both public and private capital, and funding is regarded as 'seed' funding, with the recipient organization expected to contribute at least 25% of project costs for an initial project and 50% for any subsequent projects.

Projects must use registered training providers and qualified trainers (both in vocational and adult literacy training).

Most Industry Skills Councils, which were established by the South Australian Government to strengthen the industry's voice in skills and workforce development, and to ensure that funding for skills and training is directly aligned to industry priorities, promote WELL to businesses within their industries and to generate applications for projects. Their role extends to working with stakeholders to develop project applications and collaborating with WELL staff to finalize applications for WELL funding.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main aim of the WELL programme is to assist organizations to train their workers in job-related English language, literacy and numeracy skills. The WELL programme is integrated with vocational training and dedicated to the needs of the workplace, from employers' and employees' perspectives. By building workers' language, literacy and numeracy skills alongside vocational training, WELL increases workforce flexibility and responsibility; productivity and efficiency initiatives; health and safety in the workplace; communication, consultation and team work; and creates a culture of on-the-job training.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

The programme operates a largely devolved model of delivery with state and territory offices administering projects in their respective areas and a national office administering projects that span jurisdictions. The devolved model presents several benefits such as familiarity with local industry, employers and training organizations, and awareness and consideration of local government strategies to support industry.

WELL programme training is oriented to meet the needs of the workplace in context, and they do not have to meet specified gains within a given timeframe. Part of the professional expertise of WELL teachers is in negotiating and delivering programmes to meet workplace and participants' needs. WELL programme participants

are therefore currently assessed against pre-post-training levels.

IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

The WELL programme plays an important role in supporting the development of foundation skills in the workplace. Over the past five years, more than 72,000 employees and 530 Indigenous Employment Programme (IEP) participants (including both employed and pre-employed individuals) have completed training funded by the WELL programme. Over that time, the programme has supported 1,030 training projects across 740 employer worksites, conducted by 160 registered training organizations (RTOs) across Australia.

The WELL programme is effective in increasing the employability and productivity of the participants of its training projects. Employers report that the training has a positive impact on literacy and numeracy skills as well as on employee career prospects.

The majority of employees and employers are positive in their assessment of the programme with:

- 78% of employers rating WELL as either effective or highly effective in meeting their business needs;
- 79% agreeing that important aspects of employee job performance had improved as a result.

Embedding literacy and numeracy learning within vocational training produces greater improvements across key employability traits than vocational training programmes alone. The most important aspects for future success is attention to activities that support the identification of business needs, the availability of qualified and suitably experienced trainers and an efficient application process.

Challenges

A significant challenge for WELL is the stigma associated with lower levels of literacy. At times, individuals may not be aware they need assistance with their literacy skills or refuse training and support out of embarrassment. As WELL training is voluntary, employers often promote the training as general workplace training rather than targeted literacy support to attract workers to the training.

In addition, employers must be willing to invest in training their workforce, be aware of issues of low literacy, and have an understanding of the impact of these issues on productivity and performance before WELL training becomes a consideration. Large employers are often better equipped in this regard due to the financial commitment of the programme than small to medium enterprises.

Promotion of the programme will be enhanced by the programme's inclusion in the new 'umbrella' workforce development service, Australian Skills Connect. This service is expected to assist the programme in reaching small to medium enterprises, a cohort whose time and financial constraints has seen them not engage with foundation skills training.

A programme evaluation conducted in 2011 highlighted challenges in the areas of IT, governance and administration of the programme. Solutions to these issues have been delivered through a review to streamline the programme guidelines: revising processes for programme administration, reinforcing performance measures, and the introduction of a new IT system to monitor and report on these aspects.

LESSONS LEARNED

The fundamental aspect of WELL training is developing and implementing a training programme that meets the employers' and employees' needs. To achieve this, an understanding of an organization's specific training needs and workforce profile is required, as well

as a strong partnership between the employer and the training provider. Overall, WELL training projects support employer training needs. Both employers and employees believe WELL training projects equip participants with vocational and literacy skills, increasing their employability, and improve learners' social and personal skills.

SUSTAINABILITY

The WELL Programme has been operating since 1991. The Australian Government has allocated funds for the coming financial years, steadily increasing to over AUD 35 million (about USD 27 million) in 2015/16.

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CAMBODIA

Educational and Social Development of Garment Factory Workers

Key Information

Programme title	Educational and Social Development of Garment Factory Workers
Implementing organization	Sipar
Language of instruction	Khmer
Funding	French Development Agency (AFD), Weave Our Future Foundation and UNESCO
Programme partners	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport; Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training; Garment Manufacturers Association of Cambodia (GMAC); Cambodian Women for Peace and Development (CWPD); and the UNESCO Office in Phnom Penh
Annual programme costs	EUR 200,000 (about USD 234,000; additional financial contribution from UNESCO CapEd and UNESCO Malala Fund)
Date of inception	July 2015

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Since 1993, the Cambodian economy has been undergoing reforms designed to effect a transition from socialism to market capitalism. These reforms have been aimed at improving the country's previously isolated position by opening borders to international trade (Tang, 2016). One major strategy has been to promote direct foreign investment in the country's manufacturing sector, specifically the garment and footwear industry. This investment, along with the competitive advantage provided by Cambodia's low-skilled and low-paid labour force, has resulted in the rapid industrialization of the garment and footwear industry, which has become a primary contributor to the country's economy over the past two decades. In fact, the International Labour Organization (2017) reported that garment and footwear accounted for 80% of the country's total exports, and that the industry employed an estimated 610,000 workers.

However, the competitive nature of the industry, coupled with its high geographical mobility and its focus on quantity rather than quality, can result in the fostering of short-term growth without contribution to the long-

term development of a country. For example, 87% of industry employees are women who have migrated to urban areas from rural areas or poor outlying suburbs, and are likely to have interrupted their primary school

education to support their families. Now living in densely populated towns and cities, they face a huge challenge to their personal and professional development due to their lack of education, lack of access to helpful information, and their low literacy levels. It is within this context that the Educational and Social Development of Garment Factory Workers programme has sought to cooperate with garment factories to improve the transfer of knowledge and skills to factory workers.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The Educational and Social Development of Garment Factory Workers programme is a multi-stakeholder programme with its roots in a pilot project launched by Sipar, a non-governmental organization that promotes literacy, from 2013 to 2014. The pilot project initially sought to improve the literacy levels of garment factory workers in Cambodia through the construction of libraries in three garment factories. An evaluation of the pilot project, however, revealed that simply setting up libraries was not enough to tackle the widespread illiteracy prevalent among factory workers in the country. Therefore, the programme model was reconceptualized

at the beginning of 2015 to reach beyond this approach. The amended programme included three main components during its first phase (from July 2015 to June 2018), which were offered through library resource centres (LRCs): literacy classes, social awareness sessions, and a borrowing service. This case study will focus primarily on the literacy class component of the programme.

The Sipar literacy class is part of the Factory Literacy Programme (FLP), which was conceptualized by Cambodia's Ministry of Education Youth and Sport (MoEYS) and the Phnom Penh UNESCO Office in late 2015 following a national literacy campaign. One of the lessons learned from the campaign was that the fast-growing garment industry in Cambodia had attracted numerous workers, especially from rural and remote areas, to the garment and manufacturing industries. Moreover, a 2013 report by the Ministry of Planning on women and migration in Cambodia showed that 85% of the 605,000 workers in garment and footwear factories were women, of whom 14% were illiterate and 29% demonstrated low levels of literacy (Kheam and Treleven, 2013).



A lending library for garment factory workers. © Sipar

Targeting these workers, MoEYS, with support from UNESCO and in partnership with NGOs like Sipar, developed the FLP, a special literacy initiative for factories. The programme was developed with support from UNESCO's Capacity Development for Education Programme (CapED formerly CapEFA) and subsequently funded through the UNESCO Malala Fund for Girls' Right to Education. The FLP aims to help young women and girls working in factories to acquire basic functional literacy skills and empower them to better understand their own fundamental rights.

The FLP utilizes a participatory approach to actively engage various partners and stakeholders. The Garment Manufacturers Association (GMAC) in Cambodia has been consulted to encourage the implementation of literacy classes within factories and during working hours. Volunteers from factories have been recruited to run the literacy classes, while Sipar and the local NGO

Cambodian Women for Peace and Development (CWPD) have been mobilized to share technical resources to develop learning materials. The programme has engaged the Government of Cambodia and cooperated with relevant ministries to:

- undertake awareness raising and advocacy for technical departments, relevant NGOs and factory managers;
- develop the FLP literacy package and learning-teaching materials;
- provide training for literacy facilitators;
- pilot the literacy package for girls and women in more than 20 factories (including 12 within existing LRCs).

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of the first phase of the programme was to enhance the literacy skills of garment factory workers, thus helping to empower them. This was to be achieved by pursuing the following objectives:



Literacy teachers supporting learners. © Sipar

- Enable young women and girls working in garment factories to acquire basic literacy skills and empower them to realize their other fundamental rights as well as to promote public-private partnership (PPP) and cooperate social responsibility (CSR) in Cambodia;
- Create, supply and maintain LRCs in garment factories as a space for workers' literacy classes; awareness sessions on social issues; and a borrowing service to provide workers with access to reading materials and information. LRCs would be installed in existing spaces such as an office, training or storage room;
- Provide an efficient and low-cost method of improving working conditions and productivity, as well as an opportunity for independent learning.

PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

The programme is being implemented over two phases. The first phase of the project ran from 2015 to 2018, and the second phase from 2018 to 2021. So far, three literacy courses with a duration of five to six months each have been held. The first session took place from January to May 2017, the second session from June to December 2017, and the third session started in February 2018 and is currently ongoing.

A core component of the programme is the implementation of literacy classes for workers. As part of its CapED¹ support to the FLP, UNESCO has negotiated with the MoEYS to engage factory employees as literacy teachers. Accordingly, each factory selects two employees to be trained by the Ministry of Education before taking on the role. These teachers facilitate literacy classes for their fellow garment factory work colleagues for approximately 50 minutes per day. During the first session of the first phase (January to May 2017), eight literacy classes were implemented in six factories; during the second session (June to December 2017), seven literacy classes were implemented in seven factories. As of 2018, new literacy classes have been implemented in 19 factories.

APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

The literacy classes employ a combination of traditional and learner-centred teaching approaches

and methodologies. Given the limited class time (50 minutes), literacy teachers usually spend one-quarter of the class using a top-down approach and the remaining three-quarters of the class employing a learner-centred approach. The learner-centred approach seeks to encourage interaction between learners through group activities, roleplay and use of the Khmer Literacy app, which provides practical reading exercises based on the content of the lessons.

CURRICULUM AND TEACHING MATERIALS

The curriculum is based on eight topics that relate to the workers' daily lives: (1) family, (2) hygiene, (3) family planning, (4) food and nutrition, (5) money management, (6) domestic violence, (7) road safety, and (8) civil status (i.e. birth certificates, identity cards, wedding certificates, etc.). Each topic is embedded with various exercises to teach learners to read and write as well as develop other 'soft skills', such as managing one's personal budget, taking care of oneself, and registering a newborn baby in one's commune.

Initially, a 60-hour curriculum to be implemented over a three-month period was planned; it was predicted that each topic would require seven to eight one-hour sessions to complete (a total of 60 hours). However, a test run in six factories during the first session of the first phase (January to March 2017) revealed that 60 hours was insufficient. This was because learning the alphabet took longer than expected. The literacy class curriculum was subsequently extended to 80 to 120 hours (over a period of five to six months).

Literacy and numeracy textbooks

With support from UNESCO CapED, two textbooks – one for literacy and one for numeracy – were developed and are used during classes. The books were designed by a team of representatives from UNESCO, Sipar, the Cambodian Ministry of Education, CWPD and the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA). The publishing team at Sipar designed the books' layout; printing of the first 700 copies was co-funded by UNESCO and Sipar. The literacy textbook focuses on teaching basic literacy skills in the

¹ UNESCO's Capacity Development for Education (CapED) programme aims to translate dialogue and advocacy for the global education agenda into concrete action at country level.

Khmer language, and the numeracy book focuses on the four operations (addition, multiplication, subtraction and division), as well as basic decimals, fractions, weights and measurements (see **Figures 10, 11** and **12**).



Figure 10: The covers of two manuals for teachers. © Sipar

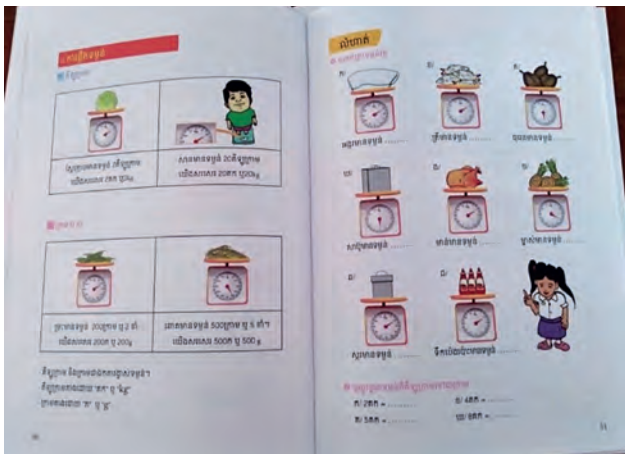


Figure 11: A lesson on weights from the maths textbook. © Sipar

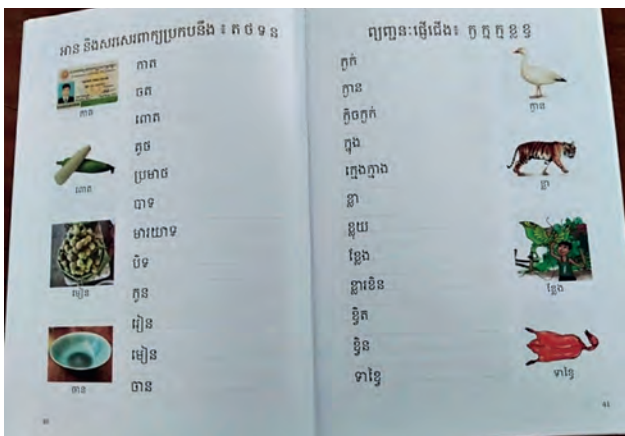


Figure 12: Lessons from literacy textbooks. © Sipar

The Khmer literacy app

A specially developed app, the Khmer Literacy app (see **Figure 13**), is also used. It features practical exercises that relate to the content of the classes. Development of the app was co-funded by the Weave Our Future Foundation, which works with NGOs to improve the working conditions in factories in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Myanmar, Viet Nam, and Agence Française de Développement (the French Development Agency; AFD), and it was produced by Sipar in cooperation with Open Institute, a local NGO. It is used as a supplementary teaching material during and after class hours and can be downloaded onto a tablet or a smartphone from Google Play free of charge. Learners can access the app either through their own tablets or smartphones, or through the LRC's tablet.

The app has 300 interactive reading exercises which link the content of the literacy classes to the eight course topics. These exercises utilize three learning techniques: simple word-picture association games, in which learners must select the correct word associated with a picture or the correct picture associated with a word; word-sound association games, in which the learner must select the correct word based on an audio recording; and a syllable identification game that requires the learner to select the remaining syllables of a word based on its first syllable.



Figure 13: Screen shot of the literacy app. © Sipar

Other programme activities

The LRC borrowing service

The LRCs provide a borrowing service that allows garment workers to access books and other educational materials during and after working hours. At least three factory employees are trained in the library's borrowing and consultation system, and to manage the library using a computer. The reading materials available at the LRCs include fiction and non-fiction books, magazines, soft skills guidebooks, flyers and posters. The libraries are also equipped with digital tablets, LCD screens, a computer and other audio-visual tools that allow the workers to access educational material via the internet.

Peer Educator and Social Awareness Sessions

Beyond the literacy classes and borrowing service, the LRCs serve as venues and sources of materials for peer educator training sessions. These social awareness workshops, held for 10 to 20 garment workers during their free time, cover topics relating to nutrition, health and financial literacy. Peer educators are selected from the factory staff and are trained by CWPD and Sipar.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF FACILITATORS

Recruitment

Two literacy teachers are recruited by a human resources manager from the staff of each factory to receive training from the Ministry of Education. They are usually recruited from the human resources, administrative, compliance or corporate social responsibility offices of the factory, although one factory did select a worker for the role. Selection is based on the employee's education level (at least Grade 12) as well as their motivation and attitude. Most of the literacy teachers already have some sort of responsibility for training new workers in the factory (e.g. in security, safety, rules and behaviour).

Training

Upon selection, the literacy teachers attend a 12-day training course conducted by the Ministry of Education, which also provides financial support. There are typically five trainers for every group of 25 trainees. The first 10 days of the teacher training course are dedicated to pedagogical and technical content focusing specifically



A training session for peer educators on social issues. © Sipar

on mathematics and the Khmer language. Literacy teachers learn basic teaching, lesson planning and course organization techniques, and they also gain practical teaching experience through role-playing exercises. During the last two days of the course, facilitators from ILO host a session on basic labour laws and rights. The teachers are encouraged to share this information with their students.

During the teacher training course, teachers receive textbooks, a teacher guidebook, and other materials. The teacher guidebook was developed in Khmer by UNESCO, the Ministry of Education and Sipar, and serves as a key tool for the preparation of lesson plans. Upon completion of the training course, literacy teachers also receive a certificate of attendance from the Ministry of Education. Since 2018, literacy teachers, as contractual teachers, have received 50% of a teacher's salary as financial compensation (around USD 130 per month), provided by the Ministry of Education.

From 2015 to 2018, 30 factories participated in three teacher training courses during the first phase of the programme. During the first session of the first phase (January to May 2017), 12 literacy teachers from six factories participated in the course. During the second session of the first phase (June to December 2017), 22 participants from 11 factories participated. To date, 26 participants from 13 factories have attended the third session of the first phase (February 2018 onwards).

In May 2017, a consultative workshop was hosted after the first literacy teacher training session. During the workshop, teachers from seven factories, along with the UNESCO Education team, the Ministry of Education, the programme coordinator, and technical assistants from Sipar and CWPD assessed the training session and commented on challenges and solutions.

Enrolment of learners

Participants of the literacy classes are the factory staff and workers. Those employees who are interested in joining the classes are required to take a preliminary test to determine their initial literacy levels. The pre-test content is provided by the Ministry of Education

and is equivalent to Grade 3 primary education level. It comprises reading, writing and oral components. More specifically, learners are required to read a simple text, answer a few questions related to the text, and solve basic mathematical problems. Learners are also selected based on their motivation and availability to participate in the classes.

The literacy classes are advertised to workers by middle managers in the factories. To promote the literacy classes, UNESCO and Sipar produced a three-minute promotional video about the project. The video, entitled *Literacy Changes Your Life* (ChenlaMedia, 2016), was broadcast as part of UNESCO's International Literacy Day, as well as in various factories equipped with LRCs. Furthermore, former and current learners are encouraged by their literacy teachers to spread awareness among their fellow colleagues.

ASSESSING LEARNING OUTCOMES

Tests designed by the teachers themselves are conducted every month to reinforce learners' skills and assess their progress. These tests usually take the form of written exercises (on words and sentences) or oral questions. A final test (both written and verbal) is carried out at the end of the course to assess the reading, writing and numeracy skills ultimately achieved by the participant. Upon completion of the course, learners receive a certificate of basic literacy from the Ministry of Education. The certificate gives access to further adult classes offered by the Ministry of Education, equivalent to primary and then secondary level.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The literacy classes are monitored on a regular basis by MoEYS, Sipar and UNESCO. UNESCO has provided financial support to MoEYS and Sipar to conduct regular monitoring visits and a pedagogical assistant employed by Sipar to oversee classes across all the participating factories. The pedagogical assistant visits each literacy class at least twice during a six-month session or upon requests from individual literacy teachers. During these onsite visits, the pedagogical assistant explains how to use the app, provides technical advice on teaching, and collects information on course attendance and the progress of learners in order to improve the programme.

In parallel, a team of trainers from the Ministry of Education also visits the classes on an occasional basis to provide advice on using the curriculum.

In May 2017, a team of Sipar and CWPD staff carried out an assessment of the programme. The assessment consisted of two questionnaires, one for literacy teachers and one for learners. Six factories were selected, and eight teachers and 65 learners participated in the assessment. The objectives were to evaluate the knowledge and capacities of the new teachers, to evaluate learners' progress, and to understand the challenges and needs of teachers and learners. The assessment provided useful information about the content of the learner and teacher manuals, the teaching methodology and the duration of training for the staff working as part-time literacy teachers. This information was used to improve certain aspects of the programme. For example, the teacher training sessions were extended from 10 days to 12 days to increase practise times.

IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

Up to December 2017, the programme targeted six garment factories. During the first session, 136 workers initially registered to attend literacy classes and 96 learners completed the course in June and July 2017. Of the 165 workers who registered to attend the literacy classes in the second session, 101 learners (61%) completed the curriculum in December 2017 and January 2018. In 2018, 19 factories were involved in the programme, with 28 literacy classes and 588 workers. In the 23 factories where literacy classes were implemented between 2017 and 2018, 12 were equipped with an LRC and 11 benefitted from a reading corner supported by UNESCO CapEd.

Overall, the programme has had a positive impact on learners' literacy levels. This was confirmed by the assessment carried out in May 2017 which included self-evaluation questions. Almost all the learners who participated in the assessment stated that their literacy skills had improved since they started the classes; more specifically, 51% stated their literacy levels had 'generally improved' and almost 13% stated that the literacy courses had provided them with 'more knowledge'. Furthermore, 83% of learners declared

that they would be interested in participating in another level of the literacy programme. Improved literacy levels mean that workers are equipped with some of the skills they need to address issues that affect their daily lives.

Although it is too early to assess the effects this programme has had on the lives of workers and their surrounding community, the findings thus far indicate that demand for expansion of the programme exists.

Challenges

The following challenges have emerged during the implementation of the programme:

- The selection criteria for learners were not clear enough, which led to disparities between the initial literacy levels of the learners. For example, the literacy classes consisted of both learners who were completely illiterate and learners who had already completed primary school.
- Some of the lessons were too difficult to complete in the allocated timeframe. Furthermore, the content of certain lessons needed to be reinforced by supplementary exercises and greater usage of the app.
- Most of the literacy classes were organized during working hours. Thus, some middle managers were displeased by the fact that workers were absent from their sewing machines for around one hour per day.
- The dropout rates for the first and second sessions were 34% and 39%, respectively. This was mainly due to work pressure or a lack of motivation.

