



Functional Adult Literacy and Vocational Training: Women's Opportunity for Socio-Economic Development in Uganda. A Case Study of Apac District-Northern Uganda

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DECLARATION

I, Dr. AKELLO JUDITH ABAL, hereby declare that this research is my original work and has not been submitted for any other Postdoctoral award to any University.

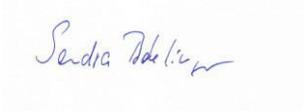
Signed: ...  Date...20th October 2021.....

Dr. Akello Judith Abal

APPROVAL

This research has been compiled and approved by my Supervisor:

Prof. Dr. Sandra Bohlinger

Signature...  Date...22nd October 2021.....

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DCBS	Department of Community Based Services
DCDO	District Community Development Officer
EWLP	Experimental World Literacy Programme
FABE	Family Basic Education
FAL	Functional Adult Literacy
FGDs	Focused Group Discussions
INFOBEPP	Integrated Non-Formal Basic Education Pilot Project
LABE	Literacy Adult Basic Education
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
NDP	National Development Plan
NGP	National Gender Policy
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
RCU	REFLECT Coordination Unit
REFLECT	Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UN	United Nations
UNCST	Uganda National Council of Science and Technology
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UIS	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

ABSTRACT

The study was about women's opportunity for socio-economic development based on their experiences on Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) and integrated vocational training in Apac District-Northern Uganda. The main objective of this study was to explore whether and how women participants in Apac District derived socio-economic benefits from FAL as well as integrated vocational training. The study was informed by agency theory from Freire's literacy theory and Kabeer's socio-economic perspective which contend on the component of awareness or by making marginalised non-literate's agents of socio-economic development. These theories helped to explore and establish the socio-economic transformation experienced by women as a result of their participation in FAL in addition to integrated vocational training. These transformations were captured by comparing the kinds of life led by the women prior to and after FAL and integrated vocational training, in terms of participating in communities, family settings, awareness on the value of training and participating on income generating group projects.

The study mainly used qualitative case study research design focusing on the experiences of 35 participants both in the rural and urban setting. Using Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews, this study revealed the conditions of women before and after benefiting from FAL with integrated vocational skills.

The findings of this study inductively generated from the participants revealed that women who acquired FAL in addition to integrated vocational skills significantly transformed their socio-economic lives. Opportunity for FAL and integrated vocational training improved women's daily lives in terms of confidence to participate in community undertakings and local council leadership. In addition, the women became self-employed, profited from income generating group projects, made re-investments of savings from the income generated. In turn, the well-being for themselves and their families greatly improved. Therefore, the study recommends that the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) which coordinates FAL training in Uganda along with other departments, such as international partners, NGO's and civil society organisations should prioritise, support and strengthen the FAL learning with integrated vocational training policies.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights upholds education or training as a fundamental human right for everyone as stipulated in Article 26 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNESCO, 2020). For example, UNESCO's affirmation in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 26, sub-section 2, states that "*Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.*". In addition, The Incheon Declaration¹, the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4² and the Education 2030 Framework for Action³, in their debates approved on the impact of education as well as vocational training. In support of UNESCO's views, vocational education was also set on the global agenda in 2015 when the United Nations' (UNs') Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs) 4.3 affirmed that, there should be "*equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university*" by 2030 (Kim, (2021; UN, 2015, p. 19). Their debates pointed out that everyone (men, women, boys and girls) must at acquire at least basic functional literacy, numeracy and life skills to improve on their livelihoods, needs as well as achieve a significant communal development. The

¹ UNESCO together with UNICEF, the World Bank, UNFPA, UNDP, UN Women and UNHCR organised the World Education Forum 2015 in Incheon, Republic of Korea, from 19 – 22 May 2015, hosted by the Republic of Korea. Over 1,600 participants from 160 countries, including over 120 Ministers, heads and members of delegations, heads of agencies and officials of multilateral and bilateral organisations, and representatives of civil society, the teaching profession, youth and the private sector, adopted the Incheon Declaration for Education 2030, which set out a new vision which is an historic commitment to transform lives by all of us through education with bold and innovative actions, to reach our ambitious goal for the next fifteen years (UNESCO 2015). The Incheon Declaration is significant to any FAL programme in terms of raising awareness and enabling the voices of people, particularly women to be heard in policy development.

² This states that it aims to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (UNDP, 2016, p.7).

³ "Was adopted by 184 UNESCO Member States on 4 November 2015 in Paris. It is the result of a collective effort involving in-depth, wide-ranging consultations driven and owned by countries, and facilitated by UNESCO as well as other partners. The development of the Framework was guided by the Education for All (EFA) Steering Committee convened by UNESCO and finalised through the Drafting Group for the Education 2030 Framework for Action" (UNESCO 2015, p.16).

above discussions imply that, no one should be left behind (all ages and adults) and everyone should be supported to be skilled in functional literacy and in lifetime to continue learning through several and flexible pathways and entry points.

Over the past 50 years, despite the steady rise in the literacy rates, it has been evident that women compared to men experienced lower literacy rates (UNESCO Institute for Statistics [UIS] (2017). The term “Non-literacy” or being “non-literate” were initially suggested by Benedicta Egbo, an Assistant Professor of Education at the University of Windsor, to avoid stigmatising the disadvantaged people who missed education opportunities based on the more common terms, particularly, “illiteracy” or “illiterate”. Whereas Egbo defines “non-literacy” as the inability to encode and decode written material, she criticises the use of the term’s ‘illiteracy’ and ‘illiterate’, for she argues, they convey images of handicapped subjects being referred to (Egbo, 2000). Similarly, UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning [UIL] (2010) like Egbo on the new changing outlook in literacy research reject the terms ‘illiteracy’ and ‘illiterates’ as inaccurate and negative on the interpretation of the real situation of individuals having challenges in using basic written materials and functional skills in their daily lives. On the other hand, Egbo contends that, the terms non-literate and non-literacy accommodate a consciousness that the subjects being referred to, are in the state of not being able to interpret written material including understanding textual conventions of other related functional skills. Therefore, this study has adopted Egbo’s and UNESCO’S definition of non-literacy based on their approval of the critique of the term illiterate which considers women as social handicapped stereotypes, that inhibits their ability to lead a normal life as well participate in improving their socio-economic lives within the community and the entire society.

According to UIS, while literacy has been high on the development agenda over the past years, global statistics indicate that out of the 750 million adults, two-thirds of non-literate populace whom are women, still lack basic reading and writing skills (see Table 1). Also, the development the National Gender Policy (NGP) in 1997, and its amendment in 2007, confirms a clear commitment by the Government of the Republic of Uganda to mainstream gender in all sectors, and as a result bring about more equal gender relations (MGLSD, 2007). In spite of the

significant progress underlined above, Kabeer (2005) argues that cultural and ideological norms that give men powers, restrict many women’s ability to make choices. Kabeer’s argument indicates persistent social practices of the differences in the positioning of women and men. From a gender viewpoint, Stromquist (2014) argues that, literacy scholars, particularly Freire (1970), emphasises the significance of conscientisation in order to explain how women have been excluded from attaining formal education over a long period leading to their registered low literacy skills. Stromquist perspective and Uganda gender policy’s promotion for women’s equal opportunities as men and Freire’s advocacy on awareness, women’s non-literacy status has often featured in national and international debates viewing literacy and vocational skills as a necessary condition for social, economic as well as national development.

Table 1. The Latest Literacy Figures: Global Literacy Rates and Non-Literate Population by Age Groups, 2016

Indicator	Adults (aged 15 years and older)	Youth (aged 15- 24 years)	Population aged 25-64 years	Elderly (aged 65 years and older)
Global literacy rate (%)				
Both sexes	86	91	86	78
Men	90	93	90	83
Women	83	90	82	73
Gender parity index	0.92	0.96	0.92	0.87
Global non-literate population (millions)				
Both sexes	750	102	507	141
Men	277	44	186	47
Women	473	58	321	94
Share of women (%)	63	57	63	67

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics (July 2017)

Literacy trends differ from region to region as well as country to country based on gender. For example, in Sub-Saharan Africa, the literacy rate for persons aged 15 and above is 58.9% for women and 79.9 for men, while in Central Asia, it is 66.0% for women and 81.5% for men (UIS, 2018). Likewise, compared to other neighbouring East African countries, specifically, Kenya and Tanzania, Uganda also registered lower literacy rate and with most of the non-literate population being women. Based on the previous UIS (2021a) report where the information was collected in 2018, the literacy rate for persons aged 15 and above for Kenya was at 85% for men and 78.2% for women, while in Tanzania, the rate was at 83.2% for men and 73.1% for women. In addition, Uganda's literacy rate was projected by UIS at 82.7 for men and 70.8 for women. All the three countries indicate a lower literacy rate for women than for men, particularly for Uganda.

Turning to Uganda, the current report about literacy rate has only focussed on national level (UBOS, 2016). Nevertheless, according to UBOS (2017) report about area specific profiles, particularly, for Apac district, persons who are non-literate aged 18 years was at 15.2% for men and 38% for women.

Generally, women in developing countries have experienced lower educational attainment than men, which in addition to other forms of gender inequalities, example, cultural stereotype, leads to the poorest, under-employed and un-employed segment of most communities (Stromquist, 2016). Ester Boserup (1970), a distinguished Danish feminist and economist argues that, bias against non-literate persons in the policies and processes of development has excluded many African women from mainstream benefits resulting to their high poverty levels than men poverty.

Since the 1960s, international and national debates on the status of women and their high levels of non-literacy as well as poverty have compelled development practitioners to consider training and integrating them into development processes of nations (Patel, 2009). In addition, an analysis from UBOS (2017) report of some specific socio-economic characteristics such as household assets indicated a negative trend particularly in favor of men. For example, the male headed households that are owner occupied registered 78.5% and female headed households that are owner occupied 21.5%. Therefore, to unravel women's potential to development and reduce on

their loss of opportunity to socio-economic development, FAL and life skills in terms of vocational training should be used as a means to improve their socio-economic status and well-being.

Freire (1970), Kim (2021), Openjuru (2007), UN (2015) and UNESCO (2015b) have thus proposed functional literacy as well as vocational training as the means through which individual livelihoods, needs, quality of life and ability to make informed decisions about life can be improved. According to UNESCO (2006b;), there is a difference between literacy and functional literacy. A literate person is one who can, with understanding, both read and write a short simple statement, while a functionally literate individual is one who is able to improve upon his/her quality of life and make informed decisions due to his/her acquired literacy skills. UIS (2021b) defines functional literacy and numeracy as, the capacity of a person to engage in all those activities in which literacy and numeracy is required for effective function of his or her group and community and also for enabling him or her to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his or her own and the community's development. Functional literacy, as a result, lays emphasis on the utilisation of literacy and life skills acquired to change one's life, while a literate person is measured by his or her ability to read and write (Openjuru, 2007; Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development [MGLSD], 2007a). Thus, in addition to acquisition of literacy skills of reading, writing and numeracy, various developing nations have implemented the policy of training nationals in development-oriented skills and knowledge. Hasaba (2012), Okech & Carr-Hill (2001) and Sen (2003) agree that the provision and accessibility of literacy and specialised skills especially by women is a key access and opportunity to their socio-economic development.

Although the government of Uganda revived adult learning with particular emphasis on FAL, there are many best practices that have been used and praised in the implementation of Adult Literacy services with integrated vocational skills in Uganda. The next section discusses adult literacy programmes and integrated vocational training in Uganda

1.2 Adult Literacy Programmes in Uganda

This section describes different approaches for the implementation of Adult Literacy Programmes in Uganda that was implemented from UNESCO's Experimental World Literacy Programme (EWLP). The services include: FAL; Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques (REFLECT); Literacy Adult Basic Education (LABE) which to some extent works closely with the conventional, and family basic education (FABE); and Integrated Community Learning for Wealth Creation (ICOLEW) Programme implemented recently (Hasaba, 2012; Okech & Carr-Hill, 2001; Openjuru, 2004; MGLSD, 2015; 2019).

1.2.1 Evolution of FAL-International Perspective

Patel (2009) points out that, Paulo Freire, one of the most famous Adult literacy Brazilian educators influenced UNESCO's conception of literacy which was reflected on the *Persepolis Declaration* (1975). In addition, Freire maintains that the aim at a functional literacy training programme is not only to help learners to acquire literacy skills but also to learn them, for instance, economic, social and political skills. More so, the skills acquired will contribute to the learners' social inclusion to cope better in the society.

Both the Declaration and UNESCO's EWLP introduced into the 1960s and 1970s projected literacy as a process that must go beyond learning the skills of reading, writing and numeracy but contribute to the liberation of people as well as their full development (Stromquist, 2006; 2016; UNESCO, 2006a). Following the advice from UNESCO, the Ugandan government adopted the FAL approach from EWLP to salvage the adult literacy programme. Uganda adult literacy policy also recognise the strengthening of public-private partnership, through creating mechanisms to promote coordination and collaboration amongst government and non-government actors in delivery of adult literacy services (MGLSD, 2015). The next section analyses the policies of FAL in Uganda.