LESSONS LEARNED

The following lessons have been learned during the first phase of the programme's implementation:

- The success of the programme depends largely on the commitment of senior managers in the factories. Senior managers play an instrumental role in motivating workers to participate and continue attending literacy classes. The workers are usually motivated when managers are enthusiastic about the programme.
- The successful design and implementation of the programme requires the commitment of the Ministry

of Education in close partnership with civil society organizations, UNESCO and the private sector.

- Regular programme assessment and monitoring is needed to improve the programme content, methodology and tools.

SUSTAINABILITY

The future prospects of the programme look positive. As stated above, UNESCO's continued engagement and support will be critical to expand the coverage of the factory literacy programme. New factories expressed interest in implementing literacy classes in 2018, and UNESCO and the Ministry of Education plan to extend the programme to 12 other provinces in Cambodia in the coming years. As a key implementing partner, Sipar will continue to collaborate and support this expansion in the factories, reaching 28,000 workers in 34 factories by 2021.

Plans to fully integrate the multi-stakeholder programme into the activities of the Ministry of Education is underway. In doing so, programme prospects for sustainability would be enhanced as the Ministry of Education would be fully responsible for all aspects of programme implementation, including funding.

Furthermore, plans to extend the programme to the intermediate literacy level and to develop the necessary manuals and teacher guides are in place. Factories that do not have enough space to implement LRCs will establish reading corners.

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CAMBODIA

Pink Phone

Key Information

Programme title	Pink Phone
Implementing organization	Women for Prosperity
Language of instruction	Khmer
Programme partners	Metfone
Annual programme costs	USD 6,000 (USD 30 per mobile phone, plus costs for inviting participants to attend training)
Date of inception	2010

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Cambodia is one of the poorest countries in Southeast Asia, with almost half of its population engaging in informal and vulnerable employment and living on less than around USD 2 per day (OECD, 2017). This despite the fact that, since the early 2000s, Cambodia's average economic growth rate has been among the highest in the world, thanks in part to the success of its garment and tourism industries.

Cambodia's troubled history led to the country having one of the highest adult illiteracy rates in the world. Under the communist Khmer Rouge regime, which ruled Cambodia from 1975 to 1979, the educational infrastructure was systematically dismantled. Vital resources, such as schools and books, were destroyed, and between 75% and 80% of all professionals in Cambodia were killed, including many teachers (Nguonly, 2004). By the time the Khmer Rouge regime was abolished, approximately 40% of the population was illiterate.

Since the regime was overthrown, Cambodia's adult literacy rate has risen little by little, and, in 2015, it stood at over 80% (UIS, 2019). This improvement is the result of progress at primary school level, where the country has maintained a relatively high net enrolment rate which

stood over 90% in 2018, with an almost equal proportion of boys and girls (ibid.). However, attendance at secondary school remains very low, with a net enrolment rate of only 38% recorded in 2008 and 120,000 out-of-school adolescents in 2015 (ibid.). One key reason for this is the direct and indirect cost of education, which most parents cannot afford. This is compounded not only by a lack of quality in education, but also by a lack of access, especially in rural areas (UNICEF Cambodia, 2014).

The improved communication and access to information that mobile phones offer can have a significant impact on users' livelihoods, particularly among the most vulnerable and traditionally hard-to-reach learners. To this end, development organizations began to make use of mobile phones across a range of projects, which have helped to improve social empowerment, increase access

to health and education services, and to create more and better job opportunities. In 2010, Oxfam GB and Women for Prosperity (WFP), a local non-governmental organization, established a pilot scheme, called Pink Phone, which provides mobile phones to women in or aspiring to leadership positions in their communities, such as in the local council, and women wishing to improve their livelihoods by becoming small producers, for example in farming, processing or trade. The aim was to use mobile technology to empower women and support them in overcoming the hurdles they face in becoming agents of change in communities in which they have traditionally held subordinate roles.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Pink Phone was launched as part of a wider programme to economically and politically empower women. It was structured on the model of WFP's Women for Leadership programme, in which women attend capacity-building training in order to prepare themselves for a position as a community leader and to enable them to influence the development and monitoring of public policy. Every Pink Phone participant also took part in WFP's Women's Economic Leadership programme.

Initially, the Pink Phone programme approached 45 female commune¹ councillors from 14 districts within three provinces, Kampong Thom, Kratie, and Stung Treng, in order to raise awareness of the importance of women's involvement in Cambodia's economic development, and to demonstrate how economic independence can be a means of moving out of poverty, leading, in turn, to greater political empowerment.

In practical terms, the Pink Phone project aims to enable female commune councillors to access information and to improve their knowledge and communication skills through the use of mobile telephones. The women are usually already active in leadership roles, acting as 'deputies' in their communities. The community deputy is the first point of contact for people in the community who have concerns about issues such as health, violence or primary school quality. She also functions as a leader and mediator between community members and

government institutions such as health centres, schools and the police.

A pink mobile phone is given to each of the participating women. The phones, together with the capacity-building training, which improves their confidence and develops their leadership skills, enables the councillors to improve communication with constituents as well as with other commune councillors and stakeholders outside their communities. It also enhances their ability to assist women producer groups in promoting their products and increasing their market power.

WFP organizes training sessions for Pink Phone participants, holding one in each of the three provinces. The instructors, drawn from WFP staff, provide support to women who struggle with technology in general and with mobile phones in particular. The features of the phone are explained, including how to use the keypad (the phones are programmed to allow SMS text messaging in the Khmer language). Class presentations, roleplay, brainstorming, group discussions and games are all used to encourage learners' active participation.

Pink was chosen as the colour of the phones to deter men from using them (cultural norms are still prevalent in Cambodia; pink is therefore seen a girls' or women's colour) and was inspired by another successful project that provided pink bicycles to women so they could travel around more easily. Moreover, in Cambodia, pink is regarded as a symbol of empowerment – an appropriate colour for a project aiming to support women to act as strong leaders in their communities.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The primary aim of the programme is to promote women's participation in public affairs. More specifically, its objectives are to:

- develop participants' knowledge and communication skills;
- strengthen the leadership positions of women and promote their economic empowerment;

¹ Communes are sub-divisions of the districts of Cambodia and can consist of as few as three or as many as 30 villages, depending on population. See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Communes_of_Cambodia [Accessed 30 July 2020].



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- improve community livelihoods by building participants' capacities to be agents of economic change;
- improve communication between local communities to enhance local services;
- increase timely interventions when needed, such as in cases of domestic violence.

CURRICULUM AND TEACHING MATERIALS

WFP initially provided capability-building workshops for 45 commune councillors, demonstrating how to use SMS text messaging in the Khmer language and providing each participant with a pink mobile phone. The workshops taught participants about the role and responsibility of facilitators, how to identify and categorize issues, and how to develop strategies to resolve them. They also learned how to make reports, to ask questions and to develop their listening skills. Participants had the opportunity to share their experiences, to learn facilitation techniques and to participate actively in group discussions.

Participants were also taught how to conduct assessments of economic needs and preferences and how to analyse the results of these assessments. They

acquired skills in writing concept papers and preparing budget plans, and learned how to assist village women in forming community groups and how to manage a community group. They also received training in writing project narratives and finance reports and guidance on how to seek assistance from relevant departments and stakeholders.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF FACILITATORS

The women who take part in the programme also participate in the WFP's Women's Economic Leadership programme, attending regular meetings with the other participants. The training of participants is provided by two members of WFP staff, funded by the WFP's wider programme supporting women's economic and political empowerment.

The female councillors are selected by Oxfam GB and WFP staff. Initially, 45 councillors from 45 communities in three different provinces received a pink phone. With the expansion of the programme, and high demand from women working in leadership roles in their communities, women in other positions also received a phone. Oxfam GB continues to raise funds in order to provide more phones to women leaders.

Women participating in the programme must meet certain criteria. They must be proficient in the Khmer language, and should be in a leadership position or have leadership potential. There are no economic criteria – many of the participating women are poor – but they should be able to coordinate work among council members, the community, the police and other authorities. The women must be available around the clock to provide an immediate response when receiving a call. This is especially necessary at night, when it is difficult to leave the house to seek help in cases of emergency.

Participating women come from different political parties, from communities nearby and far away, and from provincial towns.

ASSESSING LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the training, each participant is asked to come to the front of the class and demonstrate how to use the phone, particularly how to write and send SMS text messages. More advanced learners have the chance to help participants who have difficulty in mastering their new devices. This represents not only a great opportunity to learn the new technology, but also raises the self-esteem of participating women.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

For monitoring, a system was set up by WFP through which all participants receive daily SMS text messages from WFP staff. The women are required to answer the message, with their response appearing in the WFP system. Participants can, furthermore, send text messages to anyone else they wish. They must communicate by text at least three times each week. If a participant does not respond or responds less often than required, WFP will follow up with a phone call. All participants meet biannually to review the project and three times each year as part of WFP's Women's Economic Leadership programme.

IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

Some of the more significant achievements of the project include:

- an increase in the confidence of the women who represent the network;
- programme participants at grassroots level learned how to communicate through SMS (two-way communication);
- the women leaders improved their work performances as well as their communication skills, and are now able to respond quickly in an emergency (for example, to issues of domestic violence, childbirth



Project participants with their newly acquired pink phones. © Women for Prosperity

or disaster warnings), and are informed about market prices, weather reports and so on;

- women have begun to realize that technology is for everyone, and not just for men and young people;
- the pink phones have helped the women to develop processes for decision-making, for instance regarding work and time management;
- participants no longer have to cycle long distances to speak to other councillors or community members. This allows them to spend more time monitoring local projects, which has resulted in a decline in crime rates and violence, as well as better access for community members to healthcare and education.

Pink Phone participants often use the mobile phones for verbal communication; however, because of the programme's monitoring system and the fact that text messages are preferred when conducting business transactions, the project promotes the use of written communication. This requires the women to practise their literacy skills, thereby increasing their confidence in their capabilities and reinforcing other types of learning.

Because of these achievements and the positive feedback of participating women, the programme plans to expand, provided funding can be found.

Impact on literacy skills

Before they could learn to use a mobile phone, some of the women had to learn how to read and write Khmer. They were supported in this by the Women's Economic Leadership programme, but also engaged in self-directed learning at home in their own time.

Some of the women were taught how to read and write in Khmer with the use of the mobile device. A pamphlet was created to show the women how to operate the phone, with a section using Khmer characters, copies of which were printed out and distributed to participants so they could continue to practise at home. The use of modern technology proved a good way of engaging and encouraging the women to improve their literacy skills. It is hoped that this work will raise awareness of the importance of literacy skills, not just for women but for all members of the community.

Economic impact

The Women's Economic Leadership programme has improved the employment prospects of many participants, including poor women with few resources, giving them the opportunity to work in leadership positions. Women who have used the phones for business have found it has helped them to expand and improve their trade networks.

Impact on primary education

The phones help to improve the quality of education provided by community preschools and primary schools. Rather than travel to the schools to monitor performance, councillors can now connect with the teachers via phone, saving time which they can invest in other projects.

Impact on participants and their communities

Since the programme began, the phones have come to be seen as essential to participants' communities, sometimes leading to larger-scale, systemic changes in those communities. There is, for example, greater acceptance of the leadership role of the women taking part. As a result, the women have become more self-confident; they are proud of what they have accomplished, as are their husbands and families, and they have gained the respect of male colleagues who have heard them report on their work at commune meetings. This has, in turn, encouraged the women to work harder, to take on more responsibility and to become more effective in their work.

The female councillors have built trusting relationships with members of their community, because their mobile phones enable them to solve problems quickly. Trust is essential in building solidarity within a community and empowers people to develop sustainable solutions for everyday problems. One example is the decrease in domestic crime, which is the result of a more efficient flow of communication. Before, victims of domestic violence were reluctant to report abuse to their village chief, whereas, today, most cases are reported directly to the female councillors.



Participants in the Pink Phone programme have become more self-confident. © Women for Prosperity

The phones have also helped to save lives, for instance through flood reports that help to evacuate villages faster or in getting immediate help for women in labour. Testimonials from commune chiefs, councillors and deputies acknowledge the success of the project.

Learners' testimonials

The success of the pilot project shows that even small innovations in terms of communication can make a big difference and can even help to save lives. The impact of the programme is clear from the extent of the women's engagement and the work they have been able to do, all of which has led to them being more valued, both as women and as professionals. As the programme has developed, important benefits have emerged, including improved security, a better flow of information, and enhanced access to health services. The use of the phones has also allowed well-organized monitoring, for example in the case of schools. The testimonials of the women reveal a positive impact on inter-community communication.

'This phone helps me to connect with teachers of the preschool, police and male colleagues. At village meetings, I am able to report to the commune chief if the teacher has not been going to work at the preschool.'
Ham Pen, Councillor of the Sala Visai Commune.

'The phone helps me to communicate better as a leader. It also allows me to lend support to people when I cannot be there to accompany them.'
Chea Kimhong, Councillor of the Andong Por Commune

'The phone is invaluable, to myself and the community as a whole, because it brings us together and promotes increased communication within the community.'
Yem Im, First Deputy, Sreng Commune

Challenges

Some of the women had difficulty participating actively in the Women's Economic Leadership programme, especially at the beginning when the mobile phones were yet to be distributed. As most of the participants had never been to school, many of them found it difficult to engage in learning, particularly with other people. It therefore required deliberate planning, extra effort and adequate time from the facilitators to promote learners' active participation in the learning process.

In addition, participants' lack of experience as adult learners with multiple obligations and constraints meant dealing with these problems could be difficult. In addition, many of the women had to cope with family members' traditional view of women as housewives and mothers. The pink phone enabled them to reach out and seek assistance from other women leaders who had more experience and expertise.

LESSONS LEARNED

Network coordination

One important lesson is that the system of providing and receiving information via SMS requires oversight and follow-up where members are unresponsive. There must be an individual responsible for compiling the information, adding it to the system and sending out information to the members in the network. Furthermore, when questions arise, they can be posted to all members of the network to find a solution. Where members do not respond, it is important that this is followed up and any issues addressed.

Language barriers

To overcome language barriers, the pink phones were programmed in Khmer. The programme also opted for the phone provider with the best coverage in rural areas to ensure smoother communication. As all members use the same provider and, therefore, belong to the same phone network, costs are kept low.

Role of women

The programme represents a good example of women's empowerment through the use of innovative technology in Southeast Asia. Women are equipped with an effective communication tool which enhances their authority and status, as well as improving their capacity at work. The Pink Phone programme has made a significant contribution to challenging gender inequality and perceptions at personal, social, cultural and political levels in Cambodia.

Community trust

The programme shows that well-developed communication is based on trust. As the testimonials show, trust has increased within the communities, particularly trust in community leaders. By making themselves available and responsive to the needs and demands of individuals, women leaders, councillors and heads of committee have developed strong relationships of trust within their communities.

SUSTAINABILITY

The Women's Economic Leadership programme has been running for a number of years now, which shows that its success is not short-term. Since the introduction of the Pink Phone programme in 2010, the leadership programme has become even more effective, with organization among groups of women becoming much easier.

Support and recognition from male family members towards the programme will greatly contribute to its sustainable development. Although, traditionally, mobile phones in Cambodia were owned by men, there were no reports of male colleagues demonstrating jealousy towards the Pink Phone participants, neither for their engagement with the programme nor for their phone ownership. Moreover, whereas before women would have to borrow their husband's mobile phones to call someone, now they have their own devices, benefitting both their families and their communities.

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CHINA

Township Community Learning Centre Service for People with Disabilities

Key Information

Programme title	Township Community Learning Centre Service for People with Disabilities
Implementing organization	Lifelong Education and Learning Research Centre of the China Adult Education Association (CAEA)
Language of instruction	Mandarin Chinese
Programme partners	Shijiazhuang City, Luquan District, Tongye Town and Pingshan County CLCs in Hebei Province; Changzhou City, Xiinbei District, Chunjiang Town; and Suzhou City, Wujiang District, Fenhu Town; CLCs in Jiangsu Province; Huzhou City, Deqing County, Zhongguan Town; Cixi City, Zhouxiang Town; Shaoxing City, Keqiao District, Yangxunqiao Town; and Ningbo City, Jiangbei District, Cicheng Town CLCs in Zhejiang Province; and Jiading District CLC in Shanghai; plus, local government partners, including county education bureaux, the China Disabled Persons' Federation network in the participating counties/ townships, country-level departments of civil affairs, and local special education schools.
Funding	Local governments of each of the nine community learning centres (CLCs) involved in the project.
Annual programme costs	CNY 500 CNY (about USD 72) per learner
Date of inception	2013

NB This case study uses the term 'people with disabilities'; however, on occasion – for example, in translating the name of a department – the authors have been obliged to use a different term.

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The Chinese Government has, since the 1990s, introduced a series of policies intended to improve the development of literacy education. The *Outline of China's National Plan for Medium- and Long-Term Education Reform and Development* (Government of China, 2010), for example, aimed to reduce illiteracy among Chinese adults and young people to 5% by the end of the twentieth century. Indeed, compared with other developing countries, China has achieved a relatively high rate of adult literacy. According to official statistics, by 2013 only 4.6% of adults (aged 15 and over) in China were without any literacy skills. However, given its total population of over 1.4 billion people, that means there are still more than 63 million people without adequate literacy skills in China,

especially in rural, economically underdeveloped areas and among disadvantaged groups. People with disabilities living in rural areas are among the most vulnerable.

In recent years, the Chinese Government has made additional efforts, in terms of both policy and practice, to recognize and address the educational needs of people with disabilities. For instance, Article 10 and Article 38 of the *Education Law of the People's Republic of China* (MoE, 1995) state that government and society should provide assistance and convenience for people with disabilities to ensure they have equal access to education.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

To address the needs of young people and adults with disabilities in rural communities, and to support the government's efforts in this regard, the Lifelong Education and Learning Research Centre (LELRC) developed an education programme, called the Township Community Learning Centre Service for People with Disabilities. LELRC was created by the China Adult Education Association (CAEA), which has developed long-term partnerships with bilateral and multilateral partners such as UNESCO. Apart from education for people with disabilities, LELRC works in other educational areas, such as adult literacy; women's development; and education for older people, migrant workers, rural communities and community development.



A CLC teacher with one of her learners. © CAEA

In 2011, China's Disabled Persons' Federation (DPF) undertook a study tour of the living situations of rural residents with disabilities, in which LELRC also participated. Based on this experience, in early 2013, LELRC launched the Township Community Learning Centre Service for People with Disabilities programme in three community learning centres (CLCs) based in rural areas.

LELRC had worked with these CLCs for 10 years prior; a cooperative relationship was therefore already well-established, giving the new programme a strong foundation and support from local government and communities. Once LELRC had introduced the programme and its basic implementation requirements, the CLCs analysed their own contexts and capacities before deciding whether or not to implement it in partnership with local government institutions, such as the county education bureaux, the county- or township-level DPF, and community leaders.

LELRC's main responsibility is to provide technical support to the CLCs and strengthen partnerships and cooperation with and among institutions and organizations that work with people with disabilities. LELRC's technical support includes training key people, including teachers, from local CLCs, providing each CLC with teaching and learning materials, and offering CLCs an advisory service.

At the beginning, the Township Community Learning Centre Service for People with Disabilities programme was implemented in three CLCs in Zhejiang Province; today, the programme operates in nine CLCs from three provinces, Hebei, Jiangsu and Zhejiang, and one municipality, Shanghai.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall goal of the programme is to enable people with disabilities, especially those from rural areas, to participate equally in all fields of social life by building up their literacy and life skills. Given the broad variety of needs within this group, each CLC has specific objectives

which answer the needs of its learners. The overall aims of the programme are to:

- encourage greater use of radios among people with visual impairment through learning activities;
- provide regular vocational skills training for people with disabilities;
- organize recreational and sports activities for people with disabilities;
- develop the working capacity of CLC teachers by inviting experts from the field of special education to visit the CLCs.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

Although each CLC implements its own programme activities, there are some elements common to all nine CLCs.

Improved access for people with disabilities

All nine CLCs are equipped with libraries where adult learners can access newspapers, magazines, books (including audio books) and computers with internet

connection. In most villages and townships, the CLCs feature equipment that enables people with visual impairments to enjoy movies, as well as materials for those with hearing impairments.

Adult literacy programmes

Almost all CLCs offer a regular literacy programme aimed at adults who lack adequate literacy skills; however, due to a shortage of teachers skilled in Braille and sign language, blind and deaf people often find it challenging to take part in these programmes. Those who do attend the literacy courses do so with other, non-disabled, adult learners and receive additional individual support from their tutors.

CURRICULUM AND TEACHING METHODOLOGIES

The curriculum for the adult literacy programme in all CLCs is based on guidelines for designing curriculum and developing teaching and learning materials issued by China's Ministry of Education (MoE) in 2011. According to these guidelines, course modules for literacy education must fall into one of two categories: basic or localized curriculum.



A young man with a learning disability in class with his tutor. © CAEA

The basic curriculum focuses on skills deemed necessary in daily life:

- Reading and writing: Chinese characters, spelling, reading and writing skills;
- Numbers and calculating: measurement and calculation in agricultural production, buying and selling, family financial management, reading measuring instruments;
- Basic knowledge and capacity: family, health, using electrical appliances, disaster prevention and hedging, citizenship, migration to urban areas.

Both the MoE and provincial education departments have developed specific materials for the basic curriculum, including textbooks. Each provincial education department decides which textbooks should be used for their adult literacy programme.

The localized curriculum is about learning specific knowledge and skills which reflect local circumstances. Indigenous knowledge, traditional culture, agriculture and animal husbandry are crucial parts of the localized curriculum. For instance, the CLC in Zhongguan, Zhenjiang Province, uses a curriculum focused on fish-farming, since fish is a speciality of the area. At Ningbo Cicheng CLC, also in Zhenjiang Province, filial piety, or respect for one's elders, is emphasized. The town of Cicheng is known for upholding this virtue.

Adult literacy courses that use the basic curriculum are mostly delivered in classroom settings to groups of learners; learners with disabilities receive additional one-to-one tutoring. The localized curriculum is usually taught outside the classroom, with participants learning by doing or experimenting. Adult learners are able to gain practical skills, such as growing vegetables, fish farming, animal breeding, massage, cross-stitch embroidery, machine maintenance and repair, bamboo weaving and IT skills, among others.

Entrepreneurship and technical skills training

All CLCs organize technical skills training for people with disabilities. The content of the training is based on the learning needs identified through a baseline

survey. The main purpose of the training workshops is to equip this particular group of adult learners with income-generating skills so that, ultimately, they are able to make their own living. The technical training includes lessons in:

- growing vegetables;
- animal husbandry;
- IT skills, including computer-based training, online banking and recreational web use. People with disabilities can receive an officially recognized certificate on completing this training;
- assembling and repairing, such as watch and clock repair, computer installation and repair and web development;
- cooking and crafts, including baking, flower arranging, photography and embroidery;
- massage training.

Culture, entertainment and sports activities

Many CLCs organize recreational events, at which participants can take part in activities such as Chinese chess, table tennis and gateball, a mallet team sport similar to croquet. Some CLCs screen movies with additional narration for people with visual impairments.

Rehabilitation

Many CLCs also carry out rehabilitation therapy sessions, the aim of which is to enhance the physical and behavioural capacity of people with disabilities. Experts in special education, physiotherapy and other forms of therapy, including staff from nearby special education schools, are invited to deliver lectures and sessions. For example, Ningbo Cicheng CLC has organized both rehabilitation lectures and 'orientation walking training' for people with visual impairments.

Community services

Some CLCs organize inspirational lectures from adults with disabilities who have found a job or launched a business as a result of their learning.

In addition, many CLCs offer computer training, health examinations and assistance for the children of people with disabilities. Hebei Pingshan CLC, for example, works

with local hospitals to offer regular health examinations, diagnosis and treatment for people with disabilities, free of charge. Moreover, at the Jiading CLC in Shanghai and Pingshan CLC in Hebei Province, some adult learners have achieved degrees through online and distance courses.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF FACILITATORS

In each CLC, there are normally seven to eight teachers – though this number varies, with some CLCs having as many as 19 facilitators, depending on the number of learners. All teachers are publicly recruited, appointed and paid by the government, and most have received tertiary education, which is now a prerequisite for new teachers.

Each CLC provides its teachers with training workshops, comprising information about the programme; how to identify potential learners; types of activities that can be developed; how to motivate adult learners; potential government partners; and how to develop future plans.

In addition, each year LELRC, with other local partners, organizes a two-day training workshop for teachers and managers of all CLCs, as well as key staff from the local education bureau and DPF, the aim of which is to promote the goal and approach of the programme, communication skills and appropriate attitudes in working with people with disabilities, how to become a good working partner of adult learners, and how to motivate learners to participate in community activities. All participants in the workshop share their experiences and discuss the challenges involved in providing better education for people with disabilities.

ENROLMENT OF LEARNERS

The target group is young people and adults with physical and/ or learning disabilities. Potential learners are identified primarily through national census data; in addition, each local government database will have information on any people with disabilities living in the community. Township leaders and CLC teachers encourage new learners to enrol in the programme during group meetings with other people with disabilities and home visits conducted by CLC teachers. There is no

standard tool or procedure for assessing learners' literacy skills levels before the programme; rather, adult learners indicate their literacy level from three categories: never been to school, unable to read or write, or low levels of literacy.

ASSESSING LEARNING OUTCOMES

There is a standard national examination for the reading and writing courses taught as part of the adult literacy programme. At the end of the literacy programme, all course participants, whatever their learning abilities, have to take the literacy exam. Those who pass receive a certificate of completion from their provincial government.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Before the programme begins, CLCs conduct a needs assessment exercise to learn more about the people with disabilities living in the community; this is done using questionnaires developed by LELRC. The collection of data is conducted in two stages:

1. General information is collected from local census data and/ or other government sources. Information includes the number of people with disabilities living in the community, types of disabilities and learners' education backgrounds.
2. Home visits are then conducted with some of the target group within a given area. This is done in order to gain a deeper understanding of their living conditions, learning needs and expectations of the educational offer.

Drawing on the results of the baseline survey, and taking into account its own capacity, each CLC plans lifelong learning activities for the people with disabilities in their area who enrol in the programme. Most of the learners who participate in these activities are self-sufficient. At present, the CLCs are unable to provide a service for people with severe disabilities who need daily supervision and support.

To monitor the programme, each CLC submits an annual report to LELRC and maintains records of its work, including collecting testimonials from participants and teachers.

IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

Despite the poor living conditions in rural areas, each of the nine CLCs has planned and organized a variety of learning activities and community services for people with disabilities in their areas. In total, more than 5,000 adult learners with disabilities have been involved in and benefited from the Township Community Learning Centre Service for People with Disabilities programme. Among them, 40 learners have completed adult literacy courses, with more currently enrolled.

The annual workshops have led to the establishment of a good professional network among teachers and managers of the nine CLCs. With this foundation, all CLCs are able to improve the sharing of experiences and resources to support the further development of the programme.

Throughout the Township Community Learning Centre Service for People with Disabilities programme, learners have had opportunities to participate in activities with other community members, and have been able to develop their confidence and the skills they will need to secure a better life. The following testimonies offer a glimpse into these positive changes.

Learners' testimonials

'The [Township Community Learning Centre Service for People with Disabilities] programme helped me to become literate and provided me with an opportunity to work in a company. Now I am able to financially support my family. I am thankful for their good deeds.' *Mr Bo Jinmao, adult learner*

'Due to the poverty of my family, I have never been to school. I have gone through numerous difficulties because I cannot read and write. I used to quite often either take the wrong bus or the bus with the wrong direction. I was unable to ask the bus driver, since I could not speak Mandarin. Although I have been to the adult literacy course only for a year, I am able to write my name. When I watch TV, even though I cannot see very clearly, I can fully understand.' *Ms Hong Guifen, adult learner with slight visual impairment*

'The CLC has taught me new words and numbers. Now I know how to use the telephone, television and electric rice cooker. Now my life is much more convenient.' *Ms Fei Shuixian, adult learner*

'Because I am unable to walk, I used to stay at home the whole day and watch TV. Through the literacy course, I have learned a lot of new words. Now I am going to learn how to use the computer. I will then be able to play cards with others and talk with my son and grandson, who live far away from me, through the computer. I heard it is cheaper to buy things through the internet. I feel like the rest of my life will be very exciting and colourful.' *Mr Feng Changming, adult learner*

Challenges

All nine CLCs are founded and run by the government, and most of them are well connected to their local FPD; however, in some areas, developing an effective partnership between the CLC and FPD remains a challenge, mainly due to the poor coordination skills of CLC managers and the divergence between roles and responsibilities among different government departments. If the programme can involve the national-level FPD and obtain its support, the implementation of the programme will be more effective.

Few CLC teachers are specialists in teaching people with disabilities, nor do they understand Braille or sign language. Until now, teachers from local special education schools have been the only experts able to offer support in educating people with disabilities. In some areas, teachers from special schools have been invited to deliver training workshops on the rehabilitation and psychology of people with disabilities. Currently, however, only some of the project areas have special education schools. Additionally, in rural areas, there is a scarcity of teaching and learning materials, such as audio CDs and materials in Braille.

LESSONS LEARNED

To ensure the expected impact and effectiveness of the Township Community Learning Centre Service for People with Disabilities programme, work with relevant government departments and other institutions is crucial. In this way, the programme can access more

accurate information, and secure more effective support from local government partners in implementing programme activities.

It is also important to build up CLCs' ownership of the programme. When managers and teachers in CLCs are more committed to the programme, they are more active and capable in establishing partnerships with other government sectors and working effectively with them. Considering the scarcity of professional staff specialized in educating people with disabilities, LELRC should play a more active and effective role in providing CLCs with technical support and guidance.

SUSTAINABILITY

The Township Community Learning Centre Service for People with Disabilities programme has secured active and effective participation from local government, which was involved in planning and implementation. The programme also has stable funding from local government, although there is no special budget set in place for its administration; however, in some counties, such as Zhenjiang, Jiangsu Province, local governments are required to allocate CNY 4 (about USD 0.58) per capita to adult learning programmes. In some counties, as an incentive, every adult learner with a disability is offered CNY 480 (around USD 70) for each round of training he

or she attends. In others, both CLCs and the local FPD cover 50% of the fee for learning activities for people with disabilities. Additionally, all CLC teachers receive monthly salaries direct from the local government.

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INDIA

Vocational Skills Development Training and Literacy Equivalency Programme

Key Information

Programme title	Vocational Skills Development Training and Literacy Equivalency (JSS Malappuram) programme
Implementing organization	Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS)
Language of instruction	Hindi, English, Malayalam and other regional languages, including Paniya
Programme partners	Anganwadis (basic healthcare centres), Mahila Mandals (women's groups), Gram Sabhas (village assemblies), the Directorate of Adult Education (DAE), the State Resource Centre of Kerala, Apparel Training and Development Centre (ATDC), and the National Institute for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (NI-MSME)
Funding	Government of India and other national state-level agencies, such as the National Institute for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (NI-MSME) and the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)
Date of inception	2006

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

India has undergone significant economic growth and increased political democratization in recent decades. These developments, coupled with increased state investment in education – through, for example, comprehensive educational programmes such as the National Literacy Mission and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) universal elementary education initiative – have greatly improved educational opportunities across the country. Despite access to primary education being now almost universal, however, learning outcomes remain poor. Less than 10% of the working-age population has completed secondary education, leaving a significant portion of youth and adults without the skills or knowledge necessary for gainful employment (The World Bank, n.d.).

Although the State of Kerala has the highest literacy rates in the country (Pincode India, 2017), poor literacy remains a major issue among traditionally disadvantaged groups such as women, ethnic minorities, Scheduled Tribes

(the official designation given to groups of historically disadvantaged indigenous people in India) and migrants, who often live in financially underdeveloped and marginalized communities. This situation is evident among the 4.5 million inhabitants of Kerala's Malappuram district, where deep-rooted challenges such as endemic poverty and acute shortages of learning resources and professional teachers persist despite national educational efforts and initiatives.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Jan Shikshan Sansthan (JSS) is an umbrella organization comprising around 250 non-formal adult vocational education institutions located in rural and urban areas throughout India (Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, n.d.). By embedding literacy teaching in vocational and life skills training, JSS centres seek to improve the quality of life of their participants, namely adults aged 14 to 55 who enter JSS programmes without literacy skills or as newly literate learners.

When they were first established, JSS centres offered programmes for industrial workers in urban areas in order to upgrade their vocational skills; today, they serve both rural and urban populations and seek to consolidate the gains of past literacy campaigns while improving the quality of participants' lives through the provision of vocational training for disadvantaged and marginalized populations.

Individual JSS centres function as district-level resource support agencies, organizing vocational training programmes for people who have recently acquired basic literacy skills or whose skills are inadequate. The philosophy of JSS is built on the idea that basic literacy can be meaningful for individuals only when they can use it in day-to-day life and in earning a living. The centres are, therefore, important non-governmental organizations offering essential training in vocational skills to learners the furthest distance from the labour market. In some locations, JSS also runs continuing education centres. This case study focuses on one particular programme operated by a Jan Shikshan Sansthan centre located in Malappuram.

The Vocational Skills Development Training and

Literacy Equivalency (JSS Malappuram) programme was set up in 2006 in an effort to provide literacy and vocational training to socio-economically disadvantaged and marginalized communities in the Malappuram district of the State of Kerala, in south-west India. The programme has served 50,000 learners since its inception.

The programme aims to empower adults from marginalized populations through linked literacy and vocational training. It endeavours to provide participants with the skills and knowledge they need to lead more fulfilling and sustainable lives. The following strategies are used to achieve this vision:

- Embedding literacy teaching and learning within skills development and vocational training;
- Creating an inclusive learning environment by making use of educational technology for learners with special needs;
- Connecting the educational process with learners' contexts and lives through a participatory learning and activity-based approach.

The programme's embedded literacy curriculum is adapted to local needs, resources and contexts. Demand-driven and relevant programming is developed through a participatory rural appraisal (PRA) approach, wherein local residents are engaged in the processes of identifying issues, implementing solutions and monitoring evaluation (Participedia, n.d.); this ensures that content is relevant to learners' livelihoods and socio-cultural realities, dealing with topics such as health, hygiene, agriculture and finance.

JSS Malappuram provides literacy training and the opportunity to attain standards equivalent to Grades 4, 7 and 10 (primary to lower secondary school) alongside vocational skills development for diverse local industries, from food processing training to textile production. The JSS Malappuram centre, in collaboration with the National Bank for Agricultural and Rural Development (NABARD), offers financial and technical entrepreneurship support to participants on completion of their vocational training. As a result, many

have started their own income-generating ventures or are now gainfully employed.

The current programme targets primarily learners with visual impairments and/or other special needs, women, and people from Scheduled Tribes in the region.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

By developing literacy and life skills alongside vocational training, the programme aims to equip its participants with the skills and knowledge needed to live a better life.

More specifically, its aims are to:

- provide literacy-linked vocational and skills development training along with literacy and continuing education for disadvantaged and marginalized groups, including women; people with visual impairments; and those from Scheduled Tribes, namely Cholanaikkans, Kattunaikkans, Paniyans and Muthuvan;
- provide life-enrichment courses that cover health topics and strengthen soft skills, such as communication skills and adaptability;
- collaborate with various international, national, state and district government and non-governmental institutions to improve the welfare of disadvantaged communities;
- bring about sustainable development at grassroots level, especially among marginalized communities.

APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

Instruction is offered in Hindi, English, Malayalam and other regional languages, including Paniya. Textbooks in the local language, depending on where the training centre is located, and in Braille are provided. The programme also makes use of technology such as LCD projectors, computers and audio-visual equipment. In addition, a 'talking pen' – an electronic pen that reproduces the sound of written text – is used in the programme's literacy teaching.

Students also keep a journal, called 'My learning document', in which daily activities and progress can be tracked and which also includes space to provide feedback from the learner and teacher, as well as additional remarks related to the student's learning. Volunteers help learners with no or low literacy skills to track their progress with this tool, which also serves as a motivating factor as student can see their progress and set further learning goals. The journal also helps trainers identify the needs and progress of their students and tailor instruction accordingly.

Vocational training programmes vary: some teach simple vocational skills, such as chalk- and soap-making, while more advanced programmes include courses in food processing. Equivalency and skills development courses are subsidized by the local government, with participants paying a small tuition fee, although learners from Scheduled Tribes receive full fee exemption. Computer courses are offered free of charge to students



A learner at the JJS Malappuram centre is shown how to use the 'talking pen'. © JSS

who have passed Grade 10. The length of courses varies from one month to a year.

The curriculum of the Grade 4 equivalency programme consists of Malayalam (the regional language), basic arithmetic, introductory English and environmental studies. The Grade 7 curriculum consists of Malayalam, English, Hindi, environmental studies and mathematics. All students are evaluated on completion of the first year of the programme.

The programme's embedded literacy classes are learner-centred and designed around a participatory and activity-based approach to learning. Vocational training courses are 60% practical and 40% theory. As part of each training course, the centre provides supplementary sessions in subjects such as financial education, health promotion, sanitation, human rights and life enrichment education.

The curriculum, developed by Kerala State Literacy Mission Authority, is tailored to the needs and conditions of the area in which the programme operates. Locally sourced raw materials, provided by the centre, are used during skills development training to make consumables such as soap, candles and jam. Many graduates of the vocational programme have gone on to start their own income-generating ventures, such as producing goods with locally sourced materials.

Classes are held in schools, centres and other sites identified as suitable locations through the participatory rural appraisal process.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF FACILITATORS

The programme places emphasis on the development of its human resources through ongoing training of its vocational tutors and literacy facilitators. All vocational trainers and literacy facilitators gain professional certificates issued by the centre on completion of their training. In considering teachers for the programme, preference is given to graduates of its training scheme. Vocational trainers and literacy facilitators are employed part-time and earn between INR 5,000–15,000 (around USD 67–200) per month. Compensation varies according

to the qualifications and specialisms of teachers. Automobile sector trainers, for example, are paid on average INR 15,000 per month while textiles instructors are paid INR 7,000 INR per month (about USD 95). The average income of programme trainers is INR 7,500.

Training for new facilitators takes place monthly, led by experienced JSS trainers. Every three months, facilitators participate in professional training on new developments in vocational fields. National and state-level agencies provide the training. The Directorate of Adult Education (DAE), the State Resource Centre of Kerala, the Apparel Training and Development Centre (ATDC), and the National Institute for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (NI-MSME) provide an entrepreneurial development programme to support the training of programme trainers, including guidance on conducting market surveys, developing marketing strategies, accessing bank loans and understanding legal procedures for starting a business. Most of this training takes the form of advanced skill-oriented residential programmes involving field visits to the most successful industries and most successful programme units and business models.

The programme currently employs 180 skills development trainers, who are supported by more than 800 volunteers and part-time facilitators teaching equivalency and literacy courses. There are between three and five facilitators in each centre that offers equivalency programmes and at least one trainer at each skills training centre (see **Figure 14**).

ENROLMENT OF LEARNERS

Potential participants are identified and recruited through Anganwadis (centres that provide basic healthcare in Indian villages), Mahila Mandals (women's groups that serve as community improvement forums) and Gram Sabhas (village-level self-government organizations). These village resource centres have access to information about villagers and, as central points of contact in the villages they serve, can promote participation in the programme to potential beneficiaries. In some cases, the village centres also serve as programme delivery sites. Newly literate learners are recruited through continuing education centres

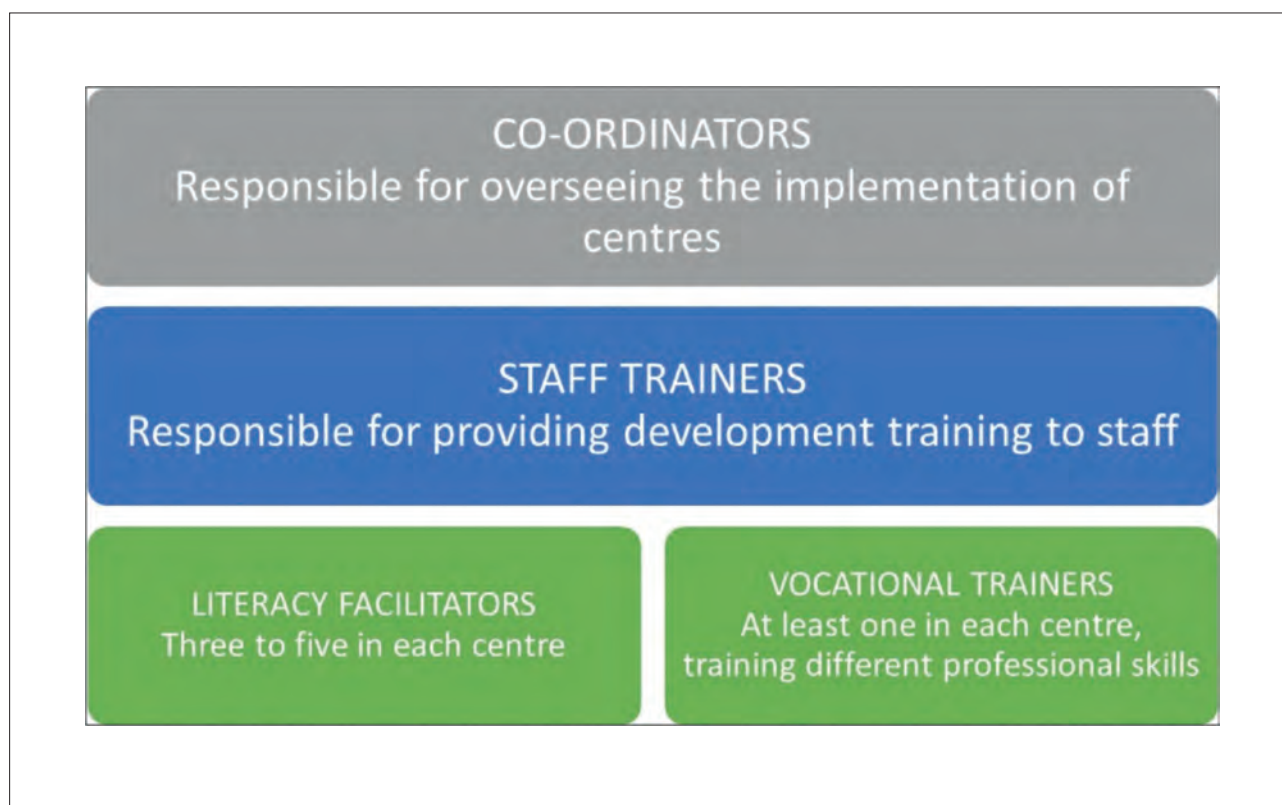


Figure 14: The Jan Shikshan Sansthan staffing structure. *Source:* JSS

run by the Government of India's National Literacy Mission. Approximately 5,000 students enrol the literacy programme each year.

JSS Malappuram raises awareness and promotes its programmes through events in target communities. Many Grama Panchayats (local self-government organizations) and municipal governments in the district have implemented the total equivalency programmes for Grades 4 to 10. Thousands of learners have now enrolled in these programmes, and many of the beneficiaries go on to recruit potential participants in their villages through word of mouth. No tests are conducted at the time of registration.

ASSESSING LEARNING OUTCOMES

JSS Malappuram conducts continuous assessment and final evaluation of all its training programmes. In addition to their daily journals being used as a formative assessment tool, learners take an examination at the end of the programme (attendance and participation count for 20% of the final evaluation), and are then presented

with a certificate and a grade. The JSS Malappuram centre also provides National Council for Vocational Training (NCVT), NI-MSME, university and National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) certificates for respective coursework. These certificates are recognized by banks for loan approval and various government and private agencies for employment.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The programme uses a management information system (MIS) to facilitate communication between the training centre, programme officers and the director. The MIS is also used to collect and share data about learners' performance. At the heart of the MIS is a form that facilitators fill out and programme coordinators collect and submit to the programme's district-level agency.

Monitoring and evaluation are integral to the programme. Both learners and facilitators engage in ongoing learning assessment. At the onset and upon completion of the programme, students conduct a self-evaluation of their degree of skill proficiency according to performance indicators set by teachers and administrators. 'My

learning document' provides information about student progress and challenges, and enables the facilitator to tailor instruction to the needs of the student during the programme. Teacher performance is assessed through observation and monitoring by programme coordinators. The MIS also collects information about teachers.

Individual coordinators oversee between 20 and 25 centres each and are responsible for supporting and monitoring programme activities at their assigned centres.

IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

The programme has made a life-changing difference to learners and their families. Since its inception in 2006, it has reported a number of key achievements:

- Approximately 50,000 participants have received vocational training;
- Over 43,000 programme participants are now working and earning between INR 5,000– 50,000 (around USD 67–668) per month, as indicated by a tracking system that collects data through follow-up meetings at various intervals following completion of the programmes;
- JSS Malappuram has inspired beneficiaries living in the same village to form groups, including 200 joint-liability groups (i.e. four to 10 people from the same village who form a group for the purpose of accessing a collateral-free loan from a bank) and many self-help groups;
- The number of savings accounts and the amount of savings in those accounts has increased;
- Health promotion campaigns, on issues such as good hygiene and immunity vaccination awareness, have reduced the outbreak of disease among Scheduled Tribes;
- The programme has resulted in an increase number of women employed in the district;
- More female learners and alumnae report helping their children and other family members acquire literacy skills, creating an even greater impact in their communities;
- Participants have gained knowledge with regard to laws and their rights through the life-enrichment education curriculum;
- Communities have become more sustainable and

self-sufficient through vegetable farming and micro-enterprises;

- The dropout rate has dramatically lowered;
- Many young learners who have completed the entrepreneurship trainings have launched their own ventures through various schemes of state government, central government and private firms;
- Many women who have completed the programme have gone on to start their own businesses, dealing with textiles, jewellery making and other crafts, which, in turn, creates jobs for other women;
- People with special needs who have benefitted from the programme report feeling more confident in their chances of being employed.