1.2.2 The Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) Programme-National Perspective

The government first launched the UNESCO/UNDP EWLP in 1964 with a primary reader and a text for further reading, available in twenty-two languages (UNESCO, 2012). The original target group of the EWLP were those who missed formal education during childhood. These included men, women, older people, youths and specific groups of marginalised people such as prison inmates, the disabled and ethnic minorities above the age of fifteen (UNESCO, 1974).

In 1966, under the guidance of UNESCO, the notion of functional adult literacy (FAL) was preferred, and introduced into the Uganda EWLP because the previous interventions used traditional general approach to teaching reading, writing, and simple numerical skills independently of function or context (Okech & Carr-Hill, 2001). However, this change failed because the required adaptations which was based on functional skills could not easily be grafted onto existing traditional materials published in 1964 (UNESCO, 2008). Also, UNESCO reported that, implementation of FAL failed during President Idi Amin's regime who gave very little government provision for adult education.

Between 1983 and 1989, UNESCO once again spearheaded the revamping of FAL training in Uganda. By early 1990s, the Government of Uganda under President Yoweri K. Museveni was co-financing the UNESCO led FAL programmes (Hasaba, 2012; Okech & Carr-Hill, 2001). FAL training curriculum was amended into what became popularly known as the Integrated Non-Formal Basic Education Pilot Project (INFOBEPP). This INFOBEPP was implemented in 8 districts, namely, Apac, Hoima, Kabarole, Mbarara, Mukono, Mpigi, Kamuli and Iganga (Nsekaki, n.d). The earlier failed functional literacy ideologies which was based on functional skills introduced previously in 1966 into the EWLP were also effectively incorporated into INFOBEPP. The first assessments of INFOBEPP noted high level of eagerness and enthusiasm amongst communities where it was tested. Numerous classes started outside the pilot area. Responding to this reaction to the experimental INFOBEPP, in 1997 Uganda government turned it into the official national FAL programme, which was to be implemented across the country

with assistance from NGOs⁴. The literacy programme “*would focus on linking literacy to people’s livelihoods and needs*”, literacy and specific-skill training (Hanemann, 2017b).

For purposes of implementation of FAL programme, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) which coordinates the programme at national level produced FAL training materials in six local languages. These included Luganda, Luo, Runyankore- Rukiga, Runyoro-Rutooro, Ateso and Lhukonzo. The Luo version was very helpful in the Lango sub-region, where Apac is located. National FAL training was organised at three levels, that is, at the Ministry, District and Sub-county levels. As a key stakeholder, MGLSD was entrusted with the role of developing, designing and overseeing the implementation of the Programme (Hasaba, 2012; MGLSD, 2001, 2008).

For its part, the district was responsible for implementing FAL activities within communities (Hasaba, 2012; UNESCO, 2008). Furthermore, the District Community Development Officers (DCDO) and the Community Development Officers (CDOs) implemented FAL training in the Department of Community Based Services (DCBS) at the Sub-county level. While the CDOs were the closest link between the district and community engagement on FAL training, the DCDOs coordinated the overall implementation of government FAL programmes within the different districts of the country.

The national FAL programme had the following objectives:

- 1) To equip learners with essential life skills for personal and community development.
- 2) To build the capacity of the community in order to generate income and to be self-reliant.
- 3) To enable beneficiaries and their families to attain improved living conditions and a better quality of life.
- 4) To provide equitable and adequate access to literacy education to youth and adult women and men, then build on a culture of lifelong learning among adult learners.

⁴ The NGOs were: Action-aid, National Adult Education Association, and Uganda Community Association for Child Welfare, Uganda Joint Action for Adult Education, Religious bodies and some parastatal organisations.

- 5) To empower the marginalised and vulnerable groups in the society to participate fully as partners in development (Hanemann, 2017b; UNESCO, 2008).

1.2.3 REFLECT by Action Aid International

REFLECT approach of training with literacy was developed in 1993 by Action Aid International, a British development agency and tried out in Bangladesh, El Salvador, and Uganda (Hasaba, 2012; Okech & Carr-Hill, 2001). REFLECT is a socio-cultural method based on community initiative (Hasaba, 2012). In addition, after the evaluation report of the pilot phase in Bundibugyo district, a REFLECT Coordination Unit (RCU) and literacy programmes was set up in Mubende, Uganda, by Action Aid to train and advise those intending to use REFLECT throughout Africa.

Okech & Carr-Hill (2001) reported that some of the organisations that benefited from REFLECT training include: the government FAL programs personnel in Soroti (Atiira sub-county), Save the Children Fund (SCF), a U.K. based agency Female Adult Literacy project in Arua which started in October 1997. While Women's Empowerment Programme (WEP) on literacy training was supported by Netherlands government when very high rates of non-literacy among women were realised with 71% as compared to 35% for the men. Yet, Soroti Catholic Diocese Integrated Development Organisation (SOCADIDO) Adult Literacy Programmes which started in 1995 with seven classes was introduced into existing women's groups.

REFLECT approach uses Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques within adult literacy based on theoretical framework developed by the Brazilian Paulo Freire to strengthen the capacity of the beneficiaries to communicate by whatever means relevant to them (Okech & Carr-Hill, 2001; MGLSD, 2015; UNESCO, 2012). For example, Openjuru (2004) while exploring the PRA tools to be used indicates a strong focus on issues of community development, for instance, agriculture and record keeping. Above all, REFLECT aims *“to integrate literacy and numeracy teaching with broader efforts to stimulate development locally*

and to address communities' social and political concerns” (Barton 2007: 192). This is indicative of integrated vocational skills with adult literacy based on the community needs on what is suitable to improve their socio-economic lives. Archer and Cottingham’s (1996) report on REFLECT in Bangladesh, Uganda and El Salvador demonstrates that the training programme greatly improved the nature of women’s interaction within the all-women committees. This suggests that REFLECT was significant in improving the social economic lives of individuals, particularly the marginalised women who missed the opportunity of formal education.

1.2.4 Literacy Adult Basic Education (LABE)

LABE is an indigenous national NGO whose focus is literacy and related services (was initiated in 1989 by students of Adult Education at Institute of Adult and Continuing Education (IACE) Heugh & Mulumba, 2014; Okech & Carr-Hill, 2001). The main aims of LABE are to address the need in Uganda for sustainable long-lasting literacy skills, essential for equitable grassroots development and a way out of poverty (Association for the Development of Education in Africa [ADEA], 2021). LABE works closely with the Ministries of Education and Sports mainly on Family Basic Education [FABE] (Heugh & Mulumba, 2014). The training service attracted support from various, organizations, including the World University Service, Canada Fund, and British Department for International Development (formerly Overseas Development Administration [ODA]) (Okech & Carr-Hill, 2001; Nyamugasira, Angura, & Robinson, 2005). LABE offers management training, consultancy, and materials to NGOs, with the aim of increasing high-quality literacy and adult basic education, supporting and promoting communities to start self-run literacy education services as well as other community-based education.

LABE initiated the Mother-Tongue Education (MTE) project in 2009 in order to address urgent educational needs of communities in the aftermath of nearly three decades of appalling civil conflict in North and North Western Uganda (ADEA, 2021). Heugh & Mulumba, 2014; MGLSD, 2008; Nyamugasira, Angura, & Robinson, 2005). The mission is to put literacy into practice, enhance access and use of information, particularly among women and children in local

communities, to effectively demand and protect individual and wider rights. To date, LABE is recognised as one of the largest and best Civil Society Organisation (CSO) providing literacy and adult basic education related services with an international stature.

LABE has been considered highly in Uganda by literacy learners, instructors and Government of Uganda officials at local and central levels for its contribution to women and girls' education, as well as meeting for the wider objectives of the programme, particularly, poverty reduction (Heugh & Mulumba, 2014; LABE, 2013; MGLSD, 2008; Nyamugasira, Angura & Robinson, 2005). A review of the training services indicates that the intended aim of the literacy training component by focusing on women's inclusion is being achieved, especially with regard to learners. To illustrate, Heugh & Mulumba (2014) LABE training intervention in Gulu and its transformational outcomes on women in conflict situation is particularly significant in terms of benefits at family and community level, cultural, social and economic gains. This illustrates that LABE training services is in line with MGLSD's (2019) situation analysis report that integrated learning endeavors to address the needs adult learners by imparting FAL skills and livelihood skills for socio-economic inclusion. Hence, LABE services has a lifetime impact on adult literacy participants, particularly, the women who missed formal education.

1.2.5 Family Basic Education (FABE)

FABE services is rendered by an NGO in the field of basic education called Literacy and LABE (Hanemann, 2017a; MGLSD, 2008). The target group comprise of, the rural populace: children (below 15 years of age), parents, adults (aged 15 years and above). The pilot project was expanded in response to the demand for adult learning and the enthusiasm for education generally that had been initiated by community school management committees, concerned parents, local governments and district education officials. In addition, as parents realised the value of training, they were inspired to support their children's access to education as well assisting them in the learning process.

In addition to literacy and numeracy, FABE approach aims to:

- Equip parents with basic knowledge on school learning methods and strengthen their support to meet the educational needs of children
- Develop parenting skills of the adult learners and improve the communication skills among parents, children and teachers based on five thematic components. The thematic components are: Train-the-Trainer (adults only), Classroom Based Learning (children only), Classroom Based Family Learning (adults and children), Home Based Family Learning (adults and children) and Adult Basic Literacy Learning (adults only).
- Combine formal and non-formal adult basic education by supporting parents to interact freely with their primary school going children through reading and writing together (Hanemann, 2017a; MGLSD, 2015; UNESCO, 2012).

Hence, practices of FABE training highlighted above indicates a flexible, structured and inclusive approach to school education, adult literacy and vocational training in turn promoting links between school learning and the inclusive community, in this case, the women.

1.2.6 Integrated Community Learning for Wealth Creation (ICOLEW)

The newly designed ICOLEW has been piloted since 2016. The training project was recently implemented by MGLSD in order to promote innovative ways for Adult Literacy Service Delivery optimization (MGLSD, 2019). Notably, in line with National Adult Literacy Policy Framework, the MGLSD in partnership with German Adult Education Association (DDV International) has piloted the Integrated Community Learning for Wealth Creation Programme in the four districts of Mpigi, Iganga, Namayingo and Nwoya. The purpose of the partnership and support is to promote community level actions to reduce poverty while targeting the adult FAL learners, particularly, women and girls in the localities or districts. This comprehensive integrated programme strives to address the needs of adult learners by imparting literacy and numeracy skills, and livelihood skills for socio-economic inclusion. The objectives of MGLSD on ICOWE project are to: enhance literacy and numeracy skills; strengthen capacity of participants to access micro finances; increase the involvement of the rural poor in

government program that seek to raise household incomes; and enhance public sector capacity to respond to identified community issues.

The new ICOLEW programme by MGLSD is in line with Uganda's Vision 2040 and the Adult Literacy and Community Development policies, and comprises of the following components and adult education services, namely: -

- Enhancement of literacy and numeracy skills;
- formation of Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLA);
- Community development initiatives;
- vocational skills training; and
- business skilling. (DVV International, 2020; MGLSD, 2019).

Particularly, the programme has been praised because it's uniqueness of which: integrates implementation of reading, writing and numeracy with support to creation of livelihoods based on issues brought out, discussed and agreed upon by the participants. It has considered integration of delivery of services by other departments such as agriculture.

According to DVV International (2020) and MGLSD (2019), implementation and accomplishment ICOWE and lifelong learning opportunities for all will be through a multi-sectoral and multi-departmental approach and partnership with stakeholders, development partners, civil society and faith-based organisations. Hence, practices of ICOWE highlighted above is indicative an integrated and inclusive approach adult literacy and vocational training with diversified skills to eradicate poverty and improve the socio-economic lives of learners, particularly, the marginalised women.

Implications for the national roll-out of the training programme include;

- A pilot programme that started in only 4 districts of Uganda now has to be rolled out in a phased approach to the whole country, namely 136 districts, 9 cities and 14 municipal councils;

- All government resources that were previously allocated for FAL will now go to financing ICOLEW (annually around 302,000 Euro), with a robust resource mobilisation strategy underway;
- Wide-scale training and capacity building has to take place;
- The nationally developed documents, such as the up-scaling strategy, programme implementation guidelines, training manuals, etc., will have to be disseminated to all government structures in districts and sub-counties.
- An inter-sectoral forum to bring all stakeholders on board needs to be established.
- All development partners have to shift from FAL to ICOLEW, which is described as both an approach and programme (DVV International, 2020).

1.3 Integrated FAL and Vocational Training - International Perspective and National Perspective

In 2015, vocational training was unanimously agreed on the global agenda under the UN’s SDGs 4.3 which stated that by 2030, *there should be “equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university”* (UN, 2015, p. 19). Recent evidence suggests that, the SDGs also emphasises on sustainable economic growth as well as decent work, while affirming the significance of inculcating suitable skills across goals (McGrath, Alla-Mensah & Langthaler, 2018).