The programme is increasing in scope and plans to continue expanding through grassroots efforts throughout Malappuram.

'I had poor education and was not at all an outgoing type. Now, standing on my own feet, I help my family financially. Since I feel so confident to face life, I have also become one of the decision-makers in my family.' *Shalini, programme participant*

Challenges

Although it has made a major contribution to serving disadvantaged and marginalized groups in the region, the programme also faces a number of challenges. These include:

- difficulties in accessing quality training and resources due to financial constraints. JSS is not able to adequately remunerate trainers in the same way as similar non-formal education organizations in India. This poses a problem for teacher retention;
- overcoming negative attitudes towards learning among historically disenfranchised populations;
- reaching out to people from Scheduled Tribes in remote and geographically inaccessible areas. So far, this challenge has been addressed by providing individual villagers with skills training they can impart within their respective villages;
- translating technical terms for skills development into local languages has presented some difficulties for

the programme. To overcome this, JSS uses videos, LCD projectors, labs, charts and sketches to illustrate terms;

- identifying markets for programme-produced goods is a challenge. Furthermore, accessing resources for the development and implementation of programmes continues to be a struggle;
- the centre is in need of improved technological training.

SUSTAINABILITY

Jan Shikshan Sansthan Malappuram, like all JSS institutions, is a non-governmental organization. It is supported by funding from the government alongside forms of self-financing, such as revenue earned through selling products produced within the programme and collecting nominal tuition fees from those students who are able to pay. The centre has national and local partnerships with ministries, NGOs and industry. The Kerala State Literacy Mission Authority, the district National Literacy Mission, local self-government institutions and local government are the main partners of JSS Malappuram in promoting literacy and equivalency classes throughout the district.

The programme's success and sustainability in the region are due to its approach and philosophy: it

is demand-driven and designed to address needs identified through participatory rural assessment and analysis, conducted at the beginning and throughout the programme. Furthermore, the programme ensures community ownership and partnership through grassroots interventions that involve the support of local communities. Such interventions take the form of self-help groups and joint liability groups. In spite of all these sustainable practices, insufficient funding remains a barrier to the further expansion of the programme.

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MONGOLIA

Literacy and Life Skills for Herder Families

Key Information

Programme title	Literacy and Life Skills for Herder Families
Implementing organization	National Centre for Non-Formal and Distance Education (NCFDE), Mongolian Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (MoECS)
Language of instruction	Mongolian
Funding	World Vision International Organization, U.S. Department of Agriculture 'herder livelihood diversification' project
Date of inception	2008

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

With a population of 3.29 million, Mongolia, the most sparsely populated country of the world, is divided into 21 aimags (provinces), which, in turn, are divided into 239 soums (districts). Although in recent years the rate of urbanization in Mongolia has been relatively high, still the semi-nomadic and nomadic herders make up approximately 30% of the country's population. These hardworking rural dwellers make their living by herding horses, camels, goats, cattle and sheep for milk, cashmere, meat and other livestock products. Maintaining a regular income is a constant battle as the climate is prone to severe, freezing winters and extremely dry summers.

In the mid-1990s, as Mongolia shifted from a one-party state to a market economy, there was a sharp decline in educational opportunities. However, with support from international organizations, the government set about restructuring the education system by introducing laws such as free and compulsory education for children up to age 16, and increased the budgets for school system expansion, human resources development and adult non-formal education programmes. As a result of higher school attendance, literacy rates increased significantly in the 2000s.

However, despite the recent improvements in literacy rates, there are still restrictions in terms of access to education for isolated nomadic communities living and moving in remote areas. This lack of access can be attributed to a number of socio-economic factors, including limited state budget for rural schools and lack of public awareness. In addition to these, the nomadic lifestyle of herder families makes the children, particularly boys, drop out of school to assist the family. A national report in 2008 estimated that more than 15,000 children and adolescents were out of school (NFDE, 2008) and still

more adult Mongolians are non-literate or semi-literate due to missed educational opportunities during the transition to democracy.

To provide education for these groups, the National Centre for Non-Formal and Distance Education (NCFDE) was established under the Mongolian Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science (MoECS) to coordinate efforts at the national level. Since 1997, on the local level, NCFDE has been running non-formal education/adult learning and education (NFE/ALE) learning centres, called 'enlightenment centres', whose main function is to provide literacy education and training for out-of-school children and youth, as well as adults with little or no literacy skills. As of 2008, 349 'enlightenment centres' were operating nationwide.

The Herder Families Literacy and Life Skills programme has been one of the recent successful programmes run by the NCFDE and implemented at the local level at NFE/ALE enlightenment centres. The project was ongoing from 2008 to 2010 and, as shown in **Figure 15**, was implemented in 23 soums from the aimags of Bayan-Ulgii and Uvs in the western region, Dornod and Khentii from the eastern region, and the Khentii aimag from the central region. The primary aims of the project are to:

- organize 'socializing' activities to promote literacy by engaging the local community;
- provide non-literate herders with relevant skills to apply their acquired knowledge in everyday life.

APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

The programme launched with the publication of NCFDE guidelines for project implementation and was followed by teacher training, as well as designing and publishing new learning materials and launching advocacy and awareness-raising campaigns to encourage communities' participation.

The literacy training was a combination of independent study by learners at home and face-to-face classes in schools and enlightenment centres. A total of six face-to-face trainings – four in the formal classroom setting and two in non-classroom settings – were organized in

23 soums. In addition, some of the soums held summer literacy training.

The curriculum takes into consideration the different levels of learners and was developed in close consultation with the local school administrators and teachers. The school administrators also had a key role in spreading the word, reaching out to families and encouraging learners to join the training. In addition, it was through their support that accommodation in form of school dormitories along with free meals were provided to learners, the training venues were renovated and equipped, and the teachers' salaries during the literacy training was secured.

One of the innovative aspects of the project was the combination of literacy training with life skills. The majority of participants were adolescents and adults who had specific learning needs. For them, the training was an opportunity to both improve their literacy skills and acquire new vocational skills and learn simple income-generation ideas that could be used to promote their livelihoods. Making coral ornaments, wool processing and felt handicrafts were among some of the techniques they learned alongside the literacy training.

Literacy training was not teacher-centred and one-way, but was done in an atmosphere of cooperation and mutual interaction. Teachers mainly tried to provide the opportunity for learners to take responsibility for their own learning and 'learn how to learn'. The independent nature of home studies and principles of self-directed

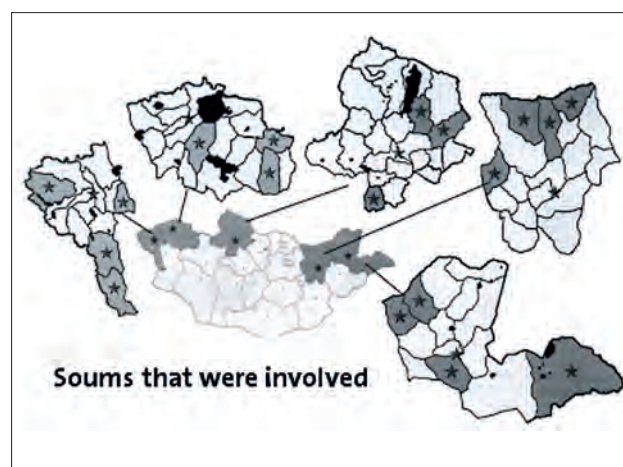


Figure 15: Soums involved in the literacy project. *Source:* MoECS

learning also helped the learners to practise using their newly acquired knowledge in everyday life.

As the number of face-to-face group classes was limited, effort was made to ensure that learners' independent study at home was regular and of a high quality: self-study books and materials were carefully prepared; and teachers regularly visited the learners at home to check their homework, give advice and assist them in areas where they most needed help.

During the project implementation period, each soum organized events that members of the public could attend, including:

Cultural and athletic events

Cultural and athletic competitions and events such as chess, sumo wrestling, rope pulling, basketball, group dance, and singing were organized to attract more people to the enlightenment centres and encourage future participation. During the events, information about the centres, their activities and the literacy project was given to the participants and the audience.

Vocational skills training promotion

During the open-day events, certain types of short trainings were organized by learners for different target groups. The learners would display their newly acquired skills to the public and encourage them to join the project.

Open day for enlightenment centres

Open days were organized and celebrated with the purpose of introducing the centres to the public and disseminating information about their activities and projects. In order to increase attendance to the open days, cultural and athletic events and competitions like those mentioned above were held for the public.

CURRICULUM AND TEACHING MATERIALS

One of the main purposes of the project was to organize training sessions with various contents and in different forms to address learners' literacy levels. To this end, specific training materials and handbooks suitable for different levels of learners had to be designed. Within the framework of the project, three main textbooks

for elementary, intermediate and advanced level were prepared along with 21 handbooks.

These handbooks aimed to increase learners' household income and impart life and literacy skills. In addition to the textbooks and handbooks, newspapers with titles such as 'University of Life' and 'Future is Near' and audio-visual materials were broadly used. The textbooks and handbooks used in the training courses include:

- Eyes of wisdom – Volume 1, 2, 3
- Expansion of intellect
- Needs of life
- Healthy food is more important than medicine
- Search from within, not from others
- A good cattleman's herd is healthy
- You are a lawyer, yourself
- Wool craft
- Wool – white gold
- Preparation of compost
- Is plastic bag a waste?
- Exterminating bugs and insects
- Is it possible to use waste again?
- Barley flour is delicious
- Learning the correct knot
- Rules are salient

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF FACILITATORS

Teachers of enlightenment centres were responsible for implementing the project in their units. Almost all teachers had higher education and extensive years of working in the field of teaching. The majority were aged 26 to 42, while around 17% of teachers were at the age of retirement. Almost half were part-time employees or had another job besides teaching.

In September 2008, a two-day training course was organized for the prospective teachers. The goal of the training was to enhance the teachers' professional skills and to provide them with new information and knowledge about the training methodology. A total of 30 teachers participated in training, most of whom had just been appointed to work at NFE/ ALE centres. The following were among the topics discussed in the training:

- The role of non-formal education in Education for All, the legal framework in the context of NFE;
- Information management of NFE;
- Nature of teaching and learning;
- Teaching multi-grade classes;
- Assessment and evaluation;
- NFE's service in rural areas;
- Challenges, difficulties and future considerations.

Enrolment of learners

A total of 857 learners took part in the literacy trainings. In addition, around 100 people attended at least one of the various open-day events organized in central soums and 80 people were involved in those which were organized in remote soums. According to the guidelines, teachers from each soum selected learners using a literacy level evaluation test: 56% of the learners that were chosen were male, while 44% were female. The fact that there were more male learners was linked to the higher dropout rate of male students as they leave school to help the family herds.

Pre-training evaluation of the learners' literacy levels showed that 38% were illiterate, another 38% were semi-literate/neo-literate, and 24% were literate. The term 'semi/neo-literate' refers to the group who had the highest tendency to lose their literacy skills if not practised. The main goal for this group was to engage them in literacy training and help them become functional literates and use their literacy skills in everyday life.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation was done both when the project was still in progress and after the completion.

In-progress monitoring and evaluation

To chart progress and provide further support and advice to teachers, officials from the NFDE centre visited the sites in many of the soums. In-progress evaluation revealed that while progress in many of the soums was satisfactory, some were lagging behind and moving very slow in terms of their activities. In such cases, to increase attendance rates and increase the activities' quality, measures such as full-time recruitment of teachers were taken. In addition, some of the people who were

in charge of the project at the local level were hired as facilitators and teachers of NFE/ALE enlightenment centres. The progress rate was slow at the beginning, but very soon these measures proved effective.

End-of-project evaluation

In addition, NCFDE also organized a survey at the end of the project in which one-third of the learners participated. The results from the survey showed that most learners found the project effective and successful. Learners stated that the training had not only increased their literacy skills, but also improved their self-confidence and decision-making skills. As a result, they felt more motivated to continue their further education.

IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

A total of 857 learners participated in the training. Of these, 38% were considered fully literate (i.e. by the end of the programme, could read and write); the other 62% used the training to enhance their literacy skills. After the training, around 5% of all learners transferred to formal secondary schools; around 47.4% continued to receive elementary and secondary education through NCFDE's equivalency programme; and 4.2% were admitted to the national centre of occupational training and continued to study.

The end of the project evaluation showed that, not only had the literacy skills of a large number of participants increased, but learners' attitudes towards studying and learning had dramatically changed, and they were now more willing to and interested in making decisions for their education. Through the project, local communities learned how to express their learning needs to the NFE/ALE enlightenment centres and take an active role in their learning. The increase in the activism and enthusiasm of the public has been considered as one of the positive impacts of the project. Some of the other side impacts of the project include:

Empowerment and inclusion of herders and other marginalised groups in social life

In the course of four socialization activities that were organized in each soum, a total of 14,118 people became engaged in one or more of the activities of

the NFE/ ALE enlightenment centres. Participants represented many different social groups, including unemployed workers, school dropouts, and herders from remote areas.

Capacity-building at the national and local level

By organizing training and offering mentoring, the old and new teachers of the enlightenment centres have been equipped with new skills. As a result of the project, teachers gained experience in applying new teaching methodologies as well as using planning and implementation tools, such as budgeting, report writing and data retrieval. The project also has helped them to become more self-confident and improve their intra- and interpersonal skills.

Challenges

One of the conditions that influenced the project negatively was the poor support of teachers at NFE/ ALE enlightenment centres. Issues such as lack of social and healthcare for teachers as well as poor salaries made a lot of teachers leave for other jobs at different points within the project. This high turnover rate of teaching staff then affected the programme in turn, as more resources and time had to be spent on recruiting and training new personnel.

Another main challenge was the difficulties arising from lack of infrastructure such as transportation and regular communication. The NCFDE had to work with the NFE/ ALE enlightenment centres in the field to provide daily advice and directives; however, poor infrastructure made communication difficult at times. In the same line, severe weather conditions, such as heavy snowfalls and blizzards, as well as a breakout of swine flu created problems in the smooth implementation of the projects and delayed some of the activities.

LESSONS LEARNED

Below are some of the lessons that have emerged during the project:

- The fact that literacy training was organized in a way to integrate life skills and vocational skills training was considered to be one of the key success factors of the

project. Life skills training attracted more learners and addressed more of their everyday needs.

- During the training, meals, stationary and all learning materials were provided to each learner for free; this played an important role in increasing the attendance rates. Considering the fact that the majority of learners came from disadvantaged backgrounds with little financial resources, the free provision of learning materials and food gave learners the opportunity to attend the training without having to worry about expenses.
- By organizing socializing activities the misconception that enlightenment centres were only for illiterates and school dropouts changed fundamentally and was replaced by the idea that these centres equipped various groups of learners with a wide range of life skills. Consequently, the idea that learning only happens in a formal school setting was replaced by the broader concept of lifelong learning. This change of mindset, however, was not only limited to the learners and local communities, but it also positively affected the local administrators and officials.

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SLOVAKIA

Romano Barardo: Romanies, the Gardeners

Key Information

Programme title	Romano Barardo (Romanies, the Gardeners)
Implementing organization	Association Svatobor
Language of instruction	Slovak
Programme partners	Eighteen village and town municipalities; parishes; eco-centres; community centres; the Implementing Agency of the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic; the Slovak Land Fund (SPF); the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development; state enterprise Forests of the Slovak Republic; the Office of the Slovak Government Plenipotentiary for Romani Communities; private companies (Zvar, Strapex and Semo); foundations (Ekopolis, Hermes-Österreich, Carpathian Foundation, the Orange Foundation, and the Open Society Foundation); churches; and NGOs (the Sosna Association, Friends of the Earth International, and Pro Tornensis).
Funding	State budget, EU funds, national and international foundations
Annual programme costs	EUR 200,00 (about USD 240,000); EUR 500 (USD 590) per learner
Date of inception	2006

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Despite Slovakia's economic growth and integration into the European Union, the country continues to struggle with long-term unemployment and social inequality. Although the unemployment rate has been steadily declining in recent years with an all-time low of 6.1% in 2018, it is still a challenge to maintain a long-term growth of jobs and to provide disadvantaged groups of people with job opportunities and educational support (EC, 2019). Particularly, the Roma people, who constitute around 8% of the total population of Slovakia (UNDP, 2014), has an extreme low participation in the labour market. The unemployment rates among them are 79.3%, with 74% for men and 84% for women (EC, 2019). Roma job-seekers are facing particular barriers to employment because of a lack of skills and discrimination. In addition to high unemployment, the Roma population in Slovakia suffer from lower rates of literacy, and higher rates of poverty, crime and disease.

The education system in Slovakia guarantees equal access to education for everyone at all types and levels of school. Primary and secondary education are free of charge, with textbooks provided. However, the participation rate, attainment and educational outcomes of Roma children are significantly lower than those of non-Roma children, mostly due to their poor socio-economic status. According to UNICEF (2011), Roma children are 18 times more likely than non-Roma not to finish primary school. The plight of Roma young people is especially alarming, with 43% not in education, employment or training, around four times the national average.

Ever since the Roma were recognized as a national minority by the Slovakian Government in 1992, ministers have repeatedly included the education and long-term integration of Roma people as key priorities in government policy documents. In 2012, the Slovak Government adopted the national Roma integration strategy, covering the period up to 2020, in accordance with its obligations as a member of the EU. The strategy focuses on four main areas: education, employment, healthcare and housing of the Roma population. According to the government, the goals of the strategy are to end the segregation of Roma communities, to facilitate a significant improvement in the social inclusion of Roma communities, to foster non-discrimination, and to change the attitude of the majority population toward the Roma minority. The government committed

itself to support the work of community centres which contribute to the aims and objectives of the Roma integration strategy.

In addition, Association Svatobor, supported by the government as well as by a number of local and international government and non-governmental organizations, has conceptualized and implemented the Romano Barardo programme, which links literacy and vocational training in an effort to help Roma people overcome poverty, social exclusion, poor health and unemployment. The programme operates through community centres, parishes and eco-centres in 18 municipalities in Slovakia.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Romano Barardo was initiated in 2006 by Association Svatobor. The main objective of the programme is to combat poverty in rural Roma communities by providing young people and adults with education and training in eco-farming. The programme brings together land owners, primarily the state and the church, with other public and private stakeholders to create opportunities for the Roma community and other marginalized groups to learn about sustainable farming methods and become self-sufficient. Young people and adults from Roma communities learn how to garden and produce fresh fruit and vegetables; as compensation for their work, they receive a portion of the fruit and vegetables that they have helped produce. Unemployed Roma people

are usually supported by the state and receive between EUR 60–120 per month (around USD 70–140), which is not enough to cover their living expenses. The consumption of fresh fruit and vegetables therefore improves the nutrition of Roma gardeners and their families, while also saving them money. The remaining produce is distributed in two ways: part of it is given to teachers and volunteers in compensation for their work and contribution to the programme, and part of it is sold, providing income for the programme. During the course, learners acquire not



Romano Barardo combines literacy training with gardening projects for even the youngest learners. © Association Svatobor

only practical skills in agriculture, but also knowledge of environment protection, eco-farming and bio-waste, which increases their chances of securing future employment.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the programme is to combat poverty by providing socially excluded Roma communities with education and training in eco-farming. Other aims and objectives include:

- helping Roma communities to overcome social exclusion and understand their basic human rights;
- lowering the crime rate (thefts and vandalism);
- reducing hunger in poor communities by fostering food self-sufficiency;
- improving the health conditions of the Roma people;
- fostering of inter-ethnic dialogue and cooperation between Roma and non-Roma people.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

Romano Barardo is implemented in community centres, gardens and fields across 18 municipalities in Slovakia. Learners attend lectures and workshops in classrooms within the community centres, and do practical work in gardens and fields. Education and farming activities are conducted throughout the year, but especially during the growing period between March and October. Although most of the participants' time is spent on farming activities, they spend approximately 10% of the time (150 hours) in the classroom, attending lectures, taking part in debates and reading literature. The literacy and farming course lasts for three years, and is divided into three levels:

Beginner Level

During the first year, learners undertake basic gardening activities, such as soil and land preparation and composting. They perform these activities under the close guidance and supervision of their teachers, who are experienced gardeners. Unfortunately, most of the Roma learners who join the Romano Barardo programme have had negative experiences with formal schooling; teachers therefore implement the curriculum slowly, increasing the amount of literacy activities with each level.

Intermediate Level

During the second year, participants learn to perform more difficult tasks, such as the production of bio-seeds, the seeding and planting of fruit, vegetables and herbs, irrigation, and the harvest and storage of produce.

Advanced Level

In the final year, learners are capable of performing all farming activities without the guidance of the teachers. In addition, they help service and repair the appliances and machines used for farming. By the time the course is over, learners will have acquired not only practical skills in agriculture, but also a wide knowledge of environment protection, eco-farming, bio-waste and sustainable living. Although no certificate is awarded on completion of the course.

The majority of programme participants have difficulty reading; the programme therefore uses simple textbook materials, which cover topics relevant to the learners' training. Learners are more motivated to read when the subject matter is seed production or a similar topic, which they have the opportunity of putting into practice. Teaching content is determined by the needs of the particular Roma community, taking into account local climactic and soil conditions.

Topics relate to practical work in the garden, including:

- preparation of the soil and land (ploughing and seeds preparation);
- bio-waste composting;
- growing fruit, vegetables and herbs;
- breeding and reproducing bio-seeds;
- seeding and planting;
- irrigating of vegetation;
- harvest, storage and the sale of farm products;
- service and repair of appliances and machines;
- protection of the environment.

Afterwards, programme graduates apply their farming skills in their own private gardens and/ or in community gardens. Local municipalities are one of the main partners of Association Svatobor and sometimes employ graduates to work as gardeners and take care of local public parks and gardens. In addition, Association

Svatobor provides graduates with a piece of land where they can continue their farming activities and, in that way, support themselves and their families, and improve their nutrition and quality of life. The association tries to secure land in the vicinity of learners' houses, which they can keep as their own property. If this isn't possible, the association rents the land from state land holders (Slovak Land Fund, State Forests of the Slovak Republic) and gives it to the graduates of the programme.