Vocational training in Uganda is carried out, particularly in technical institutes, technical schools, technical colleges and polytechnics, agriculture colleges, colleges of commerce and the Non-Formal Training Framework under the guidance of the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Act 2008 (Okumu, 2019). In addition, the TVET Act 2008 was intended to provide non-formal education particularly to the youth who had dropped out of school or early school leavers without any skills to prepare them for employment (Kim, 2021; Okumu, 2019). According to Okumu, other institutions have been set up to operationalize the vocational training Act 2008. The institutions comprises of: National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) to champion vocational training from traditional academic teaching to practical skills training; Directorate of Industrial Training (DIT) to certify quality assurance in vocational training;

Uganda Business Technical Examination Board (UBTEB), Uganda Nursing and Midwifery Examination Board (UNMEB) and Uganda Allied Health Examinations Board (UAHEB) to streamline, regulate and coordinate examinations and awards in the vocational training sub-sector based on the scope of subjects covered in the specific programmes. For instance, the range of vocational courses covered by Management Training and Advisory Centre (MTAC) in Uganda comprises of fashion and design; cookery and bakery; shoe making and leather works; carpentry and joinery, hairdressing and cosmetology; painting and decorations; graphics and digital design. Each of these course programmes run for a period of 4 months at Uganda shillings 450,000 (MTAC, 2020). This indicates that, despite the free FAL adult learning provided by the Uganda government and other international partners, the aspects of vocational skills require financial resources for literacy education programme to be more effective.

Regarding adult education and vocational training, UNESCO's fourth Global report on Adult learning and education finds insufficient progress in adult and integrated vocational education (UNESCO, 2020). As noted by UNESCO's Global Education Monitoring Report 2017/18, the information indicates many challenges such as lack of standardization in adult and vocational education. Likewise, following UNESCO's review of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, adult training system capacity indicate that, they have difficulties reaching under-represented persons such as adults with low or no educational attainment (OECD, 2019). Particularly, the analysis points out the challenges of reaching the under-represented population which include: inadequate finances in most systems, low quality and relevance of training, inadequate skills assessment and governance mechanism.

Nevertheless, in 2015, a situational analysis carried out on the implementation of FAL in Uganda by MGLSD revealed that innovative ways of adult literacy should be promoted to reduce poverty at community level named Integrated Community Learning for Wealth Creation [ICOLEW] (MGLSD, 2019). However, Uganda National Household Survey 2019/2020 revealed that the literacy rate is still lower, particularly for women compared to men, for example, by 72% and 81% respectively (UBOS, 2021). Besides, MGLSD report indicate that "*Low adult literacy levels and inadequate functional skills*" continuously impedes participation in particular the adults in development initiatives and household income earning ability (MGLSD, 2019, pg.10).

Recent evidence suggests that, currently, there is no specific policy on vocational education training delivery which guarantees skills development for all (MoES, 2019). In view of that, Government of Uganda has developed vocational education training policy to address the current socio-economic requirements. Government's Third National Development Plan (NDPIII) highlights the need to: empower families, communities and citizens to participate in sustainable development through increased adult literacy rate from 72.2 % to 80% in line with the SDG 4 (NDP, 2020). In addition, based on the NDP, the government's National Planning Authority, emphasises reduction in prevalence of negative social norms and cultural practices that propagate gender equality which in turn contributes to marginalization and exclusion of women to participate in improving their socio-economic status. Specifically, for successful implementation of the NDP, enhanced skills and vocational development should be pursued as a key development strategy. Likewise, the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda-1995 provides for the right to education under Article 30 (MoES, 2019).

In a bid to continuously improve on the socio-economic lives of those who missed the opportunity of formal education, particularly, the marginalized adult women, MGLSD is committed to address their need through the implementation of the Integrated Community Learning for Wealth Creation (ICOLEW). This kind of training indicates the significance of adult learning and integrated vocational skills to improve the socio-economic lives of the women.

The overall goal by MGLSD is to empower adults with no or limited literacy and numeracy skills to participate in the development process in their communities, specifically to:

- i) To enhance adult learners' literacy and numeracy skills and their application for socio-economic transformation
- ii) To improve infrastructure for integrated adult and lifelong learning
- iii) To strengthen the institutional capacity to deliver the programme (MGLSD, 2019, pg.11)

These objectives are in line with Freire's assumption of literacy and integrated vocational skills from the socio-economic perspective of women's inclusion in development which strongly informs this study.

1.4 Problem Statement

Global statistics indicate that, while literacy has been high on the development agenda over the past decades, the latest literacy figures show that, out of the 750 million adults, two-thirds of non-literate population whom are women, still lack basic reading, writing and numeracy skills (UNESCO Institute for Statistics [UIS] (2017). In many developing countries, non-literate women are marginalised socially and economically. Their inability to read, write or understand literature available for social as well as economic development has been recognised as contributing significantly to their condition. While there is great global economic growth due to advances in socio-economic development, non-literate women get a raw deal on sharing this prosperity.

While development sociologists and economists have for long suggested a strong positive relationship between literacy with integrated vocational training and socio-economic development, many women in Uganda have missed the opportunity of formal education. According to information gathered in 2018, women have registered lower literacy rates compared men at 70.8% and 82.7% respectively (UIS, 2021a). Above all, report in Apac district indicate that 38.0 % of adult women compared 15.2% of the adult men have missed formal education, which in turn affects their socio-economic lives (UBOS, 2017). Therefore, literacy as well as vocational training is a tool for inclusion for those who have never been to school. This only means a society with a large proportion of women being non-literate is less likely to participate in, for instance, income generating activities and therefore have limited ability to develop socially and economically.

Despite the promotion of the adult literacy by Uganda government to improve the socio-economic status of women, qualitative information about the impact of FAL with integrated vocational training on their agency in socio-economic development is insufficient. Therefore, this study aimed at addressing this knowledge gap about adult literacy and vocational training as

well as the experiences of individual women and level of transformation in their socio-economic lives.

1.5 Research Objectives

General Objective: The main objective of this study was to explore whether and how women participants in Apac District derived socio-economic benefits from FAL and vocational training.

1.5.1 Specific Objectives

- i. To analyse the women’s socio-economic experiences in Apac District prior to their training in FAL and vocational skills.
- ii. To explore the levels and kinds of skills acquired by FAL and vocationally-trained women in Apac District.
- iii. To establish whether there was any socio-economic improvement in women based on literacy and vocational skills in Apac District compared to previous non-literary status.

1.5.2 Research Questions

The key research question was: Have the women in Apac District derived any socio-economic benefits from FAL and vocational skills?

The study research question was broken down into sub questions as follows:

- i. What were the experiences of women in Apac District prior to their training in FAL and vocational skills?
- ii. “What levels and kinds of skills had the Apac women acquired from FAL and vocational skills?”
- iii. How did FAL and vocational training benefit women on their socio-economic lives?

1.6 Scope of the Study

Geographically, the study was conducted in the Municipal Council- (Divisions of Arocha, Atik and Agulu) and selected Sub-counties of Apac and Chegere in Apac District.

Content Scope: The study focused on FAL and vocationally trained women's, exploring them as active agents of their socio-economic development. To accomplish this, the study the women's experiences prior to their training in FAL and vocational learning, explored the levels and kinds of FAL and vocational skills acquired by the women as well as established the benefits of literacy and vocational training on women's socio-economic lives.

Time scope: The study primarily focused on experiences of women who had completed level II of integrated FAL and vocational training within the period 2020 to 2021. This period was considered because at level II, women were introduced to broader development issues by integrating vocational skills in this level's curriculum.

1.7 Significance of The Study

This study will be beneficial in the following ways:

- a. The information generated from this study will guide the policy makers (central and local governments) and civil society to review and integrate FAL programme with vocational skills that have a direct impact on the socio-economic lives of women.
- b. This study promises to reveal possible benefits of FAL with integrated vocational training which may be useful to womenfolk and community in Apac district and across Uganda. If the results are positive, this study will hopefully encourage women to embrace and enroll massively for FAL and vocational training.
- c. The information generated will therefore contribute to the existing body of knowledge. This will enable academicians and researchers to make reference to it whenever dealing with issues of FAL and integrated vocational training, while considering it as a socio-economic tool for participatory development.

1.8 Definition of Key Concepts

Functional Literacy: a functionally literate individual is one that is using literacy skills acquired to improve his or her quality of life, make informed decisions, effectively function of his or her group and the community's development (UNESCO, 2006b;UIS, 2021b). The concept was used

to show women's utilisation of reading, writing and numerical skills acquired by means which contribute to socio-economic development. Further, this study considers the concept of functional literacy to illustrate the process of acquiring literacy skills to improving the ability of awareness, self-confidence and utilisation of integrated skills as a basis for socio-economic development.

Non-Literacy: The concept, "*non-literacy*" means the inability to encode and decode written material, along with other related skills, for example, numeracy (Egbo 2000, p.38). The notion is also understood as the difficulties experienced by women in using the basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy in their daily lives as well as participate fully in community and wider society (UIL, 2010). The concept is used to explore non-literate women's experience of low self-confidence, limited awareness of on the value of integrated FAL with vocational skills as well as inadequate choice and agency in contributing to socio-economic development and improvement of their well-being.

Vocational Training: This refers to a set of skills, abilities and attitudes that enable individuals to learn, make informed decisions and exercise rights to lead a productive life and subsequently become agents of change (Kim, 2021; UNICEF, 2019). The concept was used to show women's utilization of vocational skills acquired by means which improves on their socio-economic development. In addition, the study used this concept to demonstrate how women that acquired integrated vocational skills with adult learning enhance their ability improve socio-economic lives and well-being.

Inclusion: Based on literatures conceptualising exclusion, conceptions of social inclusion is seen to be defined in relation to social exclusion and some analysts have argued that both inclusion and exclusion are inseparable sides of the same coin (Rawal, 2008). Exclusion involves discrimination, reducing the status and opportunities for women in development practice (Boserup, 1970. Through a lens of inclusion, equality of opportunity implies that all individuals (men and women) have full development, equal access to the institutions and publicly provided resources which allow them to obtain capabilities and attain their potential (Sen, 1985; Turner & Fischer-Kowalski, n.d; UNESCO, 2021). The concept of inclusion was used to show how FAL

and vocationally trained women have improved or failed to improve their ability and opportunity to participate in socio-economic development on the basis of their identity.

Agency: This concept denotes a person's ability to act, make choices and influence change. Kabeer (2005) contends that, agency is a person's ability to define his or her strategic life choices and act upon them even if there are others that oppose (Kabeer, 2005). Her concept of agency suggests that women should engage in transformational development as active agents not passive participants. This study used the concept of agency to display how women who were beneficiaries of FAL and vocational training become or failed to become agents of their socio-economic development.

Socio-Economic Development: This concept refers to the process of the combination of social and economic change engineered in a given society and improvement of people's lifestyles because of all stakeholders' participation in both the internal and external advancements (Oyitso & Olomukoro, 2012; Szirmai, A. (2015). The concept was used to display setbacks such as lack of education or non-literacy, skills development, income and employment. It is also a basis upon which women's experiences in the process of social and economic transformative elements of FAL and vocational training attained is tested based on cultural and environmental friendly factors.

1.9 Structure of the Study

Chapter one is the introduction to the study. It provides the background, objectives, research questions, scope, significance of the study, and definition of key concepts.

The second chapter focuses on a critical literature review of women's socio-economic development experiences prior to their FAL and integrated vocational training. The chapter also explores the kinds and levels of skills acquired by FAL and vocationally-trained women. Likewise, this chapter analyses the benefits of literacy and integrated vocational training on women's socio-economic lives. Also, it analyses the theories which inform this study, namely, the agency theory from Freirean literacy perspective and Kabeer's socio-economic perspective.

The theoretical perspectives helped in exploring and understanding the position of women in socio-economic development.

Chapter three presents the methodology of the study by highlighting the research design; study population, area and selection, sampling, data collection and analysis methods. Also, it presents the justification for choosing qualitative interpretive framework as the most appropriate for exploring the lived experiences of women in Apac District. The final part of the chapter explores the researcher's positioning, validation strategies, limitations and ethical considerations of the study.

The fourth chapter presents findings addressing the first study objective, that is, women's experiences in Apac District prior to their training in FAL and vocational skills. The chapter focuses on women's socio-economic characteristics in terms of age distribution, major occupations, household headship and family size. Also, the chapter centers on women's challenges to participate in community gatherings, participate within family settings and limited awareness on the value of FAL as well as vocational skills. The main objective of this chapter was focused on the live experiences the women went through prior to their enrolment on FAL with integrated vocational skills. In addition, the chapter presents women's motivation for training based on the kind of life they lived before enrolling for FAL and integrated vocational training.

Chapter five presents the study findings answering the second research objective on, "*What levels and kinds of skills had the Apac women acquired from FAL and vocational training?*". The chapter explores women's level and kinds of skills acquired under FAL with integrated vocational training as an opportunity and a gateway to participate in the socio-economic development process more effectively.

The sixth chapter displays the transformations in the socio-economic lives of women based on the skills acquired in FAL as well as integrated vocational skills.

Chapter seven gives a recap of the findings of this study and provides recommendations for policy-makers, womenfolk and the academia.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the relevant literature on women's experiences on socio-economic development prior to their training in FAL and integrated vocational skills, the levels and kinds of literacy and vocational skills acquired and how they are using the skills acquired to develop socially and economically.