CURRICULUM AND TEACHING MATERIALS

Even though teaching consists mainly of physical activities within eco-farming, the programme includes lectures on agriculture. Apart from using simple textbooks about farming and gardening, learners are required to use a variety of gardening tools and appliances. During the farming activities, learners use tools, seeds, young plants, trees and substrates, and operate machines.

It is very important that teachers help learners stay motivated in order to support their self-confidence and their desire to learn. At the start, learners are given very

simple tasks. Once they realize they are able to complete them, they get a sense of accomplishment, which further motivates them.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF FACILITATORS

Teachers in charge of farming activities are experienced gardeners, working part-time. As compensation for their work, they receive fruit, vegetables, firewood, and additional financial bonuses. Teachers work in close cooperation with local social and community workers, and they meet during workshops, conferences and debates to discuss the progress of the programme, and to improve their work with the Roma community. Teachers are recruited from the employment bureau. In addition, the programme hires former Roma students as teachers.

Association Svatobor runs training courses for the teachers to improve their knowledge and skills. During each course, teachers are evaluated by the learners and by the association. As learners are able to choose between several teachers, the number of students who choose to study and complete the course with a



Topics relate to practical work in the garden, including seeding and planting. © Association Svatobor

particular teacher is indicative of the teacher's quality of work. In addition to Roma and non-Roma teachers, there are 120 volunteers who help learners with their daily activities both in the classroom and in the field.

ENROLMENT OF LEARNERS

Association Svatobor involves local leaders and activists in order to promote the programme and encourage Roma people to join. In addition, journalists and photographers help to inform the public about the initiative through various media, including television, the internet and the press. Once learners start attending the courses, social workers assess their learning needs and keep track of their progress, while teachers keep a record of their attendance.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The programme is continuously monitored and evaluated through analysis of financial reports and indicators of success. Research workers, most of

them from universities, are engaged to evaluate the programme's effectiveness and outcomes. Indicators of success include the:

- number of Roma enrolled annually;
- rate of employment of those who have completed the programme;
- increased understanding and tolerance between the Roma and non-Roma communities;
- number of active volunteers;
- benefits to the environment;
- amount of fruit, vegetables and herbs produced;
- amount of compost produced;
- size of the rehabilitated land, which is used in a sustainable way;
- number of partners involved (especially local municipalities and community centres);
- coverage of the programme in the media and feedback from partners and donors.



During the course, learners acquire practical skills in agriculture. © Association Svatobor

IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

Since its inception in 2006, the programme has significantly improved both the quality of life of Roma communities in Slovakia and the local environment. More specifically, the Romano Barardo programme has:

- provided educational services in the field of eco-farming to more than 1,200 young people and adults from Roma communities. In addition, in cooperation with its partners, Association Svatobor has provided job opportunities and income for 238 people from socially excluded communities (including 123 Roma people and 115 non-Roma people);
- enabled participants to produce 300 tons of fruit and vegetables, of which they receive a portion of, thereby boosting their intake of fresh produce;
- in municipalities where the programme is implemented, Association Svatobor has noted that, through hard work and taking care of their houses and gardens, Roma people have gained respect among other communities. People of other ethnicities approach Roma people and offer them jobs, or seasonal work opportunities.

In addition, through the programme's activities, Association Svatobor, together with its learners and partners, has made a positive impact on the local environment, including:

- the closure of two large illegal waste dumps. After clearing up the land, Association Svatobor and relevant stakeholders have built eco-centres, gardens and recreational spaces, including sports courts for everyone to enjoy;
- turning organic waste matter into 1,400 tons of compost;
- the creation of three water storage reservoirs with a rainwater gathering system. The water stored in reservoirs is used for the irrigation of gardens, and for recreational and sport purposes, such as ice skating and ice hockey during the winter months.

Challenges

Poverty among the Roma people is the biggest challenge for the programme. Roma people often live in poor conditions, in both rural and urban areas. They do not

own the land on which they could, potentially, continue their farming activities; therefore, Association Svatobor, together with its partners, tries to provide land on which Roma people can grow their own food.

In addition, despite the association's efforts to raise awareness of discrimination against the Roma, the problem remains, with the Roma community continuing to face barriers to securing land for building homes and gardens. The association deals with this by promoting the programme via the media, and organizing a variety of events for both Roma and non-Roma people to attend.

LESSONS LEARNED

Providing education and work opportunities to Roma people is beneficial not only for them, but also for the socio-economic situation in Slovakia, as it increases employment and improves the relationship between Roma and non-Roma people.

In order to further reduce the programme's drop-out rate, which currently stands at 15%, offering certain benefits as incentives to encourage Roma people to enrol and stay in the programme has proven helpful. Learners receive fruit and vegetables on a daily basis, and that encourages them to be part of the programme. In addition, successful graduates are rewarded either with jobs or with land, tools, seeds, and so on.

In addition, organizing community activities, such as sports or cultural events, and inviting both Roma and non-Roma people to join, helps to bring people together and promote tolerance and understanding among different groups. Association Svatobor regularly organizes such events, which are reported in the media. The events are an efficient way to get people to socialize together and, ultimately, to live with one another.

Giving non-Roma people the opportunity to join and volunteer in the association helps improve the social situation in Slovakia. Volunteers do something good for themselves and for the community, and spending time and working with Roma people is of mutual benefit.

SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability of the Romano Barardo programme depends on funding from three different sources: the state, the private sector and NGOs, and the income earned from selling the produce that the participants grow. Over the years, Association Svatobor has established strong partnerships with local, national and international organizations. Furthermore, the objectives of the Romano Barardo programme contribute to the Slovakia's Roma integration strategy, supported by the government, which further ensures the sustainability of the programme. Finally, the association can always rely on the income learners and teachers earn from selling the fruit and vegetables they grow.

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BRAZIL

Zé Peão School Project

Key Information

Programme title	Zé Peão School Project (Projeto Escola Zé Peão, PEZP)
Implementing organization	Union of Workers in the Construction and Furniture Industries (Sindicato dos Trabalhadores nas Indústrias da Construção e do Mobiliário, SINTRICOM); the Graduate School of Education at the Federal University of Paraíba
Language of instruction	Portuguese
Programme partners	Bamtaare Services, a SODEFITEX subsidiary in charge of literacy provision in national languages; the National Federation of Cotton Producers (FNPC), a member of the National Council for Rural Dialogue and Cooperation (CNCR); and the country's Ministry of Basic Education and National Languages, Department of Professional and Technical Training, and school inspectorates
Funding	Literate Brazil Programme (Programa Brasil Alfabetizado, PBA); SINTRICOM
Date of inception	1991

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Brazil has made impressive economic and social progress over the past 20 years. As the country's economy has developed, federal investments in public education have also increased. This has been reflected in an increase in enrolment rates both in formal and non-formal education, as well as a decrease in illiteracy rates. National data show that the percentage of illiterate adults decreased from 13.6% to 10.4% during 2000 to 2006. However, the country still faces major challenges. The adult illiteracy rate remains among the 10 highest in the Latin American and Caribbean region and, at over 11 million (UIS, 2019), the number of adult illiterates is the highest among its neighbours.

In addition, although there have been reductions in social disparities as the percentage of poor Brazilians decreased from 36% at the beginning of the 1990s to around 30% in 2008, 53% of the population in rural areas still live in poverty. Moreover, the country has been slow to recover from its economic crisis of 2015 and 2016 (The World Bank, 2019). The social and economic disparities get even worse

in the Northeast Region, where approximately 52% of all Brazil's poor live. In particular, the State of Paraíba has 55% of its population living in poverty, and 29% residing in rural areas. In the early 1990s, the state had an illiteracy rate way above the national average: 41.7% of the adult population were illiterate, and 60.3% of the state's illiterates were from the rural zones.

The Zé Peão School Project (Projeto Escola Zé Peão, PEZP) was conceived in 1990 and initiated in 1991 by the Federal University of Paraíba as an outreach community programme in order to address the existing educational needs and challenges of this state, and particularly its capital, João Pessoa. The programme targets workers from the construction and furniture industry, which has been historically marked by employing youth and adults from rural areas who have low levels of literacy and no or very few years of formal education. Due to a long-lasting lack of federal and state initiatives aimed at solving this problem, the programme was designed to improve basic literacy skills of construction workers in order to empower this group to be active citizens and pursue social and economic mobility.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The Zé Peão School Project is a community outreach adult literacy programme implemented by the Graduate School of Education of the Paraíba Federal University in partnership with the Union of Workers in the Construction and Furniture Industries (PEZP) in João Pessoa. Since its implementation, the programme has reached thousands of illiterate workers due to its innovative approach, which includes an interdisciplinary methodology as well as a rigorous facilitator recruitment process. The programme's innovative actions also include ongoing teacher training, partnerships with the workers' union aimed at expanding the programme's coverage and funding, learning activities that go beyond the formal curricular content, social events that foster a sense of community among learners and the programme's staff, class locations and schedules designed to meet students' needs, and an alignment between educational learning and the demands of the labour market.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The primary aim of this programme is to improve literacy and numeracy skills of construction workers as well as their general knowledge in order to broaden their understanding of society, economics and politics, and to enhance their critical and independent thinking within the context they are embedded in. The programme also endeavours to:

- improve learners' quality of life;
- decrease the high levels of illiteracy in the construction and furniture industry;
- empower participants to be actively involved in social mobilization, to advocate for better quality of life and to be better citizens;
- promote the basic skills and knowledge needed to move into the formal educational system, as well as enhancing the possibilities for professional development;
- develop studies about the teaching and learning process of youth and adult education;
- increase the number of professionals in the field of youth and adult education and contribute to the enhancement of the theory and practice of teacher training.

APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

Classes are offered over 10 months, from March to December. They take place at the construction sites, where participants study for eight hours per week (from 19:00 to 21:00), from Mondays to Thursdays. The reasoning behind the choice of both location and schedule is to accommodate the practical needs of the participants, who often work an average of nine hours per day and reside at the construction sites.

The teaching methodology employs a multidisciplinary approach. The subjects – literacy, mathematics, history, geography and science – are combined and integrated not only in order to provide learners with theoretical knowledge, but also to develop their abilities to be socially, economically and politically proactive within their community. Therefore, the content of the classes is based on the participants' context and needs. For instance, during science classes, learners study themes such as environment, sexually transmitted diseases and accidents in the workplace.

However, literacy remains the core subject of this programme and is considered the basis for learning and exploring other fields of knowledge. The teaching of literacy primarily focuses on reading, writing, speaking and listening, in order to encourage students to read, comprehend, reflect on their social experiences and broaden their knowledge. Classes aim to expand learners' vocabulary, develop their communication

skills and enable them to acquire progressive fluency in Brazil's official language, Portuguese.

The programme has two initiatives, *Alfabetização na Primeira Laje* (basic literacy) and *Tijolo sobre tijolo* (building blocks), which were designed to address different needs of the participants. The first is an entry-level initiative designed for illiterate individuals, and the second, an advanced level, targets workers who already have some basic literacy and numeracy skills. In addition to formal lessons, the programme also offers activities to broaden learners' experience through:

- cinema, where films and documentaries are used as an aid to teach geography, history, and general knowledge;
- an art workshop, including mosaics, paintings and clay sculptures, among other activities, aimed at promoting and enhancing students' sensibility, language skills and self-awareness;
- a library on wheels, which visits the construction site and offers books on literature, history, geography, politics and economy;
- a cultural activities programme, which includes social events such as the June Festival (a traditional Brazilian Catholic festival); a Christmas party; soccer matches; and field trips to theatre plays, art exhibitions, local libraries and the planetarium. These activities are planned to bring learners, their families and programme staff together, and foster a sense of community among all participants involved in the project, as well as being unique opportunities for the majority of the learners to expand their cultural knowledge and experience.

The text and workbooks used in the activities are designed by the programme's coordinators and educators themselves, who conduct a rigorous research of materials used by other programmes and institutions in order to develop high-quality resources for their learners. The programme has even produced two literacy textbooks, *Benedito: Um Homem da Construção* (Benedito: A Construction Worker) and *Aprendendo com o Trabalho* (Learning from Work). The programme also utilizes journals, magazines, music lyrics, maps, videos and games (e.g. chess, dominoes) to enhance primary language and numeracy skills.

Zé Peão School Project programmes are free of charge and, in addition to providing learners with the materials they will need for the lessons, it offers additional benefits that include meal vouchers, transportation for those who live in rural areas, visits to eye doctors and access to the university's library. In addition, participants who have higher levels of literacy and numeracy skills are encouraged to attend formal adult evening classes at a school that partners with the project.

Prior to the beginning of classes, learners are required to take an assessment test aimed at verifying their knowledge of basic literacy and numeracy through the identification of letters, syllables, words, sentences, numbers, arithmetic operations and writing down their personal details. Next, the programme coordinators make use of this information to assign learners to the level – either basic entry or advanced – that will meet their needs. Learning assessment is formative as the facilitators have an ongoing evaluation through monthly activities that are placed in individual portfolios which, by the end of each semester, are examined by the programme's pedagogical coordinator. There is no summative exam, but learners are given the option to have their learning certified, allowing them to move into the formal educational system from sixth grade of primary level onwards after completion of the programme.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF FACILITATORS

The facilitators are undergraduate students who are enrolled in the Federal University of Paraíba. The majority of facilitators are women (90%), and the average age is 25 years. The minimum requirements to apply to the facilitator's position include being a second- or third-year student, being enrolled in one of five specific areas of study (i.e. pedagogy, language and literacy, history, geography or mathematics), and having a grade point average equal or superior to 7.0 (on a scale from 0 to 10). In addition, applicants go through a rigorous selection process, which includes a written exam on specific questions on adult education, 60 hours' pre-service training separated into four thematic groups (identity and culture, history and methodologies of adult education, planning and evaluation, and simulated classes) and a final

interview. Candidates are selected according to their performance, participation and attendance at the training as well as their demonstrated interest and commitment to providing educational services to adult workers.

The students who are selected after the process are also required to participate in an ongoing teacher-training course of study on a wide range of subjects and themes related to adult education, which takes place at the university under the supervision and execution of the programme's coordinator. There is an average of 12 facilitators per year, and 15 students per instructor. Facilitators work approximately 20 hours per week, including eight hours of instruction, 10 hours of class planning, and two hours in staff meetings. They are also required to participate in union assemblies to increase their understanding and awareness of the political and social context that their students are part of, as well as periodic workshops and individual and group discussions with the programme coordinators. They work as volunteers and they are granted a stipend of USD 224 per month.

ENROLMENT OF LEARNERS

The programme was designed to target construction workers because this group has a long-standing history of being socially and economically marginalized in Brazil. They are mostly young and adult male rural migrants with no or only a low level of schooling and vocational training, aged 18 to 64 years. They are recruited within their working community: Literate Brazil Programme (SINTRICOM) staff and facilitators make regular visits to the construction sites to promote the project, explain the goals, and the enrolment and learning process. Since its implementation, the programme has enrolled approximately 15,000 workers, and has enabled 10,000 participants to successfully master basic literacy and numeracy skills. The current average of learners enrolled per year is 216.

FUNDING SUPPORT

The programme's annual costs are approximately USD 64,000 (USD 397 per learner). There are two sources of funding: The Literate Brazil Programme is a national federal initiative through which the government

provides financial and technical support in order to enhance the capacity of youth and adult literacy projects nationwide. From this source, the Zé Peão School Project receives a stipend for each facilitator (USD 224), and approximately USD 317 for one pedagogic coordinator. The remaining financial funding comes from SINTRICOM, which covers the expenses of pre-service and ongoing teacher training, learning materials, social events, field trips, office supplies, daily expenses, and meal and transportation vouchers for learners.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The monitoring of the programme includes collecting data on learners' attendance, drop-out and progression rates, as well as assessment results. In addition, teaching efficiency is evaluated by class observations as well as a weekly log in which teachers report on their activities and reflect on their own performance. The project's coordinators use all of this information to provide individual and group feedback to facilitators in order to enhance their pedagogical practices and activities as well as improve participants' learning.

So far, no impact evaluation has been carried out to verify the effectiveness of the project or its benefits for learners and the community. However, the programme coordinators and facilitators have informally observed several positive results. Participants have shown:

- improvements in literacy and numeracy levels;
- improvement in general knowledge (history, geography and natural sciences);
- improvement in employability;
- enhanced self-esteem and self-image;
- a greater sense of empowerment, interest and involvement in social mobilization and for a better quality of life;
- improvement in family and community relationships;
- changes in habits and lifestyle, such as finding pleasure and interest in new activities (e.g. reading, going to the theatre).

The programme has also benefited the facilitators indirectly, which can be seen through an:

- improvement in academic achievement in their own undergraduate studies;
- increase in enrolment in graduate programmes;
- improvement in employability and participation in other youth and adult educational projects.

Finally, the programme has benefited the field of youth and adult education in general. For example, the Zé Peão School Project has provided various opportunities for teacher training in adult education for the Municipal Department of Education of João Pessoa, and it has also been actively involved in the creation and implementation of the state's youth and adult education teacher and coordinator training. In addition, the programme staff help to train facilitators for the Literate Brazil Programme of the State of Paraíba.

CHALLENGES

The major challenge faced by the Zé Peão School Project is the high rate of learner drop-out. On average, almost 50% of participants drop out every year. There are external and internal factors that explain this phenomenon, such as workers being laid off or transferred to other construction sites or working increased hours, leaving less time for learning. Some external factors include fatigue and other parallel personal interests, such as going out with friends and playing cards. In order to decrease student drop-out, the programme coordinator has developed some strategies that mainly address internal factors: improving the quality of teaching, assessment and the materials used, as well as seeking a deeper understanding of the context within which the target population works and lives in order to adapt the programme more to their reality and needs. Additional challenges include:

- guaranteeing the availability of the physical space at the construction sites for the classes: not all owners and construction managers are sensitive to the educational needs of their employees;
- promoting reading and studying habits among participants;
- securing continuity in formal education after learners

complete the programme because of the long hours they work every day including overtime, the distance to the schools, and lack of financial resources for transportation.

LESSONS LEARNED

Many lessons have been learned in the 20 years that the Zé Peão School Project has been in operation; these include a belief that:

- the ability to read and write is essential to human development, as it enables individuals to better comprehend and make sense of the world, their social relationships and themselves;
- there is a great responsibility and challenge involved in offering educational opportunities to a group of learners who work long hours and attend class at construction sites with limited infrastructure and resources;
- the programme offers a great opportunity for university students to develop their knowledge on adult literacy as well as their teaching abilities, and is an efficient starting point for the dissemination and expansion of professionals in the field of youth and adult education in the State of Paraíba;
- the sustainability of funding and resources to support a project aimed at community development and education of the underserved remains a great challenge;
- the Brazilian education system still lacks the necessary resources and infrastructure to meet the educational needs of its people.

SUSTAINABILITY

The 20-year history of the Zé Peão School Project is a good indicator of this programme's sustainability. Despite the challenges the programme has faced since its inception, it has been able to expand its coverage and improve the quality of its services. The main factors that influence its sustainability are the long-lasting support of the Federal University of Paraíba and SINTRICOM, highly committed staff and programme coordinators, continuous demand for flexible non-formal literacy programmes for the target population, and the innovative location of classes that meet the needs of the learners. In addition, the programme

staff is very actively engaged with many state- and national-level initiatives on the promotion of youth and adult education, which has contributed to bringing the knowledge of the programme to a wider group of learners, securing resources and attracting more facilitators as well as students.

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COLOMBIA

Obras Escuela: Literacy for Construction Workers

Key Information

Programme title	Obras Escuela: Literacy for Construction Workers
Implementing organization	Cámara Colombiana de la Construcción (Colombian Chamber of Construction, Camacol Antioquia)
Language of instruction	Spanish and English (for the foreign-language class)
Programme partners	Secretary of Education of the City of Medellín, Colombia
Annual programme costs	COP 640 million (about USD 180,000)
Annual cost per learner	Between COP 82,000–320,000 (USD 23–90), depending on the number of learners.
Date of inception	1991

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Compared with other countries in the region, Colombia has relatively high adult literacy rates. According to a 2019 report by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS), in 2018, Colombia recorded over 95% literacy for 15 to 65 year olds (92% for females) and almost 99% for youth and young adults (aged between 15 and 24), with a slightly higher rate for females (99.7%). Moreover, Colombia is a Latin American and Caribbean country with a high enrolment rate for adult education programmes and high percentage of female learners in adult literacy programmes (UIL, 2019).

Nevertheless, accessibility and quality of education in Colombia remains a challenge. The Departamento Administrativo Nacional Estadístico (National Administrative Department for Statistics, DANE, 2019) reported that, by 2018, 14.3% of the Colombian population had not achieved any educational level and that 22.7% had only completed primary education level. Thus, it remains an issue calling for policy attention to find ways to provide learning opportunities and quality education to those young people and adults who

drop out of or miss out on formal schooling. In 2017, in response to this problem, the Colombian Government issued its new General Guidelines and Orientations for the Formal Education of Young People and Adults (*Lineamientos generales y orientaciones para la educación formal de personas jóvenes y adultas en Colombia*). The guidelines aim to enhance the coverage and quality of adult learning and education offers, especially for adults from vulnerable and marginalized communities (UIL, 2019).

A large proportion of these marginalized adults are employed in the construction sector. Nearly all construction workers lack educational qualifications, and only 31.1% of them have completed primary education (DANE, 2019). Their low level of education is one of the factors explaining their low social and economic status. Raquel (2009) notes that, compared with other labourers in other sectors in Colombia, people employed in the construction and agricultural sectors are more likely to be informal workers, who are often unprotected and vulnerable, with limited access to state social protection benefits. Moreover, their generally low educational level has implications for their personal safety in the workplace. A research study on causes of accidents in construction projects in Colombia pointed out that '74% of accidents were caused by human error, mostly because of people failing to follow workplace safety regulations and lack of literacy skills to read and become aware of these regulations (González et al., 2016). Literacy education plays a vital role in this regard, enabling learners to become able to read safety signs, symbols and instructions at construction sites (*El Colombiano*, 2012) and understand laws and regulations for protecting their safety and their fundamental rights. In this context, Obras Escuela¹ has emerged as an educational programme that develops and improves construction workers' workplace knowledge and skills and helps ensure their safety and well-being.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Obras Escuela is a corporate social responsibility programme led by the Colombian Chamber of Construction (Camacol Antioquia). The programme started in 2007 when Eduardo Loaiza Posada, Camacol Antioquia's CEO, decided to replicate a similar strategy that Muros y Techos, one of Camacol's affiliate companies, was implementing. In partnership with that company, the banking sector, and construction and industrial companies, Camacol Antioquia launched Obras Escuela and began to offer the programme to all the construction companies in Antioquia, one of the 32 departments of Colombia, located in the central

north-western part of the country. The programme is now running in Antioquia, with its highest presence in Medellín, Antioquia's capital, and other municipalities in the Aburrá Valley. Additionally, the programme is being replicated in other cities such as Bogotá, Cundinamarca Department, and Barranquilla, Atlántico Department.