2.1 Women's Socio-Economic Experiences of Pre-FAL and Vocational Skills

Non-literacy and lack of vocational skills is a key factor which impeded communal and national development. Report in India have shown that a major factor in the society and who should participate in nation building process are non-literate and can't be expected to become a super power in contributing to national development (Bose, 2021). Particularly, Bose argued that non-literacy, mass unemployment, lack of vocational skills and increasing poverty levels are some of the key problems affecting many developing countries in Africa, as well as The Gambia. Also, Bose contend that these challenges in turn hinder national development and economic growth based on, for example, lack of training, unemployment, and poverty. Therefore, Bose suggest that, each group in the society should contribute in the nation building process. This demonstrates that the high levels of women's non-literacy rate contribute to their exclusion socially and economically as well as poor socio-economic lives and well-being for themselves, their families as well as the society in in which they live.

Adult literacy and different integrated vocational training programmes have been argued as a vital tool for social and economic development, although the programmes have often been ineffective in promoting the literacy and numeracy skills for which they were initially intended to promote (Abadzi, 1994; Blunch & Pörtner, 2011; Ortega & Rodríguez, 2008). Participants have often learnt various skills other than literacy and numeracy, that is, those that are income generation. Thus, adult literacy programmes may generally be productive, provided different vocational courses like fashion and designing, handloom and textile as well as poultry farms are

incorporated into the analysis as well as promoting literacy and numeracy skills per se (Bose, 2021; Blunch, 2013).

While Kabeer Freire (1970), UNESCO (2006b; 2020) and UIS (2017) emphasises on the rights and importance of women's education or training in addressing gender inequality, globally, only 83% adult women are considered literate compared to 90% of adult men. While literacy as well as integrated vocational skills is significant for the populace to participate in their communities, the goal of halving global non-literacy rates by 2015 has not been reached (UNESCO, 2015b). According to UIS (2017), serious gender imbalances with regard to non-literacy still persist in the global population with 58% for women and 44% for men. As a result, men continue to be more literate than women in many countries in the world. In Uganda, information gathered in 2018 by (UIS, 2021a) also indicate that women have registered lower literacy rates compared men at 70.8% and 82.7% respectively. Above all, Boserup (1970) argued that women have always been an important component in development practice, particularly, agriculture and beyond the corporate commercial farming system of the world but their status and opportunity have been reduced due to their lack of literacy and vocational skills. Her argument implies that lack of literacy and integrated vocational skills in comparison to men have been linked to their socio-economic exclusion and high levels of poverty they experience, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. The above information illustrates that literacy as well as integrated vocational training is significant on improving women's socio-economic lives in the contemporary world.

A trend analysis by the Uganda National Household Survey 2019/2020 affirms the report by UIS above which revealed that the literacy rate for men is higher compared to the women by 72% and 81% respectively (UBOS, 2021). Turning to Apac Municipality for example, differences in rates are even wider with men aged 18 years and above who are non-literate standing at 15.2% while non-literate women who are 18 years and above standing at 38.0% (UBOS, 2017). Literacy as well as integrated vocational training is considered very crucial in many ways. Both international as well as national NGOs such as UNESCO (2015;2020) and UN (2015) have recognised that training or education eradicates poverty. The forum has established on the need to eradicate non-literacy by promoting individuals, especially women who missed the opportunity of formal education to acquire a basic set of literacy and integrated vocational skills in order to enhance

their ability to improve socio-economic lives and well-being (Bandiera et al., 2020; UN, 2015; UNESCO, 2006).

2.2 Women's level of literacy and Vocational skills

The emphasis on the training is now focused on integrating FAL with vocational training which is adequate for active engagement for meaningful individual and communal development. To begin with, Khan (2001) noted that FAL skills training have been classified in three levels by UNESCO as highlighted below:

Level 1 (Basic level):

This involves reading and understanding simple printed paragraphs, writing simple letters, counting and recognising figures 1-100.

Level 2 (middle level):

This comprises of reading and comprehending stories, songs, directions, and simple parts of newspapers; writing simple notes and letters; and demonstrating proficiency in adding and subtracting).

Level 3 (self-learning level):

It includes analyzing and synthesizing main ideas of what they read; and writing one or two pages on certain topics.

Previous studies have reported that UNESCO's adult literacy levels to some extent harmonise with MGLSD: Beginners level (Local language), Intermediate level (Local Language and Advanced level in basic English (Acaye & Omara-Akaca, 2012; Byabamazima et al., 2012; Hasaba, 2012). However, the MGLSD FAL programme levels have been slightly modified to diversify the training through development, use of primers as well as teachers' guides which is relevant to different parts of the country (MGLSD, 2007a). Thus, the improved or modified training approach is indicative that FAL training levels inspires flexibility in the actual learning condition. This implies that although vocational training is not directly included in the FAL curriculum, both skills can be integrated to widen women's ability to improve on their socio-economic lives better.

According to Bose's (2021) study in Nadia District of West Bengal, education or literacy is the only means for inclusion of women to contribute in the process of nation building. Bose suggests that, "*Women should be trained up in different vocational courses like handloom and textile, poultry farms, fish farming, piggery, dairy farm, food and nutrition, fashion and designing, beauty parlour etc.* (pg. 84). The statement illustrates that women's inclusion can only be effected through high levels of FAL and integrated vocational skills training which is significant in improving their socio-economic lives and well-being compared to when they were non-literate with limited or no vocational skills. The above argument is consistent with findings of the past studies by Nnodim & Johnwest (2016, pg. 24) who "*established that a non-formal education program in Nigeria helped women acquire knowledge and skills including but not limited to hairdressing skills, cloth weaving skills, tailoring skills, bead, and hat making, knowledge on ICT, reading, writing, and speaking skills*". The findings demonstrate that skills in adult literacy and integrated vocational training significantly contribute to women's inclusion, reduction in their poverty, well-being and communal development.

Initiatives such as ("Feed the Minds") and in the global south confirm how adult education and integrated vocational training specifically to the women that have been marginalised and often missed out on school to are able to increase their confidence and become engaged in community's development. In addition, the marginalised women who missed out training opportunities due to extreme poverty, conflict or discrimination have the ability to increase their income. This demonstrates that adult literacy and diversified vocational education is significant to improving the socio-economic status of women within their communities.

FAL programme in Uganda has been categorized into three levels. Level one is the beginners' phase with 180-226 contact hours equivalent to nine months of study, level two includes nine months with the same contact hours as level one and level three (introduced in 2006) consists of 150-180 contact hours (Hasaba, 2012; Okech & Carr-Hill, 2001; Rogers, 2008). Contact hours refer to the face to face interaction between the learners and their FAL instructor. Literacy instruction in the first two stages is conducted in the local language of the learners and only in stage three is basic English language introduced (Acaye & Omara-Akaca, 2012; Hasaba, 2012). The contents of the FAL primers focuses on issues of economic development and poverty

eradication through three major content areas which include: a) agriculture, co-operative, marketing and trade, b) health, and c) gender issues, culture and civic consciousness (Hasaba, 2012; Openjuru, 2007). FAL programme primer emphasises the integration of basic reading, writing and numeracy with functional skills and empowers the adult trained people for improving their livelihood and well-being (MGLSD, 2015).

Previous report in Uganda has shown that, while participation in non-formal vocational training is similar between genders, women tend to participate in tailoring and hair dressing courses while most of the men choose bricklaying, carpentry and mechanics (Banks & Sulaiman, 2012; Kim, 2021). This indicates continuous gender stereotypes and limited choices as well as ability on the different kinds of livelihood or employment available for the women. According to Kabeer (1999), this kind of situation requires bridging gender gaps to make changes that serve women's strategic gender interests, for example, abolition of gender differences in the levels training courses.

In response to Uganda national adult literacy policy, emphasis was put on incorporating the curriculum/primers of functional skills with basic reading, writing and numeracy to enhance the adults, particularly the marginalized women to improve their livelihood and well-being (MGLSD, 2015). FAL primers focused economic development and poverty eradication through the contents of: a) agricultural productivity, co-operative, marketing and trade; b) health; and c) gender issues, culture and civic consciousness (Hasaba, 2012; Openjuru, 2007). Similarly, recent evidence suggests that the curriculum for vocational education in Uganda is linked to national development policy of transitioning from agricultural to modern society (Kim, 2021). This is indicative that vocational training model can be integrated with FAL curriculum by policy makers which coordinate FAL as a strategy for improving women's socio-economic lives. FAL is a government programme which covers the entire country. The training programme is an opportunity to engage all the individuals particularly the marginalised women who missed the chance of formal education to acquire and use knowledge and skills for personal and communal development.

2.3 FAL and Integrated Vocational Training for Socio-Economic Development

According to International Labour Organisation [ILO] (2020), vies for increasing women's access to and participation in lifelong learning is to prevent them from being left out in the first changing world of work. In addition, ILO argues that, non-formal technical and vocational skills training that targeted specifically the women can facilitate their transition into engagement in labour market. This implies that FAL and integrated vocational training creates jobs for the women and generates income for them which in turn reduces their poverty and helplessness.

Previous studies have argued that functional literacy should have a vision of vocational training to incorporate non-literate poor people, especially the women and for supportive environments, flexible response to changing demands, complex curriculum and capacity building (Oxenham, 2002). This implies that, the attainment of Oxenham's vision of functional literacy were integration of literacy training with vocational skills and having partnerships with, for example, vocational institutions. Furthermore, more recent studies have confirmed that, adult learning and integrated vocational education lead to a considerable and lasting earnings for women by 27%, which indicates more positive effects on future earnings due to individual skills development (Bratsberg, Nyen & Raaum (2020). Similarly, recent evidence suggest that that women's training based on non-formal vocational skills increases their participation in income generating activities (Bandiera et al., 2020).

Study by Olagbaju (2020) found that adult literacy and skills acquisition in the form of combined vocational training were found to have a significant relationship and impact on women's inclusion and self-reliance in Gambia. Further, Olagbaju revealed that, most of the women in the study attested to the fact that the trainings received had direct impact on their lives and financial status. Previous study by Mayombe (2017) which focused on the impact of adult education and training for self-employment as well as micro-enterprises in South Africa, also found that the training equipped the learners, particularly the marginalised women with skills to start small businesses. In addition, the skills in adult literacy and integrated vocational training acquired prepare them particularly for self-employment in the contemporary world. Mayombe's affirmation on the learners' ability to start small-scale businesses is indicative of the significance

of adult literacy in addition to integrated vocational training in women's personal as well communal development.

Bokova (2015) also notes that, knowledge is key in eradicating poverty and reaching the Sustainable Development Goal 4, which aims to *“ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”* (UNDP, 2016, p.7). This is indicative of gender equality where both women and men should have equal opportunity from literacy besides integrated vocational training for the society to gain. In addition, Olomukoro argue that when women are literate, the entire society gains. Bokova and Olomukoro's argument is in line with the slogan for the UNICEF that, *‘when you educate a woman, you educate a nation’* (Olomukoro & Adedire, 2015). This clearly demonstrates that, if FAL is linked to vocational training, marginalised women will be equipped to perform their roles more effectively.

Okech et al. (2001) and Hasaba's (2012) report in Uganda revealed that literacy programmes benefited the learners with vocational and business skills. A study conducted about women in Uganda found that they opted for integrated training with vocational skills such as making cakes, tailoring, hairdressing, making beads, candle as well as crafts because they are adults who cannot go back to formal classroom learning (Namuyiga,2020). Besides, the women opted for adult learning and integrated vocational training because the skills take little time, and easier to for them to apply practical skills and get means of generating income, which in turn can help in improving their lives. Also, vocational skills acquired such as making dreadlocks, liquid soap, shampoo and conditioner helped adult women to gain self-confidence and self-worth to start up their own business and earn extra income (Bukuluki, 2020). In addition, the skills helped them to participate in both formal as well as non-formal sector activities and sustain their lives. Therefore, the above findings suggest that FAL plus integrated vocational training is significant to women's improved livelihood and economic status, for example, through self-employment. Although similar claims about FAL and integrated vocational training about women have been reported in Uganda, studies particularly focusing on adult literacy and integrated vocational training in Apac district have been challenging to find. Therefore, this study aimed at addressing the information gap.

2.5 Theoretical Perspectives

A theory is fundamental for any research work to give its direction or viewpoint and furthermore to validate or disapprove a phenomenon. Theoretical underpinning helps the researcher to interpret the way the things are or a phenomenon and the basis of specific actions.

The study was anchored within agency theory which is traced back to Freirean literacy theory and Kabeer's socio-economic perceptions. Agency theory places women's ability and active participation in a prominent position if their socio-economic status and well-being are to be improved.

2.5.1 The Agency Theory

Aarts, Chalker & Weiner (2014) and Burkitt (2016) defines an agent as the person who carries out an action to produce a result. Feminist scholars such as Wollstonecraft believed that in the eighteenth century, women did not contribute to society because they lacked awareness and agency, and that they were viewed as incapable of anything other than being wives, mothers or love objects. However, in pursuit of women's rights in 1792, Wollstonecraft in her book "A vindication of the Rights of Woman" popularised women's well-being and their claim to agency (Botting, 2014; Wollstonecraft, 1982). Scott explains that 'agency means doing (the doer of an action) and the characteristics of agency include ambition, assertiveness, ability to reason and self-confidence (Scott, 2014). Hence, agency as a concept has been used by many scholars to explain the element of conscientisation or awareness by making marginalised non-literates see the reality of the world and recognise impediment to their development.

2.5.2 Agency Theory and Freirean Literacy Perspective

Freire's theory is founded on the notions of conscientisation or awareness and dialogue which points out that, the major factors in social change include social awareness and critical inquiry (Freire, 1970; Freire & Macedo, 1987). He states that, literacy should not only impart the skills to read, write and do arithmetic, but also open the minds of the learners to discover the world within which they live as well as contribute to effective functioning and development of an individual, a group and the community (UNESCO, 2006a). Additionally, Freire and Macedo

argues that lack of consciousness of the real world, limited social awareness and critical inquiry can impede social change, especially for the women with no literacy and professional skills. The element of ‘conscientisation’ attempts to make marginalised see the reality of the world by using their agency to recognise their obstacle to development, while coming together in dialogue to discuss and deal with this obstacle which is affecting their existence (Freire, 1970; Freire & Macedo, 1987). Freire’s theory in this study guided in analysing whether women who acquired FAL and vocational training are utilising the skills to act as functioning members in their families and community.

2.5.3 Agency Theory and Kabeer’s Socio-Economic Perspective

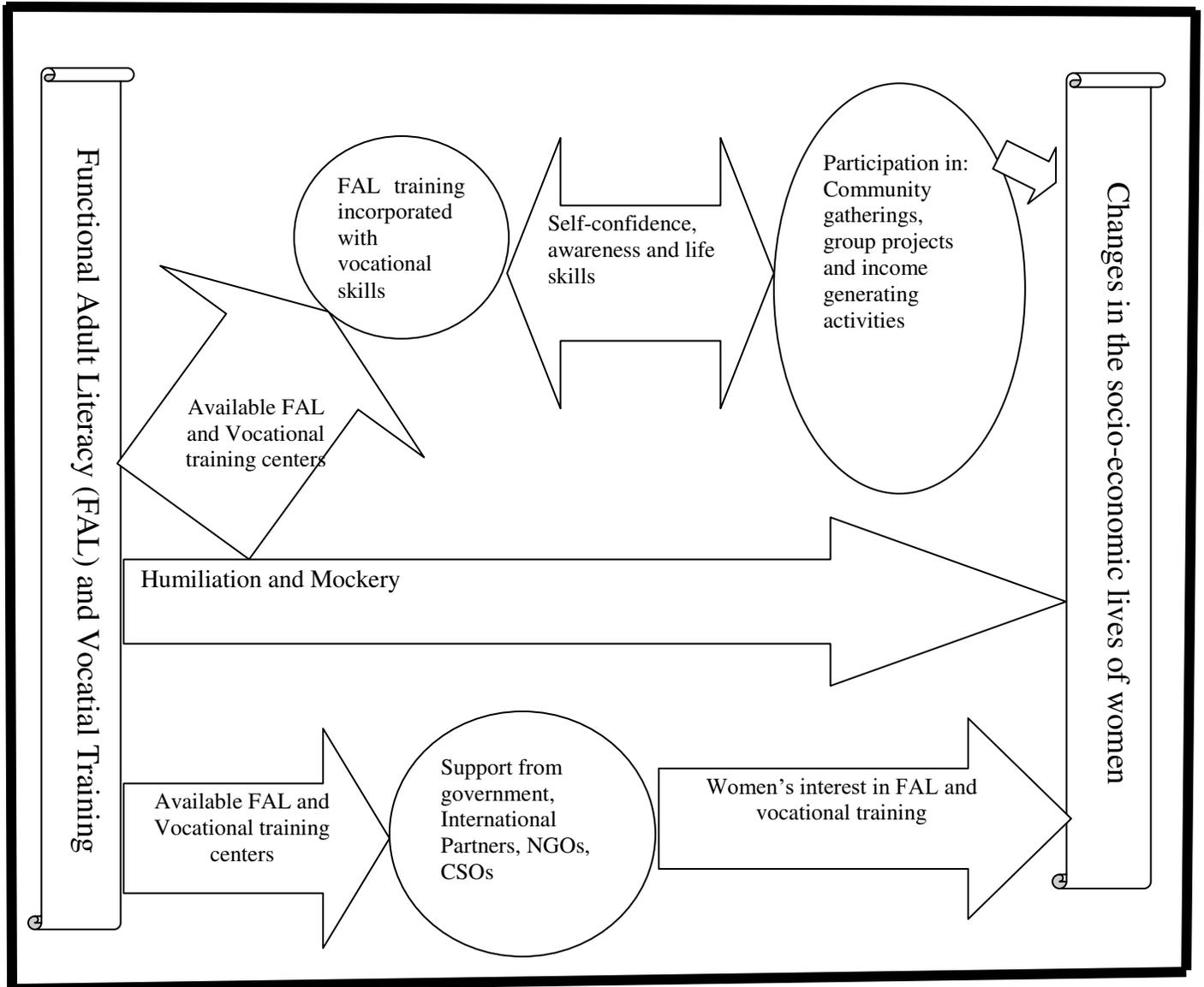
Several feminist scholars have picked Wollstonecraft’s line of arguing for women’s agency. Amongst them is Kabeer who has continued to explain that, agency is a person’s ability to define his or her strategic life choices and act upon them even if there are others that oppose (Kabeer, 2005). Kabeer maintains that women should engage in transformational development as active agents not passive participants. Kabeer, however, contends that in several cultures, institutional biases, (customary, cultural ideological norms and values) restrict many women’s ability to make such choices. Her perception of women’s less ability to make choices suggests the need for a strategy to bridge gender gaps between of both formal and non-formal institutional levels through a joint intellectual model. Particularly, Kabeer (1999) argues that bridging gender gaps requires changes that serve women's strategic gender interests, for example, abolition of gender opportunity for education or training and imbalanced control over resources.

According to Kabeer (2005, p.15), agency can be “*passive*” or “*active*”. Therefore, the conception of active agency suggests that FAL as well as vocationally trained women are expected to become active agents of their socio-economic development. Basing on socio-economic development context, Kabeer (2005) emphasises the power of education or training to ignite women’s ability and social inclusion. According to Gogoi (2020), inclusion refers to giving equal opportunity for women to participate in economic activities. In line with Kabeer’s viewpoints, Sen (1999) maintains that a good basic training can improve upon the ability of a person to earn more and improve on their well-being in this case, the women.

The agency theory significantly explains women's active participation. First, the women's development as paramount self-driven shows how individual women actively participate in socio-economic development. Stewart & Sinclair (2007) argue that development is about individuals becoming agents in development. According to Sen (1999), agency has enabled the trained women, for example, to become self-employed, acquire personal as well as more income, make re-investments of savings from income generated and improve on the socio-economic lives for the entire family. In agreement with Sen's view, Kabeer (2005) emphasises on the impact and the part played by education or training as a fundamental determinant of women's agency and socio-economic inclusion. Therefore, agency enables women to actively participate in socio-economic development and improvement of their well-being. Therefore, Agency theory is relevant to this study because it focuses on how women who are beneficiaries FAL and integrated vocational training actively participate or are unsuccessful to become agents of their socio-economic development.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: Women’s FAL and Vocational Training Conceptual Framework



Source: Generated by the Researcher

Figure 1 above explains the relationship between FAL and integrated vocational training services, women’s interest to the facilities and possible anticipated impact based on facts or observed evidence inductively created from the participants. Ivankova, Creswell, & Plano Clark (2007, pg.23) define the inductive researcher as someone who works from the “*bottom-up, using*

the participants' views to build broader themes and generate a theory interconnecting the themes".

On training services, while the Uganda government revitalized adult literacy with particular emphasis on FAL, the key contributions of other actors in the provision of adult literacy services is also recognised., mainly faith-based organisations and civil society to provide adult literacy services using diverse approaches. Other services in addition to FAL include: REFLECT, (LAFE) which to some extent works closely with the conventional FAL and ICOWE (Hasaba, 2012; Okech & Carr-Hill, 2001; Openjuru, 2004; MGLSD, 2015: 2019). There are number of best practices by FAL government programme and NGOs that have been used and praised in the implementation of Adult Literacy services with integrated vocational skills in Uganda. It is assumed that women would be interested in attending the training if there is a support from International Partners, NGOs as well as CSOs and free FAL training established by Government in all the sub-counties or learning centers. In addition to reading, writing and numeracy, FAL training incorporated vocational skills in order to help women participate in socio-economic activities, improvement of their lives and well-being.

Access to FAL and vocational skills indicated an improvement to women's daily lives in terms of improved awareness to understand basic written texts and the value of acquiring vocational skills. In addition, the women had ability to compute the income, expenses and profits earned from their sales. In the same way women's opportunity and confidence to participate in community undertakings as well as become community leaders greatly improved. In addition, they became self-employed, profited from income generating activities, made re-investments of savings from the income generated as well as improved the well-being for themselves and their families based on FAL and vocational skills acquired.

The conceptualisation of the study is informed by Freire and Kabeer which is linked to FAL and vocational training. In relation to skills acquired, women's opportunity in FAL and vocational training available in the learning centers has contributed to creating awareness and understanding of their situation and the overriding social structures that impeded their socio-economic progress. Freire's literacy theory provided awareness for marginalised people, particularly, the women, on

the reality of the world. Also, Kabeer's theory contributed to finding out whether the women trained in FAL and vocational skills used their agency to recognise their obstacle to socio-economic development. If FAL and vocational training is considered to be an appropriate and successful tool in changing the socio-economic lives of women, it was important to find out how these trainees use their experiences and agency after gaining literacy and vocational skills.

Overall, this chapter has discussed how women's socio-economic development has been conceptualised and the subsequent theoretical underpinning drawn from Freire literacy theory and Kabeer's agency viewpoint.

Gaps in Literature: The above literature shows that adult literacy focuses more on reading, writing, and basic numeracy skills rather than integrated training programme with life skills which particularly, connects FAL to vocational training. While claims about the participants' aspirations to be trained vocational skills after FAL have been reported in Uganda, reports focusing on how FAL and vocational training improves women's socio-economic lives have been trained are less manifested in the literature. The current study is expected to fill these gaps by exploring how connecting FAL to vocational training improves women's socio-economic lives. The information generated will give new insights/awareness into women's agency and their ability to inquire, explore and challenge the patriarchal structures that reproduce constraints and inequalities in their lives.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodological process used in this study. It describes the research design, data collection methods, sampling procedure and ethical considerations. The research methods used to collect data were key informant interviews, FGDs, observations and documentary analysis. These were considered adequate to answer research questions and associated well with the research design. With reference to the research paradigm, the study was based on phenomenological method which is linked to qualitative interpretive framework.

3.1 Research Design

Using the qualitative interpretive framework, the researcher used phenomenological method and case study research design, while focusing on FAL and vocationally trained women in Apac. Phenomenological method to qualitative research emphasizes on the commonality of lived experiences of a group of individuals in order to arrive at a description of the nature of the particular phenomenon (Creswell, 2013; Finlay, 2012; Fossey, Harvey, McDermott, & Davidson, 2002). Phenomenological method helped the researcher in interpreting the meanings of women's lived experiences which was appropriate to this study. Denscombe (2014, p.2) argues that interpretivism is concerned with seeing "*social reality as something that is subjectively constructed by people's thoughts and actions*". In addition, Prasad (2005) argued that interpretivism is concerned with seeking to explore people's lived experiences and their perceptions of these experiences as the starting point of developing knowledge about the social world. In the interpretive paradigm, the aim of the researcher to understand the subjective meanings of study participants is important (Goldkuhl, 2012). This suggests that social researchers must always be part and parcel of the social reality they are exploring and interpreting.

In this study, the design enabled the researcher to explore women's lived experiences, whether and in what way women participants in Apac District derived socio-economic benefits from

skills acquired from FAL and integrated vocational training. The choice of a case study design was preferred because it creates closeness to real life situations and generates a wealth of information on multiple sources of data or evidence from the life experiences of participants (Yin, 2013a; Bhattacharjee, 2012, Stake; 2005). According to Yin (2003; 2011; 2013a), a case study as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in the context of its real life when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. This implies making a thorough account and analysis of the phenomenon and setting of a specific unit of a community to show the significant factors that are specific to that unit. Mouton (2001, pg. 281) has contended that the unit of analysis in research may be *"an individual person, but case studies can be done of other units such as family, a treatment team, segment of a clinical session, a community or a country"*. In addition, he reports that case study research *"can investigate multiple individual units"*.

This was a probing, specific- set case study. This is for the reason that what was analysed were the experiences of FAL beneficiaries with integrated vocational skills in seven sites where classes were ongoing. In this case, the unit of analysis were FAL and vocational skills and beneficiaries of the training in one district (Apac). The focus used in this case were MGLSD, DCDO, Apac Municipal Council (Arocha Division, Atik Division and Agulu Division), Apac Sub-county and Chegere Sub-county. This was not a multiple-case study design in which, for example, an individual Division where FAL as well as vocational training class is ongoing may be the focus of a case study while the whole study that covers all other Sub-counties constitute another case study (Yin, 2003).