Obras Escuela is an innovative programme because it takes education provision to construction sites to reduce the number of cases of dropout caused by commuting. The majority of construction workers come from low socio-economic backgrounds and live in remote rural areas. This would require them to travel to and from schools that offer literacy programmes and pay transportation costs to attend these classes. Studying together with co-workers who share similar backgrounds and workplace experience, on the other hand, is believed to increase learners' motivation. With these factors in mind, offering a course at the workplace can be an efficient solution, allowing workers to save time and expense. Implementation is based on a flexible, inclusive pedagogy adapted to the special learning needs of the target population. The programme equips construction workers with basic literacy skills, which provides them with new learning opportunities and job prospects, and enables them to fill in the necessary documents to take advantage of social, public and working benefits.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The programme aims to enhance the quality of life of the population working in the construction sector. Specific objectives are to:

- increase construction workers' basic reading, writing and numeracy skills, enabling them to better read and recognize safety instructions, resulting in improved safety for workers and reduced accidents;
- encourage construction workers to continue with their formal education;
- reduce obstacles in the way of effective exercise of civic rights and duties
- increase workers' self-esteem and self-efficacy.

¹ For this publication, we have translated the programme title 'Obras Escuela, cero analfabetismo en la construcción' as 'Obras Escuela: Literacy for Construction Workers'; the shortened programme title, Obras Escuela, is used throughout the case study.

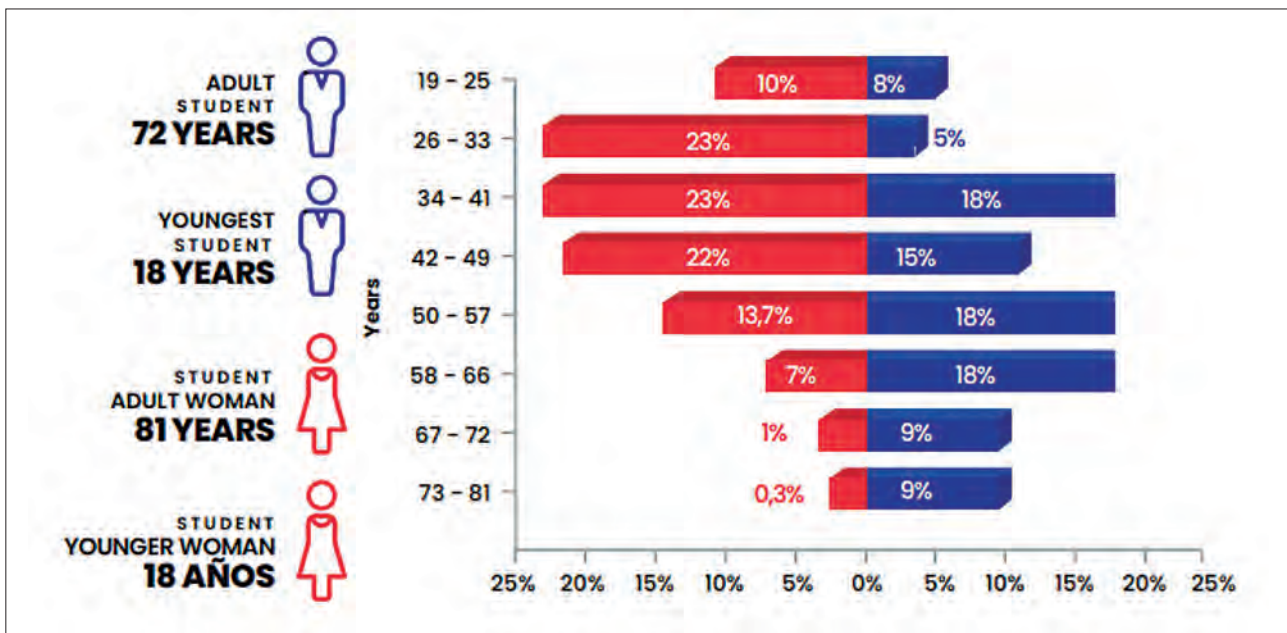


Figure 16: Age and gender of enrolled learners in 2019. Source: Camacol Antioquia

TARGET GROUP

In Colombia, the majority of employees in the construction sector have not completed primary education. Once they start working, they are given opportunities to improve their literacy skills. Workers aged 18 to 81 are invited to sign up for the programme (Camacol Antioquia, n.d.a.). In 2019, 5% of the enrolled learners were Venezuelan, 3% indigenous, 25% were displaced persons, and 4% were Afro-Colombians, while the rest identified as Mestizo Colombian (ibid.). Furthermore, 87% were male and 13% female (Camacol Antioquia, n.d.b.), as shown in Figure 16.

Moreover, as illustrated by Figure 17, most learners earned around or below the monthly minimum wage in Colombia, COP 877,803 (about USD 236). Such low wages do not necessarily encourage construction workers to avail themselves of further learning opportunities to improve their skills.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

Obras Escuela is endorsed by the Ministerio de Educación Nacional (MEN), the Colombian Ministry of National Education, which, through the Secretary of Education for Medellín, assigned the Jesús Rey Institute to certify learners who complete the courses successfully.

Although it was designed for a duration of one semester (210 contact hours), some learners may take up to three years to complete it, depending on their learning needs. In most cases, learners realize that they have not achieved the learning outcomes and ask to repeat the programme. In other cases, educators recommend learners take the course again when their literacy competencies are not fully developed. However, since the duration of construction projects is usually three years, and not all the construction workers start from the beginning of the projects, there may be occasions when they do not accomplish the last phase of the course. In such cases, the Medellín Secretary of Education transfers the learner to other educational programmes offered by other education institutions.

At each construction site, there are one or more provisional schools that are built by construction workers with resources provided by their companies. Literacy courses at each school start with 20 learners, though the number of learners participating during the course of the programme may vary between two and 25. As enrolment is open throughout the year, newly joined workers (potential learners) may occupy the vacancies at any time after educators have determined their literacy and numeracy skill levels.

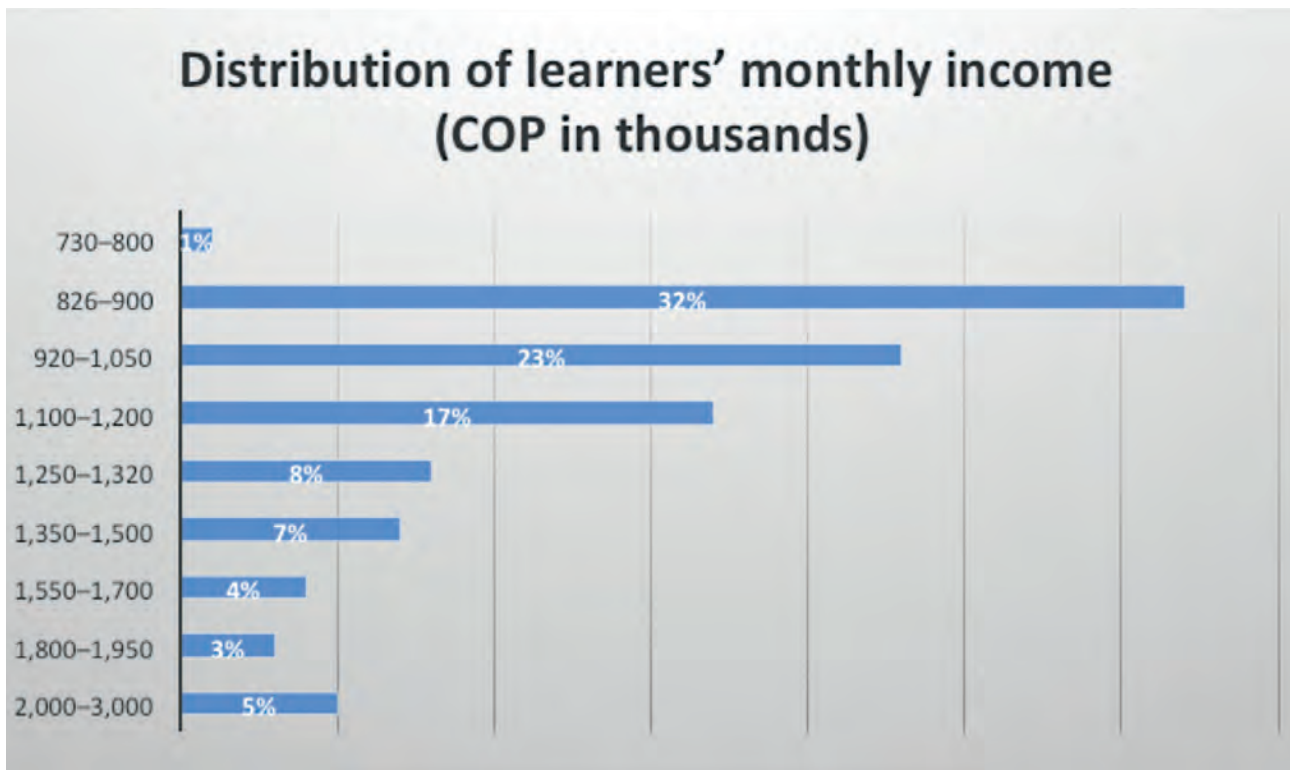


Figure 17: Percentage of learners who fall into a specific monthly salary group. *Source:* Camacol Antioquia

Facilitators and learners plan the timetable of their sessions to suit the group's availability. A minimum of five contact hours per week is distributed either before or after the working shifts on weekdays or the weekends, and educators are assigned to each group according to their availability. Additionally, depending on the employer, time spent by learners in the classes may be considered part of working hours.

Obras Escuela offers two cycles of integrated adult literacy courses, which are equivalent to primary school



A school built by construction workers. © Obras Escuela

education. Both cycles follow the standards set by the Ministry of National Education for Youth and Adult Literacy Programmes. The first cycle or the Integrated Special Academic Cycle (the Spanish acronym is CLEY 1), integrates basic competences in language, mathematics, social and natural sciences, and civic skills, as well as learning goals equivalent to Colombia's Grades 2 and 3 in formal education. The second cycle, CLEY 2, meets the requirements of Grades 4 and 5.

A graduation ceremony is organized every semester, in which learners receive certifications. Upon completion of the programme, Camacol encourages learners to continue to secondary education by introducing them to partner institutions offering such services. Nevertheless, in 2019, Camacol started a pilot project, *Bachillerato a la obra* (Baccalaureate at work), offering secondary education in partnership with Caja de Compensación Familiar (Comfama), a family allowance fund, and Universidad Católica de Oriente, a Catholic university in Rionegro, Antioquia. This project offers enrolment opportunities for construction workers and their family members.



Learners at La Vida es Bella [Life is Beautiful] School, located at a construction site in Bello, Antioquia, Colombia. ©Obras Escuela

APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

Obras Escuela is informed by constructive theories of learning, which argue that learners are active agents in the process of learning and reject the belief that learning is a process of memorizing information (Bada, 2015). More specifically, in this programme, learners are helped to develop new concepts and knowledge by exploring and reflecting on real life, and are encouraged to put these concepts into practice by applying them to real situations; for example, practising spelling using grocery lists. In addition, in anticipation of some of these workers becoming unemployed when construction projects are completed, the programme facilitators also integrate literacy and numeracy skills and future entrepreneurial project development. In terms of entrepreneurial projects, the participants learn relevant vocational skills, such as making pet kennels or hutches, and decorative tiles and doors.

Informed by Vygotsky's concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)² (Vygotsky et al., 1999), Obras Escuela

creates an opportunity for learners to be supported by more experienced persons who provide timely and constructive feedback and guidance. The programme uses the role of these 'godparents' to improve learners' learning. For instance, through the Plan Padrino programme (the godparents programme), administrative staff or other employees, such as site managers, supervisors or engineers, enrol voluntarily to act as a 'godmother' or a 'godfather' to learners, guiding them in their learning process. Some 'godparents' donate learning kits and give tutoring sessions for learners who are struggling with their learning. Another way to achieve collective knowledge construction is to promote group work among learners and participation in home-learning activities on topics that are related to families, such as women's inclusion, children's rights and positive discipline.

Bastable and Dart (2014) argue that 'an individual's developmental stage significantly influences the ability to learn' (p. 1). Educators therefore need to understand

² The zone of proximal development is the difference between what a learner can do without help and what he or she can do with help. See http://www.innovativelearning.com/educational_psychology/development/zone-of-proximal-development.html [Accessed 1 July 2020].

the behavioural, cognitive and psychological developmental differences of adult learners. Based on this understanding, the programme is flexible in identifying and implementing different instructional methods to meet different learning needs of the participants. Defined as 'differentiated instructional strategy' (Chapman and Gregory, 2007), the facilitators develop learning tasks based on learners' different literacy skill levels and learning needs as demonstrated through diagnostic test results. In addition, facilitators use information and communication technologies (ICTs) to provide a differentiated learning experience for learners who demonstrate better digital skills. Moreover, interactive and supportive learning is encouraged among learners with different competency levels: for example, learners who have mastered basic numeracy skills provide guidance to those who are new to learning the concepts of hundreds, tens and units. Upon request from individual learners, facilitators also provide additional personalized support.

Apart from these pedagogical approaches, Obras Escuela also organizes learning activities that aim to enhance the application of learners' acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situations. Two major activities are:

Outdoor pedagogical activities

Every three months, Obras Escuela organizes an excursion to places of interest such as museums, theatres, the planetarium, zoos, interactive parks or ecology parks. Learning activities are organized during such excursions to improve learners' literacy skills. For example, learners read the instructions and other texts available at the sites, and discuss and exchange ideas and opinions about the things they have observed.

Story contest: Tell me a story.

Each year, as a way of promoting creative and literacy skills, Obras Escuela invites learners and their families to participate in story contests. During these contests, learners write and present their own stories on topics of their interest. Three stories pass to the pre-final stage, which are awarded by Camacol Antioquia, and the winning story is published. More competent learners are encouraged to write their story by themselves, while those who require

more support are allowed to present their stories through drawings or with assistance from their families.

CURRICULUM AND TEACHING MATERIALS

Obras Escuela is based on the standards and structure of the national youth and literacy programmes known as the Integrated Special Academic Cycle (CLEY). Thus, it employs CLEY-related books and methodological guides developed by the Ministry of National Education. But as the principle of flexibility is applied, educators develop the programme's curriculum, including the monthly teaching plan, using some alternative materials and learning activities that take into consideration participants' needs and learning contexts. Then, the programme's director and the certifying educational institution, Educational Institution Jesús Rey in Medellín, revises and approves them.

The Obras Escuela teaching plan is made up of nine knowledge areas which are compulsory according to the MEN (1994) and delivers a minimum number of five hours per week, as MEN (1997) dictates. These knowledge areas include the following courses:

1. Natural sciences and environmental education;
2. Social sciences, history, geography, political constitution and democracy;
3. Arts education;
4. Ethics and human values education;
5. Physical education, recreation and sports;
6. Religious education;
7. Humanities, Spanish- and foreign languages;
8. Mathematics;
9. ICT.

The programme relies on guidelines issued by the Medellín Secretary of Education, but it plans to standardize the criteria to enhance its impact nationwide and provide a clear course of action for educators in all the regional and sectional chambers.

As shown in **Table 5**, the teaching guideline demonstrates the integration of skills and basic literacy at the instruction level. Each lesson evaluates learners' achievements



A winning entry from the Obras Escuela 'Tell Me a Story' competition. © Obras Escuela

Table 5: An excerpt from a facilitator’s teaching guidelines for a CLEY–2 natural science class. *Source:* Compiled by authors based on information received from Obras Escuela.

Aim	By the end of the class, the learner should be able to distinguish chemical/ artificial products from natural products, and identify the challenges and risks of using the former.
Guiding question	How can chemical products negatively affect health and the environment?
Standard	Ability to identify some of the health and environmental consequences associated with using chemical and/ or artificial products.
Competence	<p>Nature and evolution Learner is able to identify chemical or artificial products and how they are developed.</p> <p>Appropriation and use Learner is able to follow manual instructions for using chemical products.</p> <p>Problem-solving Learner is able to identify and describe features, challenges, deficiencies and risks associated with the use of chemical/ artificial products.</p> <p>Research tools, chemicals and society Learner is able to use different sources of information and media to support their ideas.</p> <p>Learner is able to understand the importance of complying with the rules for preventing chemical-associated accidents.</p>
Performance indicator	<p>Learning to know Learner is able to explain some of the factors associated with the use of chemicals that may affect human health and the environment.</p> <p>Learning to do Learner is able to establish a link between the use of chemicals and the negative impacts on health and the environment.</p> <p>Learning to be Learner is able to identify the social and environmental consequences of using chemical or artificial products.</p>

Thematic axis	<p>Technology, society and the environment</p> <p>By the end of the course, the learner should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the importance of correctly using of chemicals at home; • understand the environmental impact caused by chemicals/ artificial products.
Methodological strategies/ learning activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group discussion on possible effects chemical/ artificial products can have on the environment. • Analyse energy, agriculture and antibiotics and their negative and positive effects on human health and the environment. • Encourage learners to discuss what, in their opinion, are the worst effects of chemical/artificial products on people and the environment. • Make a comparison chart about the correct and incorrect use of chemicals and share it with the group.

against predetermined performance indicators that learners are expected to achieve.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF FACILITATORS

Currently, the educators' team at Obras Escuela includes 21 facilitators, some of whom have worked for Camacol Antioquia since the beginning of the programme. Fifteen of them have majored in subjects related to education (see **Table 6**).

The director of the programme is in charge of recruiting facilitators, either through recommendations from current or former facilitators, or through announcements at universities which offer bachelor-level education programmes. The recruitment process requires potential facilitators to pass an interview in addition to holding a bachelor's degree in an education-related area and having at least two years of teaching experience. The salary per construction project is equivalent to the Colombian monthly minimum wage (around USD 236) and, depending on their availability, each educator can be assigned between one and five construction projects or schools.

Facilitators participate in pre-service and monthly in-service training organized by the programme director. Experienced facilitators coordinate the training process. During the training, facilitators are introduced to professional codes and ethics, procedures, dress code, institutional norms, pedagogical aspects and

Level of education	Number of facilitators
Preschool education	4
Primary basic education	5
Special education	5
Philosophy. Social Science. IT, Humanities	5
Family development and social work	1
Other (Education)	1

Table 6: Breakdown of Obras Escuela facilitators' study majors. Source: Compiled by authors based on information provided by Obras Escuela.

construction project management. Facilitators also have monthly meetings, organized by the programme director, in which they share their experiences, discuss their problems and are given potential solutions. Additionally, Camacol Antioquia provides facilitators with 56 hours of monthly individual training, in alliance with the Medellín Mayor's Office, the Medellín Secretary of Education, the Women's Secretariat, the Office of the First Lady of Medellín and other educational institutions in the city. The topics of the monthly training include:

- Health and safety at work;
- Technological tools;
- Positive discipline;

- Pedagogical models;
- Prevention of sexual abuse.

ENROLMENT OF LEARNERS

At the beginning of a construction project, the programme management and the facilitators visit construction sites and disseminate information on the courses offered by the programme. New construction projects usually have more construction workers. Often, in such informal on-site meetings (often with 200–300 construction workers), the Obras Escuela facilitators explain the purpose and learning opportunities offered by the programme, raise awareness about its importance, and encourage workers to register. People interested in attending the programme have to provide their photos (which may be digital), contact details and an identification document. The enrolment opportunity remains open throughout the year. Facilitators may conduct on-site enrolment two or three times a year depending on the number of learners who register for the course.

ASSESSING LEARNING OUTCOMES

During the first week of the programme, a diagnostic literacy test is carried out to determine learners' literacy level. Through this initial learning assessment, educators determine learners' literacy levels as follows:



Call for enrolment at a construction site. © Arenas, 2017

- Pre-syllabic level: Learner does not know the alphabet and does not know the phoneme–grapheme relationship.³
 - Syllabic level: Learner recognizes the sound of at least one syllable.
 - Alphabetic syllabic level: Learner is able to decode a complete syllable.
- Some learners refuse to take this diagnostic test: often they say that they know 'nothing'; others say that tests remind them of their negative schooling experience. In these cases, facilitators conduct an informal assessment through observation and conversations with learners. Those who show sufficient competence during this informal facilitator assessment take an initial test involving numeracy and literacy problem-solving.
- Facilitators continuously assess learners' performance through all the learning activities. In addition, learners are encouraged to conduct self-assessment and peer feedback. The former fosters autonomy and critical thinking, while the latter provides opportunities to generate a learning community among the workers. Both self-assessment and peer feedback are formative in nature. Self-assessment requires learners to describe any perceived changes in terms of their thinking, behaviour and progress in learning. Through peer feedback, learners provide suggestions to fellow learners for improvement. Peer feedback is usually encouraged during presentations.
- Upon completion of the programme, learners are expected to be able to:
- write words/simple sentences;
 - read short texts;
 - perform the four basic mathematical operations (i.e. addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division);
 - pay for purchases or expenses;
 - use a mobile phone;
 - have basic knowledge about human rights and other issues concerning their work.
- Specifically, learners need to pass the Obras Escuela exam, which is endorsed by the Educational Institution Jesús Rey through the Ministry of National Education. Moreover, learners who complete both cycles of adult

³ The phoneme–grapheme relationship is the understanding of letters and their associated sounds, recognition of known words, and decoding ability with unfamiliar words.

literacy courses receive a certificate accredited by the Secretary of Education of Medellín. The programme also awards outstanding learners for their efforts, progress and cooperation. For example, during the graduation ceremonies held each semester, outstanding learners receive an honourable public mention for exceptional commitment to learning, supporting peers, great learning achievements and contribution to their communities. Normally, learners aged 75 years and older, or learners with disabilities who complete the programme, receive this award.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Obras Escuela continuously examines the progress and impact of its educational services by using standardized indicators for all its schools. The indicators include the number of learners enrolled, number of learners who work in the construction sites, number of learners whose skills are certified, the number of teachers and the number of partner companies (see **Figure 18** for Camacol's indicators for 2019).

Furthermore, Obras Escuela conducts monthly supervision meetings at each construction project site. During this meeting, the programme management team and facilitators discuss progress, challenges, lessons learned and further actions. Such meetings enable



A learner receives an honourable public mention.
© Obras Escuela

facilitators to determine their learners' needs and to address them efficiently.

In addition, monitoring is conducted through interviews in which facilitators ask outstanding learners about their experiences, challenges and their plans after completion of the programme. In 2019, for the first time, an external advisor was invited to conduct an external evaluation of the programme. This exercise was intended to check for the possibility of adapting the curriculum to better meet the needs of the learners. At present, the consultant is compiling a report by analysing collected data.

IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

To date, more than 4,000 construction workers have acquired basic literacy skills through Obras Escuela, and 2,800 of them have received their primary school certificates. The risk of falling victim to fraud or suffering accidents at the workplace has been greatly reduced, as many learners are now able to read their contracts and understand safety rules and signs at construction sites. Moreover, learners tend to show a stronger motivation for learning, enhanced self-confidence and self-efficacy in improving their life. Many of them have come to realize that social mobility, job promotion and academic progress is possible. For instance, along with many other success stories, learners who continued to secondary education and a learner who pursued a technical degree in electrical engineering are documented by Las2Orillas (2017) and *El Colombiano* (2012) respectively.

Learners' testimonials

Below is a testimony, from a learner named Jorge Eliecer Castillo Urán, who started his courses in February 2018 while working in Constructora Capital's construction project site:

I decided to enrol because I want to learn the letters well, read better because sometimes you have really a hard time when applying for health services for construction projects. When I have to go to take the medical test, fill in the information that you are required, read all that information, I suffer a lot, I sweat, I get anxious, I start shaking because

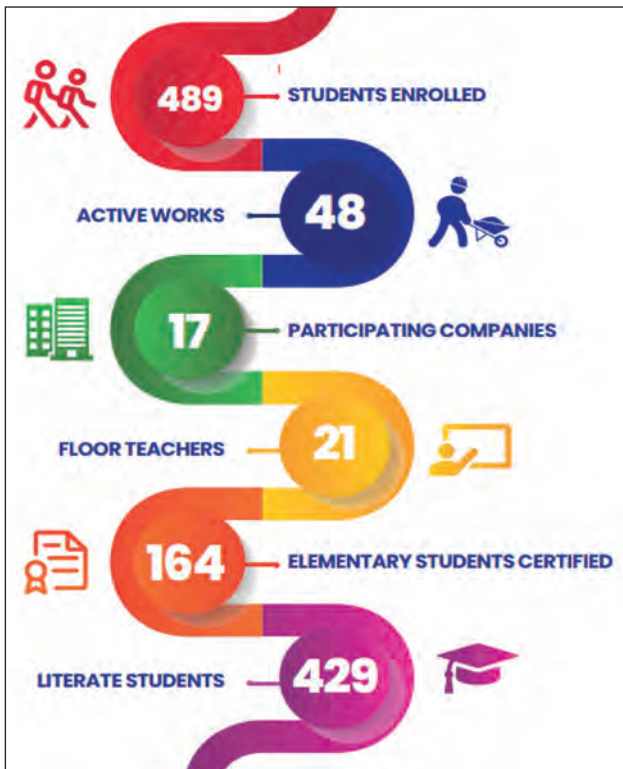


Figure 18: Indicators for 2019. *Source:* Camacol Antioquia

I don't know how to do all those things. I am ashamed that they realize that I know very little.

After some months, the learner reported that he had to fill in some applications again, but explained how his feelings were different this time:

I understood all that I had to do. I read and understood what they were asking me to fill in. I finished fast because I read fast. I did everything so easily that I did not even realize; and when I finished, I wasn't nervous, so I realized: I have learned a lot. I left the place happy because I didn't have to ask for help to fill in any document because I had understood everything, but mainly because I did it on my own.

Awards and accolades

Obras Escuela has received several acknowledgements. In 2019, it was awarded UNESCO's Confucius Prize for Literacy, and it has been recognized by the Secretary of Social Inclusion, Family and Human Rights of the Medellín Mayor's Office for its commitment to transforming lives by offering opportunities to learn and for contributing to achievement and inclusion in Medellín. In addition, the programme has received recognition from the Medellín

Secretary of Education and has been mentioned in multiple publications on digital media, local newspapers and websites associated with the education sector.

Challenges

Obras Escuela has faced four main challenges: first, to achieve greater outreach of the programme and to better address individual learners' needs, facilitators' training must be more frequent and diverse. Secondly, teachers are constantly challenged by learners' negative perceptions of adult literacy learning: their sense of shame in not being able to read and write; or their belief that they are too old to learn. The third challenge is the need to identify new literacy development opportunities in the construction sector, as well as obtaining more funding to enhance the programme's impact. Lastly, the uncertainty regarding the duration of a course is always a pressing concern, since some learners may take more than one semester to develop their literacy skills and construction projects are liable to closure.

LESSONS LEARNED

Smooth partnerships and coordination with both private and public sectors have been decisive to the success of the programme. For example, the support from the Medellín Secretary of Education has enabled Camacol Colombia to continue with its operations by certifying its learners and approving their educational processes. On the other hand, financial support from the private sector enables Obras Escuela to continue operating. To win support from the private sector, the director of the programme reaches out to associated companies' CEOs individually and introduces them to the programme, raising their awareness of the importance of enhancing construction workers' basic reading, writing and numeracy skills and encouraging them to become partners in this process. Thus, each associated company sponsors the programme in its construction site, which means taking on the educator's monthly salary and costs associated with the classrooms' construction. Moreover, Camacol Antioquia raises funds for different projects, including Obras Escuela, through events, conferences, and local and international fairs with its associated companies. The budget items allocated to Obras Escuela cover costs such as outdoor activities, celebrations and training events.

Preliminary results from the external evaluation mentioned in the monitoring and evaluation section indicates there is a need to apply an andragogical approach to teaching, wherein learners are encouraged to take the initiative in diagnosing their learning needs and formulating their learning goals. Programme facilitators have started collaborating with an advisor from the external evaluators to develop a standard document to record learners' backgrounds and learning needs.

SUSTAINABILITY

Obras Escuela pursues sustainability in two ways: first, by providing quality education to enhance learners' skills and attitudes, leading to their improved well-being and the knowledge they need to claim their civic rights. The second way is by establishing and nurturing its partnerships with public and private institutions in which both the programme and its allies achieve their aims. The Ministry of National Education recognizes Obras Escuela as an educational institution and supports the programme by certifying learners and acknowledging that Camacol Antioquia contributes to increasing the literacy rates of the target population. Regarding the private sector, associated companies give donations that enable, in conjunction with the annual budget, Obras Escuela to keep working as it has been for the last 12 years.

In 2020, Camacol Antioquia is planning to develop its own curriculum to facilitate the replication of the programme in all the 17 regions where it has its affiliated companies. Having its own pedagogical model will allow Camacol Antioquia to accelerate facilitators' training, to expand its efforts in improving literacy skills, and promote the completion of primary education for workers in the construction sector.

Additionally, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Obras Escuela started to deliver its programmes online. Through the use of text messages and videos, it is adapting to meet the new challenges of this delivery mode, such as by reaching learners without electronic devices or internet access, or those with low digital skills. Some of these videos can be accessed through the programme's YouTube channel (Camacol Antioquia, 2020). Additionally, based on requests from its learners, the programme is also delivering learning

materials to the children of construction workers and providing tips on time management during the lockdown.

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HAITI

Basic Literacy and Vocational Training for Young Adults

Key Information

Programme title	Basic Literacy and Vocational Training for Young Adults
Implementing organization	Department of the Secretary of State for Literacy (DSSL)
Programme partners	Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (AECID); Argentinian partners
Cost per learner	HTG 5,870 (about USD 77)
Date of inception	2007

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The Department of the Secretary of State for Literacy (DSSL) is the national authority responsible for promoting literacy among the people of Haiti. Created in 1994, it implements literacy campaigns, promotes literacy by raising public awareness and carries out surveys in order to compile literacy statistics. The most recent survey of this kind was conducted in 2002/03. Since 2006, national literacy campaigns have been launched annually by the DSSL. With a view to implementing this project, which forms part of the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE), the DSSL has received technical assistance from UNESCO and the Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo (AECID). AECID and Argentinian benefactors are the funding partners.

With nearly four-fifths of its population living below the poverty line and over half of the population living below the extreme poverty threshold (UNESCO, 2009), Haiti is undoubtedly one of the poorest countries in the Western Hemisphere. A string of political crises since the 1980s, a chaotic economic situation and series of natural disasters have contributed to this state of affairs. Moreover, in recent years, the economic growth in Haiti has declined with rapid currency depreciation and inflation (World Bank, 2020). The unemployment rate is among the highest in the Caribbean sub-region, reaching over 14% in 2012 (ILO, 2012). The country, which once

produced and exported fruit (mangos and bananas), coffee, cocoa, sugar cane and manufactured products (this industry once employed more than 100,000 people), is now dependent on imports for more than 50% of its consumption.

Against this background, it is unsurprising that the education system has suffered greatly in recent years. The system, which is dominated by the private sector (nearly 90% of schools are run privately), does not provide access to education for all and is one of the least effective on the continent. Poor governance is frequently cited as one of



DSSL, its Argentinian partners and UNESCO Port-au-Prince developed Basic Literacy and Vocational Training for Young Adults to raise literacy levels in the arrondissement of Bainet in Haiti. © DSSL

the main causes of this education problem, but the sector is also suffering from a significant lack of funding.

Over the last few years, the country seemed to be back on the road to growth and stability after the president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, stepped down in 2004. However, following hurricanes and adverse tropical weather that hit the Caribbean hard in 2008, Haiti once again faced serious humanitarian problems. In addition to the tragic effects on the population, with more than 800 deaths and 1 million children affected, the hurricanes also had a severe impact on education infrastructures, with hundreds of schools destroyed, and brought about a further shift in priorities in the country.

Already beset by these problems, Haiti was then hit by powerful earthquakes and destructive hurricanes between 2010 and 2018, which caused major losses of life and property. Their serious economic impact and the fact that education was among the sectors worst

affected mean that the literacy and training needs of adults remains significant. In 2016, for example, there were over 2.7 million adults in Haiti who lacked basic literacy skills (UIS, 2020).

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The situation of low literacy in the country spurred various interventions at national level in the early 2000s. Unfortunately, these efforts did not lead to the desired outcomes. In the Sud-Est, one of the country's 10 *départements*,¹ 62% of people aged over 14 were illiterate and, within the 14–30 age bracket, more than 30% of people were unable to read or write. In the arrondissement of Bainet in the Sud-Est *département* (the catchment area of the Basic Literacy and Vocational Training for Young Adults programme) and both of the communes that it comprises, the number of illiterate people exceeded 29,000 out of a population of 100,000. These factors formed the basis for the creation of the project, which was designed and implemented by the Department of the Secretary of State for Literacy (DSSL)

¹ In the administrative divisions of Haiti, the *Département d'Haïti* is the first of four levels of government.

together with Argentinian partners and the UNESCO Office in Port-au-Prince.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

One of the areas of strategic action selected by the government was the development of human resources through increased efforts in the area of education and formal and/or non-formal vocational training aimed at young people who are enrolled in schools, not in school and/or have dropped out. With this aim in sight, the general objective of the project was to help implement a human resources development policy to raise the level of education of the population, particularly those on low incomes. The strategic priorities selected to this end were: (1) providing basic literacy education to illiterate populations, and (2) providing vocational training in certain small-scale trades to enable beneficiaries to engage in income-generating activities. The specific objectives of the Basic Literacy and Vocational Training for Young Adults programme therefore are to:

- raise the literacy rate in the Sud-Est *département*;
- help more young people find work;
- build the operational capacities of the literacy

coordinating body of the Sud-Est *département*.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF FACILITATORS

The DSSL recruits programme facilitators from the community. Eligibility to become a facilitator is based on candidates' prior training and their motivation to serve their communities. So far, 320 trainers and 23 supervisors recruited by the DSSL have been responsible for facilitating and supervising literacy sessions at the programme centres. Pre-service training is provided.

ENROLMENT OF LEARNERS

Although it addresses literacy skills in general, the Basic Literacy and Vocational Training for Young Adults programme is targeted in particular at young adults aged 14 to 30 from the Baintet arrondissement, which has a total population of 6,500. The decision to focus on this target group was based on the fact that half of the population of Haiti is aged 31 and under. Working towards the literacy of this group thus increases the scope for the social and professional reintegration of a very large segment of the population.



The project is targeted at young adults aged 14–30. © DSSL

Training is delivered to beneficiaries in two stages:

1. Literacy courses

The first stage of the project involves the running of literacy sessions. With the target population already identified, participants are selected by agreement between the various actors (DSSL, UNESCO, AECID, and community representatives). The first literacy drive was implemented at the end of 2007; 5,000 learners were enrolled and 134 new literacy centres set up and provided with equipment. The second literacy drive, which ended in December 2008, benefitted 1,500 young adult learners (see **Table 7**).

The learning approach is based on training modules specially designed by the DSSL to cater to the local context. The language of instruction is Haitian Creole, which is used by the majority of the population.

Duration	<i>5 months per session</i>
Sessions run	2
Total no. of participants	6,500
Session 1 participants	5,000
Session 2 participants	1,500
Number of centres set up	134
Number of facilitators	320
No. of learners per facilitator	20
No. of participants who passed final assessment	2,647
Session 1	1,570
Session 2	1,077
Total no. of people considered literate post-training (Stage 1)	947 (<i>success rate 36%</i>)
Cost of Stage 1	<i>USD 488,451.40</i>

Table 7: First two literacy drives, 2007 and 2008. *Source:* Authors, based on information from DSSL.

2. Vocational training

The second stage of the project involves building the capacities of the newly literate participants through vocational training. This stage followed a study carried out in partnership with the Institut National de Formation Professionnelle (INFP), the only institution in the

country that is officially authorized to coordinate and regulate the vocational training system and ensure the quality of vocational training centres and all non-public training providers.

The study, which explored vocational training needs, identified three key sectors: building, carpentry and cookery. Accordingly, three syllabuses and 16 learning guides were developed specifically for the purpose of training participants for one of these three trades. Horticulture textbooks were also developed as part of the Pro-Huerta project, a supplementary initiative funded by Argentinian partners that aimed to increase food security for poor and vulnerable populations in Haiti by providing Haitian families with agricultural training as well as tools and seeds.

The vocational training stage of the project resulted in the training of more than 1,000 participants who had already received literacy training (see **Table 8**).

Duration	<i>4 months per session</i>
Sessions run	<i>Ongoing</i>
Total no. of participants	500
Breakdown of participants by strand (August-November 2009 session)	<i>Cookery 66 Building 50 Carpentry 56</i>
Number of training centres set up	2
Number of facilitators	6
Number of learners per facilitator	<i>Not confirmed</i>
Number of monitors of Pro-Huerta component (horticulture promoters)	97 <i>Côtes-de-Fer 51 Bainet 46</i>
Number of learners per promoter	15
Cost of Stage 2	<i>USD 586,436.10</i>
Training textbooks	<i>3 series of vocational training textbooks + 1 food autonomy textbook</i>
Teaching guides	16

Table 8: Vocational training, 2009 to 2012. *Source:* Authors, based on information from DSSL.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A participatory monitoring and evaluation system was developed to enable each stakeholder in the project to have a clearly defined role. For the literacy stage, the person with chief responsibility for monitoring is the *département* coordinator, who receives field reports drawn up by the supervisors and support committees in the communes of Bainet and Côtes-de-Fer. While courses are under way, the local coordinator and one member of the support committee (a local body representing the community) visit each centre twice a month and a report is drawn up on each occasion. Monthly summaries of these reports are sent to the central office of the DSSL, UNESCO and AECID via the various focal groups. Each local or community supervisor is responsible for 10 learning centres, which she or he must visit at least once a week to carry out systematic and ongoing monitoring of centre operations and facilitators.

Facilitators are responsible for providing literacy training to the enrolled participants assigned to them by the support committee and the *département* coordinating body. They keep attendance registers and record absences and late arrivals of participants. They are trained to provide high-quality facilitation and instruction, while also motivating participants. Their duties also include passing on observations to local coordinators via community supervisors and acting on the feedback given to them and using it to improve training provision.

Monitoring and supervision visits are also made by focus groups and the central office (of the support committees). Regular reports are drawn up to assess the situation within each commune as regards the attendance of participants and facilitators and the quality and effectiveness of training provision.

A two-pronged evaluation system has been created. One of the evaluation methods involves setting participants two simple reading, writing and arithmetic tests during each session. These tests are devised by the *département* coordinator on the basis of samples provided by the central office. The second method involves evaluation of the project by UNESCO, AECID and the DSSL, comprising evaluation of the objectives, activities, actors and



Training centres have been set up in both of the communes targeted by the project. © DSSL

participants. A final external evaluation report is then drawn up and presented at a three-party meeting.

The vocational training courses last four months, with learners attending classes up to three days a week. A final assessment is carried out by facilitators who have received prior training from INFP staff. During the training period, monitoring is carried out by the INFP and DSSL to establish how well the courses are being run. This monitoring focuses on both the quality of what is taught and also the importance attached by the trainers to the reading and writing skills acquired by the participants.

The food autonomy strand of the project employs 100 trained promoters, each of whom is given an evaluation kit with which to monitor the progress made by beneficiaries towards the goal of literacy. All beneficiaries are given a horticulture and livestock-rearing textbook supplied by Pro-Huerta. Pro-Huerta coordination initiatives are carried out in Haiti every two months.

IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

Despite the difficult circumstances in which it was implemented, the Basic Literacy and Vocational Training for Young Adults programme has yielded notable results in the communes of Bainet and Côtes-de-Fer. For example, the training centres that have been set up in both of the communes also served as venues for other cultural and recreational activities to cater to the needs of the wider community. The centres also host courses

to further improve the literacy skills acquired by the programme's participants; to date, these courses have been attended by a total of 6,500 people, almost 70% of whom are women. Despite the devastating storms of 2008 and their aftermath, participants achieved a success rate of 36% in the final tests of the literacy sessions implemented thus far. Moreover, vocational training has been taken up by 500 young people, and nearly 750 young people have received horticulture training through the Pro-Huerta project. To help learners translate the knowledge they have gained into income-generating activities, the project will attempt to establish synergies with other projects and NGOs in the domain of micro-lending. This, in turn, will encourage the creation of small enterprises. Along similar lines, it is also expected that the project will introduce the concepts of risk and disaster prevention through the courses delivered, given the region's extreme level of exposure to crises of this kind.

Challenges

One of the greatest challenges faced by the project was the deadly hurricanes of 2009, which halted activities. The Sud-Est *département* was one of the worst-affected areas; this led to many participants dropping out due to safety concerns. Moreover, just under 50% of enrolled participants were able to take part in the final assessments of the second literacy session in December 2008, and only half of this group passed. This result fell short of expectations, but could have been better if the area had not been hit by adverse weather. A special literacy session has been arranged for these beneficiaries, who had to break off their studies after a great deal of effort and for reasons beyond their control, to enable them to complete their training and obtain the certificates they have earned.

The other challenges encountered include the difficulty of supervising the activities due to the very uneven terrain in the areas of intervention, with a lack of asphalt roads and telecommunications hampered by the generalized lack of electricity. These factors, in addition to the adverse weather conditions, are among the reasons for the low level of participation in the final assessments. The second stage, which focuses on vocational training, began in 2009 and afforded an opportunity to address

these weaknesses. Measures here have included the recruitment within the region of two training supervisors and two local agronomists.

SUSTAINABILITY

Despite being a pilot initiative of relatively short duration, the Basic Literacy and Vocational Training for Young Adults programme features a number of sustainable components. Firstly, the focus on a group that is vulnerable but also has enormous potential (young people aged between 14 and 30) reflects the desire to make the project last. Literacy and vocational training are seen as ways in which the target populations can identify and capitalize on their potential. In addition, the sectors on which the vocational training is focused are very well suited to the local environment and have high income-generation potential.

On the institutional front, the project has boosted the strength of the DSSL: the equipment acquired through the project, the infrastructures improved by it and the teaching materials will become the property of the DSSL. This will make the department better equipped for its annual literacy campaigns and training activities aimed at vulnerable groups in Haiti.

A second phase of the project is now in the pipeline. It will consolidate the knowledge acquired by learners during the first two stages and provide training for 1,800 young people aged between 14 and 40. Given the difficulties and experiences of the past, this second phase will begin with a better chance of achieving satisfactory results.

LESSONS LEARNED

The main lesson to be learned from this pilot project is that the link between literacy training and the job market in Haiti needs to be strengthened, especially through the creation of job opportunities in the areas of intervention or vocational training as a means of achieving literacy. In a country like Haiti that is constantly striving towards stability, literacy appears to be one of the pillars on which economic and social development must be built.

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JAMAICA

Workplace Literacy Programme

Key Information

Programme title	Workplace Literacy Programme (WLP)
Implementing organization	Jamaican Foundation for Lifelong Learning (JFLL)
Language of instruction	English and Jamaican Creole
Funding	Client organizations and the Jamaican Ministry of Finance and Public Service (through the Ministry of Education)
Date of inception	1997

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

Jamaica has made impressive progress in providing its citizens with access to basic and quality education, which is free to all from early childhood to secondary level. Those who cannot afford further (tertiary) education have access to vocational skills training through the Human Employment and Resource Training Trust, National Training Agency (known as HEART), which is the largest provider of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in the country. Non-formal adult education is seen by the government as critical to national development, not least because it teaches adults special skills and nurtures attitudes that will optimize individual productivity and, by extension, national development. These educational policies have resulted in relatively high adult literacy rates in Jamaica, reaching 88% for adults aged 15 and older in 2014 (UIS, 2019).

However, while adult education is central to the government's national development strategies, not enough resources are being allocated to this sector for it to achieve its stated objectives. This is reflected in the fact that most adult education programmes are currently being implemented by NGOs. In addition, the levels of functional literacy among the national workforce remain low: about 70% of workers with basic literacy and numeracy skills are unable to use these skills to function effectively and competitively within a global economy. In short, low levels of functional literacy skills among Jamaican workers is one of the major barriers to their

productivity and national development. In light of this, the Jamaican Foundation for Lifelong Learning (JFLL) initiated the Workplace Literacy Programme (WLP), which is designed to enhance national productivity and development through work-based adult literacy skills training.