Merriam and Simpson (1995, pg. 109) assert that:

the process of conducting a case study consists of several steps, the first of which is selection of the "case" to be analysed. The selection is done purposefully, not randomly; that is, a particular person, site, programme, process, community, or any other social unit is selected because it exhibits characteristics of interest to the researcher.

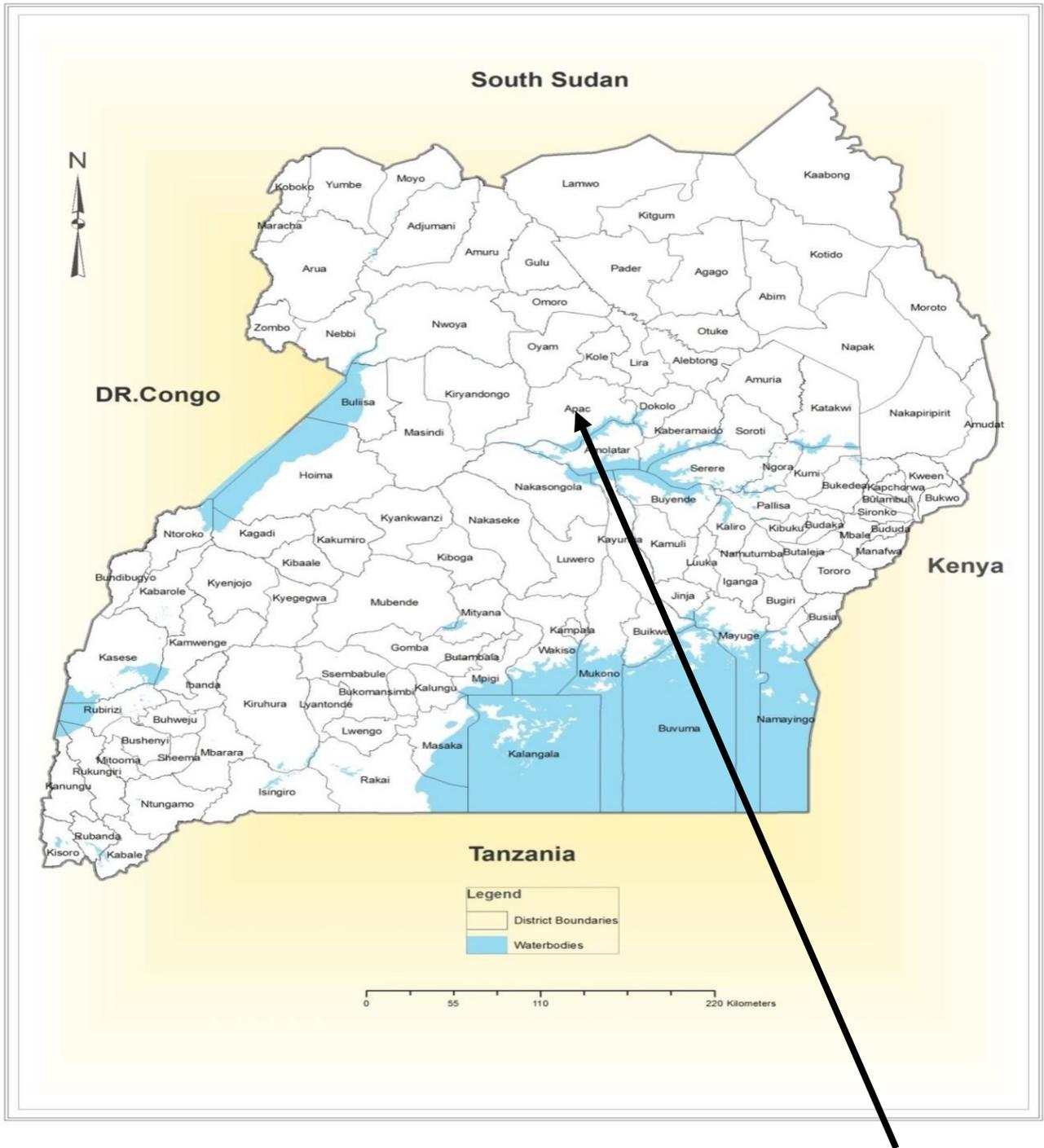
The FAL and integrated vocational training beneficiaries in seven sites were purposely selected.

Besides, the case study design was chosen because it can be used to *"deal with a full variety of evidence - documents, artifacts, interviews, and observations"* (Yin, 2003, pg. 8). More importantly, the research design was selected due to its strength to generate descriptions of conscious experiences of women that have benefited and acquired skills from FAL and integrated vocational training. This study considered the above qualities of the case study design and interpretivism as more appropriate and adequate to explore the women's lived experiences as beneficiaries of the FAL and integrated vocational training.

3.2 Study Area and Population

The study was conducted in Apac District located in Lango region of Northern Uganda (Figures 2 & 3 below). Apac district has an estimated population of 368, 626 (180,995 males and 187,631 females) indicating more women than men in the population (UBOS, 2017). To support economic activity, particularly women, the government of Uganda implemented the FAL training programme in 8 districts, including Apac, Hoima, Kabarole, Mbarara, Mukono, Mpigi, Kamuli and Iganga (Nsekaki, n.d). In addition, to enhance wealth creation for human and holistic community development, MGLSD designed to integrate literacy and numeracy with livelihoods and life skills. The MGLSD in partnership with German Adult Education Association (DDV International) has piloted the Integrated Community Learning for Wealth Creation Programme in the four districts of Uganda, namely; - Mpigi (Central Region), Iganga (Eastern Region), Namayingo (Eastern Region) and Nwoya (Northern Region) with support from the German Adult Education Association [DVV] (MGLSD, 2019). The national report indicating Apac as a pilot district for FAL training as well as in the region where ICOLEW, has been piloted, the time, financial and personal expenditures involved in collecting data influenced my choice as a study area. Below is a map of Uganda indicating the study area:

Figure 2: The Map of Uganda Indicating the Study Area



Source (UBOS, 2017)

Study Area

Figure 3: Map of Lango Region, Northern Uganda Where Apac is Located



3.3 Study Population and Sample Selection

Within Apac district, the researcher chose three divisions out of 04 from the municipal council and two sub-counties out of 04. Those that were sampled include: Municipal Council-Apac District (Divisions of Arocha, Atik and Agulu); Apac Sub-County and Chegere Sub-County. The choice of the municipal council and sub-counties was informed by the DCDO who confirmed that FAL classes and integrated vocational skills were active and ongoing at level II of the training (DCDO, 2021). In addition, information could be availed from the trainers/instructors and the learners. Table 2 below illustrates the different methods and the interviewees.

Table 2: Distribution of Study Participants for Each Tool

Study Site	Key Informants		FGDs	
	Women	Men	Women	Men
MGLSD	1	0		
Apac District Head Quarters- Community Development Office	0	1		
Municipal Council-Apac District				
1. Arocha Division	0	0	5	0
2. Atik Division	1	0	5	0
3. Agulu Division	1	0	5	0
Sub-Counties:				
1. Apac Sub-County	0	1	6	0
2. Chegere Sub-County	1	2	6	0
TOTAL	4	4	27	0

N= 35 (Women=31 and Men= 4)

The researcher used two groups of the population. The first population included Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development official because the technical expertise on the policy issues. The second population chosen within Apac District included: District Community Development Officer (DCDO), Community Development Officers (CDOs) based at the Municipal Council and Sub-counties, FAL instructors and the learners from different learning centers from Apac District in Northern Uganda. The participants were selected because they had already benefited and experienced vocational training as well as had a direct interaction with the community. The population chosen was representative, diverse, and provided trustworthy information. The study population comprised of 35 participants (08 Key Informants and 5 FGDs comprising of FAL 27 women who had completed level II of FAL and integrated vocational training). FGDs was a representative of the learners in Apac District, Northern Uganda.

The Key Informants comprised an official from MGLSD at the position of Principal Literacy officer, and Community Development Officers - from both the district (DCDO) and the sub-county levels (CDO). These officials were the overall coordinators of FAL training programme in the entire district and at a sub-county level. In addition, FAL Instructors or trainers from different study areas were also purposively selected and interviewed.

Whereas the study was on women's lived experiences of as beneficiaries of FAL and integrated vocational training, a purposive discussion with some key informants who were men was conducted. The purpose of men's inclusion was to capture their voices and perceptions on women's FAL and integrated vocational training. Thirty-four (35) participants were considered an appropriate sample, because of the rigour in qualitative research data in-depth analysis (Creswell, 2011).

The research participants were categorised, as those who had completed level II of integrated FAL training. The level II participants as indicated in Table 3 below comprised of the study period 2020/2021 for the purposes of getting up-to-date information about women's experiences in FAL and integrated vocational training in relation to socio-economic lives and well-being.

Table 3: Population of Enrolled Adult Learners, Level II in the Study Area as at 2020/21

Study Site	Level II	
	Women	Men
Municipal Council -Apac District (Divisions of Arocha Division, Atik Division, Agulu Division and Akere	155	90
Chegere Sub-County, Apac District	203	91
TOTAL	358	181

Source: District Community Development Office Apac (August 2021)

In addition to level II of adult learners, Key Informants (an official from MGLSD, 05 FAL instructors, 01 DCDO and 02 CDO) were purposively selected and interviewed to share their technical knowledge and experience on FAL and integrated vocational training. In particular, the MGLSD official was included to provide insights and the experience regarding the policy on integrating FAL with vocational training, while the FAL instructors represented the persons in charge of implementation of training programme in the sub-counties. The DCDO and CDO were selected purposely to represent the government institution, that is, MGLSD which initiated and coordinated training programme at national level. Whereas, the table above indicated the enrolment status of level II of the learners, the actual learners who attending the classes were low. For example, in the entire Sub-County of Chegere, the active learners comprised of, 36 women and 26 men and that the low attendance was due issues such as death, limited awareness on the benefits of training, death, migration and restrictions of women to attend training from male spouses (KII, 2021).

3.4 Sampling Procedure

This study employed purposive sampling to select seven sites. This sampling involves selecting research participants that have knowledge of the research topic and can give detailed and rich information that is suitable for qualitative research (Creswell, 2013). All the seven sites indicated

in table 2 above were selected from the government FAL training programme, that is, sites with active FAL learning centres. 1 site was selected from MGLSD because it coordinates the FAL training programme using the same criteria. Selection basing on FAL participants was to determine their insights on FAL and integrated vocational training programme, whether and how women participants in Apac District derived socio-economic benefits from skills acquired from the training.

A sample of 35 participants were selected as follows:

- 5 FGDs of trained participants were selected comprising of 27 women
- 8 Key Informants were selected as follows:
 - 01 MGLSD official (Woman)
 - 01 DCDO (Man)
 - 02 CDOs (Women)
 - 04 FAL instructors (2 women and 2 men)

Purposive sampling helped me to select the participants that had the best knowledge and experiences in FAL and integrated vocational training programme. The names of the sites sampled and distribution of study participants for each tool are shown in Table 2.

Sampling types of qualitative research includes convenience sampling, snowball sampling and purposive sampling. Convenience sampling involves the selection of the most accessible subjects but may result into poor quality data and lacks intellectual credibility. Snowballing sampling depends on the accessibility and availability, willingness and appropriateness of the subjects (Silverman, 2006; Fossey, et al., 2002). In this study, purposive sampling was more suitable since the participants had the knowledge regarding the research topic. Purposive sampling “means that qualitative researchers choose participants who will best help them understand the research problem and the research questions (Creswell, 2013).

Sampling of participants stopped at the point of saturation. Out of the FGDs with the women (Table 2), by the time I was interviewing the 03rd FGD–Agulu Division and 5th Key Informant (Apac Sub-County, they were giving me exactly the same answer. According to Mason (2010),

saturation is when collection of the new data does not shed any further light on the issue under investigation, guided by both interviewing and sampling. Such a point is a diminishing return to a qualitative sample which signifies that the data collection process is complete or near completion (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006).

3.5 Methods of Data Collection

Qualitative data collection techniques include interviews, focus groups, ethnographic approach, participant observation and case studies, among others (Berg, 2007; Fossey et al., 2002 Rubin & Rubin, 2012). In this study, three qualitative methods of data collection were used: in-depth key informant interviews, FGDs and observations. Key Informant interviews were conducted to get information on their knowledge and experiences on how integrating FAL and integrated vocational training plays a role or falls short for the enhancement of women's socio-economic development in Apac district, Northern Uganda. In addition, Key informants, as a result of their particular skills, or position within a society or expert national stakeholders, are able to provide additional information and a deeper insight into what is going on around them (Docrat, Lund, & Chisholm, 2019). Triangulation of methods enabled me to check data collected using one method of another method which boosted the richness of data collected in a case study research design. While case study may limit themselves to descriptive, exploratory objectives or even inability to generalise conclusions in the conventional sense, Yin (2013b) recommended triangulation in order to generalise findings for a good case study. Triangulation provides an in-depth and balanced picture of the situation and develop a comprehensive understanding of phenomena (Altrichter, Feldman, Posch, & Somekh, 2013; Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe, & Neville, 2014; Hussein, 2015). In addition, triangulation of method involves cross-checking several sources of data in order to search for regularities in the study data (O'Donoghue & Punch, 2003), for instance, observation method gave me an opportunity for the analysis of non-verbal communication (Pope & Mays, 2013), that could not be captured through FGDs. This study was thus based on both primary and secondary data.