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The WLP is a work-based literacy and social intervention project which was initiated in 1997 as a response to the low levels of functional literacy and numeracy competencies among Jamaican workers. It was

designed to improve the levels of functional literacy in organizations and thus targeted low-skilled/manual workers. The programme is currently being implemented across the country, and training courses are offered either on-site (i.e. on the client organizations' premises) or at one of the 29 adult education centres (AEC) operated by JFLL. About 2,500 workers enrol in the programme each year.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The basic principle behind the WLP is that functional literacy and numeracy skills are a vital catalyst for increased productivity and national development. Its primary goal is therefore to enhance workers' levels of productivity by building their capacity to function more autonomously, and respond and adapt to the evolving challenges they encounter in the workplace. In addition, the WLP endeavours to reduce the cost of production: workers with better literacy and numeracy skills are expected to be more disciplined and capable, and thus able to function independently, carry out written instructions more effectively and demonstrate enhanced leadership skills (e.g. critical thinking, decision-making). This will ultimately boost their personal levels of production which, in turn, leads to higher earnings, greater job security, improved entrepreneurial potential, increased self-confidence, and better living standards for them and their families.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

The WLP offers basic literacy and numeracy training from the primary level up to the regional (Caribbean) high-school graduation level. However, its basic curriculum is adapted to participants' learning and literacy needs, including vocabulary and concepts specific to their respective workplaces. In addition, the programme places great emphasis on life skills training in order to equip participants with the knowledge and skills to fulfil their training aspirations and to contribute to their communities. Accordingly, the life skills component of the WLP encompasses several core subjects, including career guidance, citizenship education, character building, communication, computer literacy and language instruction.

The WLP has four levels of developmental skills training. Workers sit a pre-enrolment assessment test and are subsequently placed in one of these levels according to their literacy and numeracy skills. Levels 1 and 2 address the learning needs of low-literate participants, while Levels 3 and 4 are for learners with basic functional literacy skills (or graduates of Levels 1 and 2).

- **Level 1:** The learner displays minimal or no recognition of words and may struggle to write. Thirty-six (36) words are learned at this level.
- **Level 2:** Concepts such as phonics, counting, vowels and spelling are introduced. Participants' vocabulary is expanded to facilitate reading readiness, and learners become familiar with mathematical symbols and simple calculations.
- **Level 3:** Participants improve their reading comprehension and maths skills using books from the secondary school system and a dictionary. At the end of the level, they sit an achievement test consisting of two papers in English, one in mathematics and one in general knowledge. Those who obtain 75% or more on all papers receive a certificate of achievement.
- **Level 4 (functional level):** Life skills are infused into the programme to give practical support to the use of language and numbers. Participants are expected to attain a level of literacy that will help them to function more effectively and productively at work and in their communities. They are introduced to official documents such as bank and application forms, and begin computer training and business writing (e.g. job application letters). There is also more interactive discussion to build awareness of social and current issues and increase participants' general knowledge.

APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

Facilitators are encouraged to employ learner-centred teaching methodologies and context-specific examples and terminologies that encourage maximum learner participation and effective comprehension of the subject matter. Discussions and role-playing activities are therefore central to the learning process. Counselling and coaching sessions are also provided to individual learners based on their specific needs. To ensure that the learning process remains learner-centred as well as to maintain high levels of learner motivation, a variety of

aids are used, including workbooks, radio and television programmes, computers and flashcards. In addition, a survey is conducted at the end of each learning session to determine learners' level of comprehension and skills competency; an achievement certificate is then awarded to participants who obtain 75% or more in each of the tests, after which they may choose further options to continue their education.

In addition to the ongoing internal evaluations and student assessments undertaken by JFLL staff to ensure the quality, continuity and cost-effectiveness of the programme, external professionals have also been engaged to conduct qualitative programme evaluations.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF FACILITATORS

Typically, programme facilitators are recruited from client organizations in order to reinforce the link between the learning process and participants' specific context. Where no qualified individuals are available, government-approved professional consultants recruit facilitators through public advertisement and competitive bidding. Preference is given to trainers with industry-specific qualifications and experience. Regardless of how they are recruited, all facilitators undergo intensive professional training in adult education teaching. Each facilitator is then assigned a class of around 15 learners and is constantly monitored and mentored by JFLL staff in order to ensure the continuing effectiveness and high quality of the programme. Facilitators are paid an hourly fee of about JMD 1,000 (around USD 7).

ENROLMENT OF LEARNERS

Client organizations are primarily responsible for encouraging their employees to enrol in the WLP, as it increases their chances of being promoted or offered permanent rather than temporary employment. Once potential participants have been identified, JFLL employs a diagnostic test to determine participants' language and numeracy skill levels. This, in turn, determines which class the learner will attend and the pace at which the facilitators will conduct the lessons.

IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

In many instances, discernible and progressive improvements in the efficiency and productivity of workers in many of the participating organizations indicate that the WLP has succeeded in achieving its primary goal of empowering learners. The programme proved particularly effective in organizations which provide post-training opportunities. Nonetheless, further capacity-building is required to facilitate the expansion of the programme as well as to ensure its sustainability within individual organizations.

In addition, the programme has led to a reduction in administrative costs: the CEO of Advanced Farm Technologies (AFT), which is based in Falmouth, Jamaica, and produces and processes papaya for the export market, has attributed the significant increase in staff efficiency and reduction in supervision costs to the WLP. Most critically, staff supervision has been minimized because workers are now adept at using modern technology and interpreting written instructions pertaining to chemicals, tools and machinery.

Workers who participated in the WLP have also improved their functional literacy skills and competencies and are thus in a better position to negotiate for higher wages and seek employers offering the best conditions of service. Overall, the WLP has empowered workers, improved their working conditions and wages and, ultimately, their families' living standards.

The WLP has also raised the importance of education in people's lives. As a result, many parents are now actively helping their children to access and gain an education.

Challenges

The biggest challenge facing the programme is when participants decide not to continue attending the training, often due to a lack of post-training incentives. Employers or sponsors are therefore strongly encouraged to provide workers with such incentives once they have successfully completed the programme, as this will encourage them to invest their time in training.

LESSONS LEARNED

As a work-based literacy programme, the success, effectiveness and sustainability of the WLP depends on the provision of post-training rewards and incentives, including promotions and financial bonuses. Invariably, where such incentives exist, workers are more likely to participate in the programme and apply their new skills to productive activities.

In addition, the programme depends on the commitment of senior managers within the client organizations. These managers play an instrumental role in motivating their workers to participate and to continue attending literacy classes. Furthermore, one major lesson which consistently emerged from the field was that managers who are enthusiastic about the programme will be emulated by their workers. At Toyota Jamaica, for example, all line managers participated in a preliminary diagnostic test together with their staff as a means of building team spirit in the quest for quality enhancement and greater productivity. This is in stark contrast to another programme, which suffered significantly because supervisors were reluctant to allow workers to take the required time off to attend classes.

SUSTAINABILITY

The sustainability of the WLP depends on the availability and continuing demand for literacy training for workers, and the ongoing commitment of managers and employees of client organizations as well as the Government of Jamaica. JFLL has an advantage in that it caters for lower-level workers, whereas most private training consultants are focused on the upper level of the market. However, to maintain the viability and affordability of the literacy programmes, JFLL intends to cement its position in the long term by launching an aggressive recruitment campaign to attract the volunteers who have traditionally been key to the success of literacy programmes in Jamaica.

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URUGUAY

Prison Education Programmes for Young People and Adults

Key Information

Programme title	Prison Education Programmes for Young People and Adults
Implementing organization	Consejo Directivo Central de la Administración Nacional de Educación Pública (Central Governing Council of the National Public Education Administration [CODICEN-ANEP])
Language of instruction	Spanish
Funding	Government of Uruguay, NGOs
Date of inception	2005

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND

The number of imprisoned people and the length of prison sentences in Uruguay has risen sharply in the last 20 years, from 4,469 in 2000 to 11,755 in 2020. As a result, the prison population rate is now up, at around 337 prisoners per 100,000 inhabitants (WPB, 2020). Moreover, overcrowding and a general lack of resources and funding has exacerbated the poor living conditions of the majority of the country's inmates.

A demographic look at Uruguay's prison population reveals that more than 60% of inmates are aged 30 and under, with many having received an inadequate primary education. A nationwide study in 2007 revealed that 40% of prisoners had not completed their primary education and 31% dropped out of school after Grade 6.

Difficult economic circumstances in 2002 left Uruguay with high poverty incidence rates and led the way to the formation of a National Plan for Social Emergency Assistance (PANES) in 2005. The Ministry of Social Development for Uruguay (MIDES) was created that same year with an aim to implement PANES and to develop, oversee and evaluate policies and strategies

in the fields of youth, women and the family, older and disabled people, and social development (MIDES, 2020).

To address the educational needs of prisoners the Ministry of Education and Culture of Uruguay (MEC) and the National Public Education Administration (ANEP) jointly undertook the initiative to conduct educational projects inside of prison institutions on a variety of topics and with many different objectives (health, family life, vocational training, literacy skills, social reintegration, etc.).

Following the Uruguayan Parliament's passing of the Prison System Humanization and Modernization Act

in 2005, which placed significant emphasis on the benefits of education in prison environments, the scope of education in prisons began to find a stronger source of support. Since its establishment in 2007, the Support Commission for Education in Prisons (CAEC) has been committed to achieving wider and better-quality educational coverage in prisons across the country, by means of workshops, courses and literacy programmes.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

One of the fundamental objectives of any penitentiary system should be to rehabilitate inmates and prepare them for their eventual return to society. Under the scope of these aims, prison education functions as a means to improve the conditions of imprisonment and represents a positive approach to rehabilitation. As part of the overarching national education programme for young people and adults, learning programmes and activities were established in prisons with an aim to:

- strengthen the links and intensify engagement with organizations and institutions connected to the prison population in order to coordinate activities;



The CODICEN-ANEP education programme targets prisoners with low literacy skills. © CODICEN-ANEP

- extend educational coverage to every prison facility in the country;
- promote the provision of training for prison staff, particularly those connected either directly or indirectly to teaching in penal institutions;
- ensure that education in prisons promotes self-reliance and autonomy with the end objective of enabling prisoners to reintegrate into society upon their release;
- investigate how the activities which are offered can be improved and optimized by means of a survey of target groups;
- implement a series of measures that enables prisoners to reduce their sentences in exchange for studying, in line with the recommendations of the Prison System Humanization and Modernization Act.

PROGRAMME STRUCTURE AND CONTENT

As the prison education system in Uruguay is made up of a variety of projects run by private organizations and public authorities, coordination is key. The Commission to Support Education in Prisons (Comisión de Apoyo a la Educación en Cárcels, CAEC) is the overarching body responsible for this, and is made up of members of the MEC and ANEP, the Department of Education and Further Education in the National Office for Prisons and Rehabilitation Centres, the National Trust for Current and Released Prisoners (PNEL), and an advisor with pedagogical experience in prison education who is appointed by the committee members.

CAEC is charged with the task of analysing the policies and educational practices in prisons, coordinating actions to improve education methods and conditions, supporting the training of prison staff – particularly those with a direct or indirect teaching role – coordinating the links between public and private institutions in order to achieve maximum educational coverage across the country, and maintaining contact with regional and international organizations with similar objectives. Rather than a passive, administrative role, CAEC actively engages with all those involved (teachers, prisoners and prison staff), enabling the commission to see first-hand the reality of life behind bars in order to create pathways for discussion in the area of prison education.



CAEC actively engages with teachers and prison staff. © CODICEN-ANEP

APPROACHES AND METHODOLOGIES

Non-formal education in the prisons utilizes both formal and non-formal teaching approaches, with possibilities to attend literacy classes, continue with primary or secondary education, access vocational training, and take part in workshops, theatre groups, and so on. Activities are planned and carried out with the intention of supporting the development of skills, encouraging group communication, and reforming the outlook and social behaviour of inmates.



Inmates develop their computer skills as part of the 'El ajedrez de las cárceles' project. © CODICEN-ANEP

The chess project, 'El ajedrez de las cárceles', carried out in 2007, provides an example of the common interdisciplinary nature of the prison programmes. The integrated structure of the course utilized three themed workshops, one on carpentry (building the chess board), another on information and communication technology (installing a computer chess game), and a third on journalism (reporting on a chess tournament) to carry out various tasks through the development of literacy and practical skills.

In that same year, a pilot project was developed by a team of education professionals and introduced in the men's prison of the City of Canelones. After consulting a selection of prisoners on their interests and preferences for the workshop, Uruguayan Carnival was adopted as the central theme. On preparing the sessions, literacy and self-directed learning were woven into the curriculum by the team of professionals. The aspects addressed during the workshop were the social self and environment, language development and communication, art and culture (music groups and carnival), history, and

geographical reviews of similar cultural expressions. The workshop participants were encouraged to deal with standard aspects of life as well as their own experiences, writing and speaking about the reality of their situations and the topics of freedom, hope and time. During the workshops, the participants developed their reading, writing and general communication skills through the embedded literacy components of the programme.

Despite having been planned for only 20 participants, by the third meeting, 27 prospective learners had joined the workshop and, in order to guarantee the educational quality of the sessions, no additional participants were admitted. All of the participants completed the four-month-long course with full attendance. Originally intended to consist of three meetings a week each lasting three hours, the teachers reported that it was impossible to restrict the meetings to less than four hours at a time due to the magnitude of participation and the scope of interest in the topics.



An initiative in a men's prison in Canelones promoted self-directed learning. © CODICEN-ANEP

During the workshop, dialogue and debate was encouraged and the diverse backgrounds of the prison population was taken into consideration. The flexible curriculum encouraged the programme's participants to use their practical skills and inquisitiveness and

fostered the growth of qualities central to the process of lifelong learning. The design, methodologies and foundations of 'learning to learn' strategies were employed in order to encourage the development of the participants' autonomy and self-empowerment. As a result, participants became actively involved by asking questions on job-related topics. The teachers were able to support the participants by bringing information and holding readings on workers' rights, resulting in the establishment and evolution of an area of meaningful interaction between the teachers and learners.

The pilot programme and its workshop structure formed the basis of the non-formal education programme PAS (Programa Aprender Siempre/ 'always learn' programme), which offers flexible citizenship education to prisoners along with literacy and technical and vocational education and training (TVET). In 2018, Programa Aprender Siempre was awarded the 2018 UNESCO King Sejong Literacy Prize for its impact on participants' social participation, their improved skills for community life, strengthened self-esteem and autonomy, and motivation for continuing learning.

In 2005, the largest prison in Uruguay, with half of the country's prison population, was not equipped with classrooms and, across the country, teachers were employed in only five out of 27 prison establishments. Four years later, in 2009, the positions had risen to 51 – a marked improvement arising from the recognition of the right to education for all and the beneficial effect of education in limiting the number of reoffenders. PNEL supports educational initiatives by supplying the prisons with a quantity of educational material that corresponds to the number of teachers at the institution. The agency has 19 centres across the country and serves to support inmates, and released offenders and their families, placing emphasis on the important role of reinsertion into employment as well as providing social, moral and material assistance.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING OF FACILITATORS

Only qualified teachers are employed to work as teaching staff in the prisons in order to ensure that the



Music or theatre groups have been formed in many prisons, often with the support of paid and voluntary instructors. © CODICEN-ANEP

quality of teaching remains high and, most importantly, to ensure that each teacher establishes him or herself as a pedagogical authority rather than a supervisor during the programme. Qualified teachers are also preferred when hiring workshop instructors.

A key aspect of the prison education programmes is the regular exchange of ideas and experiences between the teachers during meetings and training days organized by CAEC. During training, political-educational aspects are examined and educational methodology is discussed. In the past, local ministerial authorities, educational branches, as well as teachers from various education branches have been invited to attend and contribute to the event. The importance of developing areas for pedagogical reflection and interaction with educational professionals is integral to designing common educational projects.

ENROLMENT OF LEARNERS

Two major incentives have drawn prisoners to the programme. First, the Prison System Humanization and Modernization Act made it possible for inmates to reduce the length of their sentences by engaging in regulated educational programmes. Two days of study (with one day equating six learning hours) corresponds to

a sentence remission of one day. Second, the possibility to receive accreditation for completing primary or basic education gives prisoners a specific goal to work towards that will support them with their reintegration into society when they leave prison.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Teaching teams meet every two weeks to discuss topics such as motivating learners, dealing with prison staff, developing competencies, changes to the curriculum, and educational spaces in the prisons. Facilitators are also encouraged to perform self-evaluation and reflect on ways to develop and support future educational practices. The prison authorities attend the meetings from time to time in order to give the teachers a closer insight into how the prison functions and the internal administrative rules which concern them.

As part of the evaluation of each programme, the teachers send statistical data on a monthly basis to CODICEN-ANEP. This information is used to analyse the quarterly reports and is shared with the inspectors in order to plan for and predict the specific needs of the learners. In 2008, CODICEN-ANEP coordinated the first of several sessions in which the teachers, inmates

and wardens were interviewed individually on the weaknesses and strengths of prison education according to their experiences.

IMPACT AND CHALLENGES

Over the last few years, the prison education system has been growing positively in both the capital city and rural regions, with much wider educational coverage being offered in penal institutions across the country. Nowadays, the majority of the prisons feature areas dedicated to primary level teaching, and the Uruguayan literacy programme, *En el país de Varela: yo, sí puedo* ('In the country of Varela: Yes, I can'), which directly targets people who are socially disadvantaged as a result of not having completed their primary education, has been introduced in several prisons with positive results. The percentage of the prison population engaged in education programmes has increased nearly sixfold, from 5% in 2005 to 29% in 2008. Bearing in mind the rise in the number of prisoners, this achievement is not to be taken lightly and reflects concerted efforts to implement effective and attractive educational strategies for the prison population.

The establishment of knowledge environments in Uruguayan prisons has fostered great interest for learning among the prisoners and incited the growth of informal offshoot projects. Adapting the educational content and context even further, such projects make the education process more relevant, engaging and effective, and set the foundation for successful lifelong learning.

Beginning as a small initiative, chess is one such activity that has been well received and successful in its aims to engage offenders and establish valuable learning environments. In one prison where it was introduced two years ago, chess is played by more than 25% of the prisoners and monthly tournaments are held. Initially introduced and played during the workshops at the prison, the activity has been taught as often to family members as to other prisoners and has become a feature of daily life in the prison. Having learned chess in prison, one former prisoner began to teach the game to children at his local church shortly after completing his sentence.



The literacy programme *En el país de Varela: yo sí puedo* has been introduced in many prisons across the country. © CODICEN-ANEP

In several prisons, a number of alternative educational programmes have emerged from ideas and contributions of the prisoners. The results from such participatory projects have been promising, particularly with regard to qualitative achievements (the enrichment of dialogue, better management of interpersonal relationships, the reinforcement of identities, subjectivity, empathy, critical and creative thinking, etc.).

In addition, as well as being highly popular with inmates, the success of the carnival project had further unforeseen results, including the development of a website featuring poems and letters from the prisoners to their families and the production of a CD with lyrics and illustrations from the group. The learning experience, empowerment and feelings of accomplishment which the project brought about had a high emotional impact on everyone involved.

Challenges

After 2005, some of the greatest challenges to prison education have arisen from governance of the prison system itself, including overcrowding in prisons, lack of budgetary and extra-budgetary resources, and the lack of a national unified prison structure. It has been noted that many prison areas, which may have formerly been used for educational purposes, have been reallocated to accommodate more prisoners. Such challenges persist to this day and hamper the quality and quantity of education that can be offered in prisons. In interviews with the prison population, the challenges to prison education from their perspectives

were revealed as a lack of didactic material, the limited time available for training and the lack of specialized programmes.

Overcoming the view of many people across all areas of administration (government, prison staff, teaching staff, etc.) that prison education is a marginal task carried out by volunteers is an additional challenge. The reported resistance of prison staff to escort offenders to the classrooms was recorded in a report on prison education in Uruguay from 2010. Tackling this issue is necessary in order to enhance the status of the staff working in educational positions and to guarantee the fulfilment of the prisoners' right to basic education.

In spite of the successes of CAEC, further coordination and promotion of education are needed on the level of national planning and across all areas of government. The challenge at hand is reaching all the relevant parties dealing with imprisoned people and making sure that the value of prison education is recognized. As late as 2009, a new prison was opened in Uruguay which had been constructed without incorporating educational areas into its design, highlighting the necessity to promote a higher prioritization of prison education on a wider scale.

LESSONS LEARNED

Establishing good relations with the prison staff and authorities is of prime importance in order to ensure efficiency and success with the educational programmes. As part of this, the experience and efforts to train prison staff and help them to recognize the importance of education has played a significant role. Since the prison system addresses a much broader set of objectives, including controlling and disciplining the offenders, the task of firmly establishing education as a part of prison life is a difficult, and yet invaluable, undertaking which requires constant backing from the authorities.

Prison education extends beyond simply supporting the literacy skills of the people deprived of their liberty. The programmes in Uruguay have gained success through planning integrated curricula which incorporate practical skills, personal development and the foundations for lifelong learning. Not least important, the effects

of the programmes have not been limited to the people deprived of their liberty, but have been felt by their families and contribute to societal and community gains.

SUSTAINABILITY

The progress made in prison education since 2005 has been very beneficial for Uruguayan society, for the promotion of lifelong learning and the protection of the right to education for all. Though there are NGOs supporting projects in the area of prison education, the continuation of the prison education programme relies strongly on government funding and coordination. The continuing recognition of achievement and support by the government suggests that the shift in policy-making towards increased levels of education in prisons will be sustainable. However, it must be appreciated that more discernible results and advances can only be achieved through substantial prison reform, a deepening and widening of the programme and stronger coordination and promotion of the existing projects.

The flexible curriculum and heterogeneity of the programme allow the course content to be adapted to fit in with the participants, their interests and respective situations. Having such flexible features, the programme can be run repeatedly, requiring only a change in theme to maintain interest and to focus on new areas of learning. Given that it is possible for imprisoned people to pursue formal education qualifications while serving a sentence in Uruguay, the education programmes can lead to the reinsertion of learners into formal education and the acquisition of national qualifications.

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Integrated approaches to literacy and skills development

Examples of best practice in adult learning programmes

Since the first coronavirus case was reported to the World Health Organization in December 2019, millions of youth and adults around the globe – especially those with low literacy skills – have faced increased challenges to securing meaningful work and safeguarding their livelihoods. A more integrated approach to youth and adult learning and education, combining basic literacy, vocational and life skills, is needed now more than ever.

This publication showcases selected examples of integrated youth and adult learning and education programmes featured in the UNESCO Effective Literacy and Numeracy Practices Database, also known as LitBase. Implemented in various social, cultural and economic contexts around the world, the programmes featured herein reveal not only the transformative potential that enhancing the quality of youth and adult learning and education can have, but also lay bare the hurdles and potential pathways to consider when planning effective integrated programmes.

Integrated approaches to literacy and skills development: Examples of Best Practice in Adult Learning Programmes is useful not only for policy-makers, providers and educators who plan to implement integrated adult education programmes but also for those trying to help the most vulnerable groups reach their highest potential.