3.5.1 Key Informant Interview

The in-depth interview with the 08 Key Informants (an official from MGLSD, DCDO, CDO and FAL instructors) took place using one-on-one conversation with an interview guide (appendix A). Interviews with the Key Informants enabled the researcher to collect first-hand information about the experiences of the women about FAL and integrated vocational training in Apac District. They acknowledged the contribution to integrating FAL with vocational training in improving the socio-economic lives of women in Apac District. The interviews were specifically useful at the beginning of community entry as well as in building social rapport.

To concentrate on listening to the conversation, the researcher recorded all the interviews using a recorder and field notes. Each sitting lasted for approximately 1 hour. All the 8 Key Informants agreed that the process of the interview should be recorded using recorder. The recorded interviews for both the camera and field notes were transcribed and those done in Luo Language were translated into English while saving the original scripts and records for future reference.

3.5.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Five FGDs (appendix B) were conducted which provided an open discussion on FAL and integrated vocational training, the challenges faced by women prior to the training and the socio-economic benefits of participants. FGDs comprised of 05 to 06 trained women. The FGDs as a method of data collection for this study was used because it obtains in-depth information on different opinions and experiences in a group discussion of members of the group. FGDs create social interaction as data is generated (Boateng, 2012).

During the FGDs, the researcher only acted as a moderator who guided the discussion. To ensure that ideas and experiences of all participants were represented, the researcher encouraged everyone to speak. The participants were contacted one week before the scheduled day for discussion through the DCDO. The DCDO assigned a CDO to support in identifying participants through their trainers on the women who had completed level II FAL and integrated vocational training. Participants in the FGDs were selected by word of mouth but based on their level of training. Selection of the literacy level was important because participants communicate more

openly if they are in a group of people that share the same background or experiences. The FGDs allowed a deeper analysis of complex issues because the participants who heard others speaking were also prompted into sharing their ideas.

3.5.3 Observation

Another method used in this study was direct observations before, during and after the interviews during the FGDs. The researcher observed and recorded different behaviors of participants during the discussions using the observation checklist (Appendix C), for example, expressions of confidence, eagerness, fear, shyness and bitterness during the interview process. Observation during the FGDs was important for data collection on FAL and vocationally trained women's ability to manage and improve upon their socio-economic lives in the family and the community where they lived. The researcher used the observation checklist to avoid being unfocused and to improve on the reliability of the data collected. Therefore, direct observation helped the researcher in understanding the meaning of participants' experiences and interpreting the non-verbal responses. O'Leary (2005, p.119) identified that to be able to understand what happened, *"there are at times when you need to see it yourself"*.

3.5.4 Secondary Data

The sources of secondary data involved a review of various documents from government, NGOs and Community Development Office (Appendix D) and review of previous literature. Bowen (2009) indicated that, where a list of analysed documents is provided, it often does not include previous studies. Also, Bowen showed that, scholars usually review previous literature as a source of data or information which requires relying on the description and interpretation of data rather than having the raw data as a basis for analysis and incorporate that information in their reports. The documents comprised of were those which contained information about FAL primer/curriculum in local Luo and English language; ongoing enrolment of FAL training which helped to choose the current level II FAL learners 2020/2021 as study participants and policy issues regarding gender, FAL and vocational training in Uganda. Finally, I considered information about policy on adult literacy programmes in Uganda; women's literacy status and

development based on global Literacy rates and non-literate population and the development status of Uganda. The government documents included UBOS statistical abstracts and reports (2016-2021). Other documents reviewed were UNESCO and UN reports. The sources of other relevant literature included journals, relevant books and other published materials. I reviewed previous literature as part of my study and incorporated information about women, FAL, vocational training and conceptualisation of socio-economic development. In addition, I critically reviewed women's socio-economic development while focusing on their experiences prior to their FAL and integrated vocational training; the kinds and levels of skills acquired by FAL and vocationally-trained women sufficient for women's socio-economic development; and benefits of literacy and integrated vocational training on women's socio-economic lives. The supporting information was gathered from: online, libraries, District Community Development office and Sub-county offices. The sources of data gave information on women's experiences of FAL and integrated vocational training as well as improvement in their socio-economic lives.

3.6 Data Collection Process

Data was collected in two phases. To begin with, it included obtaining permission from Lira University which is the official work place, Uganda National Council of Science and Technology (UNCST) and Authorities from the study area-Apac district. The final phase involved full data collection and analysis.

Phase I Preparations for Data Collection

During this phase, it was important to pre-test research tools before using them to collect data. Pre-testing was conducted in one Sub-County. The women who had completed FAL training, levels I and II, were selected. The pre-test study consisted of a FGD (06 trained women that were purposively selected).

Benefits of the Pre-Testing Phase

Pre-testing helped me to identify questions which did not make sense to the participants, namely, biased questions and questions which were not easily understood by the participants. Consequently, pre-test results prompted me to revise and clarify the questions. To illustrate,

Questions on the second study objective on the level of FAL skills acquired which are: “*What did you learn in the FAL and vocational training programme?*” was revised to: “*what did you learn in vocational training under level II of FAL?*” (Probe more). In addition, another question: “*Tell me about your skills in FAL and vocational training*” was revised to: “*Tell me about the skills you acquired in vocational training under level II of FAL*” (Demonstration required). Meanwhile, question three: “*What levels of FAL and vocational training have you completed?*” was deleted because it was vague and all the participants were selected from level II of the training. By the end of the pre-test, I realised that, adhering to the right order of questions generated unsatisfactory feedback. In order to keep the discussions running smoothly, I decided to follow the sequence of the discussions based on the content as the FGDs progressed.

Phase II: Data Collection

This stage involved actual data collection from FGDs, Key Informant interviews and observations. It started with visiting the study sites, getting contact persons and making appointments before embarking on the process of discussions and interviewing. I established field contacts in Apac District by visiting the Community Development Office since I was already granted permission by the office of the Resident District commissioner through the DCDO and UNCST to allow me collect data from the study area.

The permission helped to establish confidence and trust with the study participants in the selected study sites, namely; -Municipal Council-Apac District (Divisions of Arocha, Atik and Agulu); Apac Sub-County and Chegere Sub-County. Due to the nature of the study, it was necessary to have discussions between the researcher and research participants for clarity of the purpose of the study. This was followed by full collection of data and subsequent processes of research.

Access to the participants started with the researcher’s visit to the DCDO. I was introduced to the contact persons in the selected study sites above, where participants for FGDs were identified. Appointments were made with the participants one week earlier before the FGDs.

Basing on the lessons from the pre-test, I opted to interview those who had just completed level II because they had experiences to share after their training, compared to those who were still at level I (beginners' and basic level). The researcher also made prior arrangements to conduct FGDs with the participants as per their appointments.

3.7 Data Management and Analysis

This study followed Creswell's (2007) suggestion outlined below: a) Data Management Phase, b) Generative Phase, c) Interpretive Phase, and d) Representing and Theorising Phase.

A. Data Management Phase

Qualitative data was derived from key informant interviews, FGDs, observations and document reviews. Recordings were then transcribed by the researcher with anonymous names and identifying information. The researcher was careful with the transcriptions and translations of information collected in the local Luo language to make it as accurate as possible. There were frequent references back and forth during data analysis to ensure that I preserved and produced the verbatim records, such as, "*I should have been...*" and "*The best thing...*". Devault (2004) argued that preserving and including 'um's, 'you know's as well as silences while producing verbatim transcriptions because of their importance in writing about women's live experiences in the world. The recordings and transcribed data were safely stored in word processing files on password protected laptop and a lockable room. Primary data was analysed through a detailed process that produced themes from the textual data and observations noted. Relevant literature from secondary sources was reviewed in order to supplement primary data.

B. Generative Phase

This qualitative data was coded using qualitative content analysis for Key Informants' and FGDs while reading the whole transcripts numerous times to get logic in relation to the specific research questions and the study objective. The researcher eventually identified the keywords and later developed categories and themes generated from the participants' responses. The study generated seven key themes or categories from the data which include: community gatherings; mockery; reading, writing and numeracy; FAL and vocational skills; teamwork; diversified vocational skills; and income generating projects.

C. Interpretive Phase

Throughout this phase, I began by relating the data onto the findings, understanding and checking thoroughly the themes and making sense out of it. Interpretivism in qualitative study is concerned with individual understanding as the starting point of developing knowledge and assumes the possibility of the experience of any reality of interpretation (Prasad, 2005). This was a phase for interpreting the significance of FAL and integrated vocational training to women's socio-economic lives.

D. Representing and Theorizing Phase

This phase was a moment of expression, with subsequent guidance (Miles, Miles & Huberman, 1994). Following the guidance of Miles et al above, I engaged in a continuous process of coming up with conclusions of the findings. The procedure of scrutinising data enabled me to develop consistent explanations based on the study objectives and questions. During this phase, I reflected on how my background could have influenced or affected the nature between the researcher-researched relationship and also the information the participants could have shared willingly. Hence, I continuously monitored the influence or effects of my background to enhance the trustworthiness of the research and credibility of the findings by accounting for my knowledge and biases.

3.8 Researcher's Reflexivity: Locating Myself in the Research

Qualitative researchers identify the significance of reflexivity in addressing ethical issues, and the researcher is considered as an instrument in the study (Hoover & Morrow, 2015). Reflexivity involves a process of the researcher's self-reflection by making continuous recognition of his or her influence on the research process. It is important for the researcher to come out and reveal how one's positionality influenced or was influenced by the research process. It is mainly vital in interpretive qualitative research, where the researcher's bias shapes the research process. It is therefore, important to recognise both the researcher's and participants' position and how the researcher influences or is influenced by the research findings and analysis (Jenkins, 2007).

This section therefore clarifies how the researcher paid attention to the practices, social interactions and participation within the community. By spending time with the women

participants and understanding them from their own perceptions, the researcher was able to understand how women participate in transforming their socio-economic lives as active and not passive participants. However, I had to constantly be conscious of how my influence or power would have emotional impact on the participants as well as the effect on the credibility of the research. As explained by O'Leary (2010), the integrity, information produced and the well-being of the research are dependent on the ethical negotiation of power and power relations. Basing on O'Leary's viewpoint, I ensured that the data collection process was conducted in a respectful manner, for instance the women's understanding from their own perceptions, while seeking the consent and protecting the confidentiality of the participants.

During the FGDs, the women shared their experiences freely, with confidence and excitement, except in a few cases, they took the research process as a solution to their personal problems. The researcher tactfully avoided responses to private life and kept in line with the research questions. Subsequently, during certain discussions, participants considered me as a role model, an associate and this was the only chance they could be talked to and share their good and bad experiences. Their concern was that, since the training, they had limited opportunity to benefit from projects which supports women's activities. Participants expressed the need to be supported by technical experts to write project proposals which can fund women's income generating projects as well as continue with vocational skills. I looked at this as a good opportunity for sharing experiences with the participants. The discussion process therefore enabled me to access information on women's lived experiences with skills gained from FAL as well as integrated vocational training and its potentials to improve their socio-economic lives and well-being in their communities.

3.9 Assessment of the Quality of Research

Validation strategies

Qualitative validity is based on determining if the findings are accurate from the perspective of the researcher, the participant or the readers (Creswell, 2013). As the area of qualitative research increases, social and behavioural scientists critique the validity of studies that use such methodology. Thus, qualitative researchers utilise various validation strategies which make their studies credible and rigorous (Creswell & Miller, 2000). One has to consider methodological and

interpretative rigour, such as principles of congruence, response to social context, appropriateness, adequacy and transparency as well as good practice principles in qualitative research (Fossey et al., 2002).

To ensure trustworthiness of the research (transferability, dependability and confirmability) and identification of research participants as highlighted by Fossey, et al. (2002) and Lincoln, Guba, & Pilotta (1985), the research methodology was executed through preliminary arrangements of pre-testing research tools. Preparations were followed by research clearance inform of an introductory letter from Lira university and authority letter from Lira the Resident District Commissioner through the DCDO-Apac and research approval from UNCST. Credibility for this study was achieved through triangulation of methods, theory and participants; researcher's reflexivity, collection of thick rich description, and debriefing. The data was triangulated using, particularly, key informant interviews, FGDs, observations, field notes, documents and reflective periodical entries. Thick, rich description was employed by presenting the participants' voices under each theme in a detailed description of the cases. Kumar (2011) argues that, thick descriptions were believed to be useful in providing understanding of social realities as they are subjectively perceived, experienced and created by participants.

3.10 Limitations of the Study

The researcher faced the following limitations during the field work:

The major challenge was lockdown and restrictions such as banning mass public gatherings, putting in place curfew from 21:00 to 05:30, restrictions on inter- district movements and use of private vehicles. However, the researcher made use of the presidential guidelines which granted permission for activities such as, marriage ceremonies, parties, and all other social gatherings with a maximum of 20 people under strict observance of SOPs to collect data. I also ensured that all the participants sanitized their hands, wear masks and kept social distance during the data collection process.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Given the sensitive nature of the inquiry, the researcher protected the study participants by guaranteeing to them that there was no negative implication for their participation in the course of the research (Creswell, 2013). This study falls in line with Creswell's portrayal of sensitive studies because it involves experiences of human subjects in this case individual women. Touching on these issues denoted gathering information on personal life of women which creates ethical dilemma if ethical standards of practice in research is not maintained. This is in line with Tamale's (2006) argument that confidential issues create ethical dilemmas as it poses substantial threat to participants releasing such information. Ethics maintain that research participants should be protected from exploitation or harm.

This research was conducted in line with guidelines from Lira University and UNCST. The researcher obtained an introductory letter from Lira University and UNCST. During fieldwork, the informants were briefed on the information about the purpose of the study and consent (see appendix H) was sought from each participant prior to Key Informant Interviews and FGDs as well as the use of recording devices and camera. Those whose pictures are in the report had their consent sought and were also eager to see their pictures being used for study purposes (see appendix H). Participants were also advised on the voluntary nature of their contribution, and that they could withdraw from the study at any time without a penalty. They were also guided and assured that at any one time during the process they could decline to answer any of the questions.

All those who participated understood that identities were hidden with pseudonyms or anonymous names based on official titles for Key Informants (MGLSD, DCDO, CDO and FAL trainers) for purposes of confidentiality. Previous studies have shown that anonymity should be respected (Simons 2009; Marshall and Rossman 2011; Rule and John 2011). Hence, this study only used pseudonyms or anonymous names to report direct quotes from the participants and information obtained from them was kept confidential. Participants were also informed about the purpose of the study and they were also informed that the result of this study shall be published.

This also minimised the risk of the participants being suspicious about the purpose of the study. Lastly, the research objectives were clearly explained and articulated to the participants.

CHAPTER FOUR

SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND THE PRE- FUNCTIONAL ADULT LITERACY AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN

This chapter provides findings for the first study objective which is: “*Women’s socio-economic experiences in Apac District prior to their training in FAL and vocational learning.*”. While in total 35 participants were interviewed for this study, the discussion on this chapter focusses on the 27 women participants who started out as non-literates but later joined and trained in FAL as well integrated vocational skills. Other participants’ views (8 key informants) are left out of this chapter but are discussed in subsequent chapters. The experiences examined in this chapter are thematically organised according to three categories identified in the conceptual framework, namely, humiliation in community gatherings, mockery within the family and lack of FAL and vocational skills. The qualitative discussion was perceived as being key indicators in the improvement on women’s lives.

4.1 Socio-Economic Characteristics of 27 FAL-Trained Participants

4.1.1 Age-Groups of the 27 FAL-trained Participants

Table 4: Age distribution of the FAL-trained participants

Age Range	Women
21-30	2
31-40	3
41-50	9
51-60	5
61-70	7
71-80	1
Total	27

Source: Generated by the researcher

Table 4 above revealed that all the women were adults above 18 years. This demonstrates that all the women in the age group 21-80 missed the opportunity of formal education during their childhood. In addition, Table 4 shows that there were more women participants in the age group of 41-50 (9), followed by 61-70 (7). There were fewer women participants in the age-groups 51-60 (5) and 71-80 (1). This suggests that, more Apac women in the age-group of 41-70 missed the opportunity to undergo formal education and become literate during their childhood compared to Apac women in the age-group 21-40.

The insignificant number of women in this group is explained by Angwec, a 68-year-old woman, peasant farmer, a household head with 6 family members who asserted that cultural belief excluded the girls from being sent to school. She explained that,

For example, in my home, it was just concluded that when girls are grown up, their work is to get married and bring cows for the family. That boys should go to school because they remain at home or come back home and will help the family. So, we were left home at large. We did not know even how to write our names...we could not even speak in public.

The above quotation by Angwec suggests that negative attitudes held by some parents, which reinforced by the cultural beliefs contributes to women's lack of literacy and vocational skills as well as creates low self-esteem among them. These outlooks make the women perceive themselves as less important than younger (21-40). As a result, the negative attitudes impede the women's efforts to achieve socio-economic development. Kabeer (2005) also found that that in numerous societies, institutional biases such as cultural ideological norms and values restrict many women's ability to make such choices. The cultural attitude on women reveals negative agency which Kabeer refers to as overriding women's ability within the adult age group opportunity to participate in improving their socio-economic status. Likewise, Sen (1999) also revealed that obstacles to what a person can do in life like non-literacy and lack of freedom enjoyed by women within the community limits their choices and socio-economic development. The above findings are consistent with findings of past studies by Freire (1970) which reveals

that the oppressed women suffer from a two-fold effect, for example, between speaking out or being silent, in their power to change the world. Thus Freire and Kabeer emphasises education or training as a means to ignite women's ability and social inclusion.

4.1.2 Major occupation of the participants

In all the study sites, namely, Municipal Council Divisions (Arocha, Atik and Agulu) and Sub-Counties (Apac and Chegere), most participants were peasant farmers and reported spending most of their productive time in handwork as well as other livelihood skills using local knowledge to survive. According to the latest UBOS (2017) report, 88.8% depend on subsistence farming as the main source of income in Apac district. To exemplify, Ulluka, a 66-year-old woman, peasant farmer, doing handcraft business, a widow with 2 family members confirmed these findings by revealing that, *"I majorly participate in peasant and rudimentary farming as well as handcraft using local skills to survive"*.

While, Juju, a 72-year-old woman, peasant farmer, a household head with 2 family members added that, *"in addition to peasant farming, the handwork we used to know locally was knitting table clothes and making winnowers (see picture I below), which would generate for us some little money to cater for the family well-being"*.

The voices above by Ulluka and Juju indicate that the majority of women in Apac, lacked other 'life skills' which are developed from formal training. Most people, particularly, women in Apac, therefore, depended on peasant farming and handwork using indigenous knowledge historically learnt through observations from their elders and inter-generational transfer.

The local skills as presented above are of subsistence nature. This work is practised for basic survival families. Ulluka and Jujju's accounts describing rudimentary farming, local skills and some little money suggests that the women were using skills gathered from indigenous knowledge which was spread across Apac district. However, regardless of the benefit, indigenous knowledge-based farming and local skills handwork provides, it impedes generating better income and making of profits as evidenced in Juju's statement about generating *"some*

little money". Her account indicates poverty and hard work where she wished to do better by undergoing training in FAL and vocational skills. Ulluka and Jujju's cravings demonstrated Kabeer's (2005) advocacy for change which instigated women to transform themselves from passive to active agents in order to become developed.



Picture I: Sample of Locally Made Winnower to Generate Income⁵

⁵ Winnowing, the process of separating quality grains such as rice, millet, simsim and coffee beans from chaff using the traditional way by making dried grains fall from a height using shovels and a sieve. The quality grains which are heavy fall vertically while the weightless chaff and straw get blown away by the wind or a forced current of air. Hence, winnowing is only effective when there is a wind and farmers often have to first wait for the wind to blow before starting the process of winnowing (Finer, Maggioni & Nilsen, 2021; Qu, Kojima, Wu, & Ando, 2021).

4.1.3 Household Headship

Table 5: Headship of Household Where the Study Participants Belonged

Community	Men	Women
Municipal Council-Apac District		
1. Arocha Division	4	1
2. Atik Division	1	4
3. Agulu Division	3	2
Sub-Counties:		
1. Apac Sub-County	5	1
2. Chegere Sub-County	1	5
Total	14	13

Source: Generated by the researcher

Another socio-economic aspect concerning the women was household headship. It was vital to establish the person that headed the households where the women in the study belonged. The reason being, household headship determined the socio-economic opportunities and benefits of members of the family. Several scholars have explained the concept of household headship in different ways. For instance, Rudie (1994), observes that the household is more often than not headed by a senior, married, and economically active man, but it can also be headed by a widow or a divorced woman. The Uganda Household Survey by Uganda Bureau of Statistical report [UBOS] (2021), based on Household Survey 2019/20 indicates a balanced role between both Males and Females whether occupying iron sheet/grass thatched or other types of houses. Hedman Perucci, & Sundström (1996), a household head is a man in authority, a main financial provider, decision maker and chosen by family members. Women are only considered as household heads when there is no adult male in the household (Hedman, Perucci, & Sundström, 1996). Yet Rosenhouse (2015) has defined a household head as the most important member of the household, whose presence is regular in the home, has overriding authority on key household decision matters and provides a consistent and central financial support. There is a strong emphasis on male leadership in Rudie's (1994) and Hedman, Perucci, & Sundström's (1996)

definitions of household headship. UBOS (2021) and Rosenhouse (2015) definitions reflect a gender neutrality about the issue of household headship. However, the effectiveness of the gender-neutral dimension of the former's definitions depends on whether the society under investigation is patriarchal or not. In most patriarchal societies, these definitions would equally implicitly indicate that the household heads are male. The fewer opportunities that women have compared to men to head and 'officially' make family decisions have an impact on the women's efforts at socio-economic development.

Table 5 on the previous page shows that men-headed households (14) were slightly more than women-headed households (13). This indicates limited opportunities for the Apac women to lead the family and make significant family decisions. In a FGD, this study revealed the majority of female headed household were either single, widows or divorced women. But for the all the married women, their households were headed by men. While women in the men-headed households experienced limited opportunities to own resources, the findings in this study revealed that even women in women-headed households had the same experience on ownership to help them in them participate in income generating ventures like farming and live hood skills.

To illustrate, Nyac, a 44-year-old woman, peasant farmer as well as specialised in selling a winnower, a widow and household head with 2 family members revealed that *"my main problem was land ownership issue to earn a livelihood after staying 24 years because I am a widow and I was also considered dull due to my non-literacy status"*.

Amoli, a 53-year-old woman, peasant farmer, a widow and household headed by brother-in-law with 7 family members added that,

I should have been the administrator of our family property after the death of my husband because I am now a widow. Instead, my brother-in-law is the one who has taken over my family and acting as the family head on all the resources my husband left for me because I was uneducated and considered to know nothing.

The women's voices above, such as being considered "*dull*" and "*I should have*" is indicative of the challenges the non-literate women with no vocational skills go through to make own resources family. Moreover, culturally, women are believed to be less knowers which consequently contribute to lack of freedom, low self-confidence and limited access to acquire or own property or attend trainings to enhance their skills to manage the family. Similarly, Freire & Macedo (1987) and Kabeer (2005) also found that cultural and ideological norms that give men powers as well as lack of training, restrict many women's ability to make choices and social change.

Nyac and Amoli's voices demonstrates women's passive agency, that is, "*action taken when there is little choice*" (Kabeer 2005, p. 15) as a result of men's overriding authority over women. This shows that while household responsibility has been shifted to women, the household headship is generally associated with men rather than the women. The aspect of overriding authority in turn contributes to women's social exclusion where culturally, they are viewed by men as less knowledgeable on matters involving owning and managing family resources which as a result affected their socio-economic development. Therefore, household headship plays a critical role within the family, since it is the position that determines whether members of the family receive socio-economic benefits and opportunities. It also has emotional impact whether members of the family have control over income and other factors. To improve on the social status and challenge the cultural norms, some women expected that improving their literacy and integrated vocational skills could improve on their socio-economic status and enable them to challenge these biases.

While women experienced difficulties in managing their resources due to their lack of literacy and life skills as well as suppression by their spouses, this study revealed that individual women adopted different approaches to dealing with oppressive patriarchal structures. The approaches included enrolling and attending trainings despite of their busy domestic schedules to enable them acquire the literacy and vocational skills which could improve on their socio-economic status.

To illustrate, Acoma a 50-year-old woman, specialised in baking and selling bread, and household headed husband with 7 family members expressed that, *“For the spouse, we end up being submissive and do housework very fast to only fulfil his demands...”*.

On the contrary, Toka, a 49-year-old woman, a small-scale retailer, specialised in baking and selling bread, maize and, widow and household head with 11 family members added that, *“however, even if we do anything, some men do not appreciate...so we become submissive to make them allow us go for training”*.

Atiang, a 63-year-old woman, peasant farmer and specialised in selling soft brooms and household head by husband with 7 family members in her approach to dealing with oppressive patriarchal structures proposed that, *“The best thing is to sensitise the men at community level that we are chasing poverty or we make a follow-up through home visits and we talk to them from their homes”*.

The three women’s (Acoma, Toka and Atiang) story line is indicative of women’s agency and silent tactics in the family. This suggests that women are aware of how their economic status tend threaten the patriarchal society and design strategies tactfully to alleviate conflicts with their spouses. While this is in itself indicative of women’s suppression, it is nonetheless a worthwhile initiative by the women to free themselves from the overriding cultural suppression to attain socio-economic development. Although Sen (1999) found that obstacles such as lack of real freedoms enjoyed by members of the society, lack of access to resources, non-literacy and lack of life skills limited women’s choices and socio-economic development. Therefore, women’s suppressive experiences could only be lessened trainings, such as FAL and integrated vocational skills.

This is in line with Freire’s (1970) viewpoint that oppressed women suffer from a twofold effect (tragic dilemma) of whether to speak out issues that affect their lives or remain silent. To free the women from the tragic dilemma, Freire thus recommended education or training for the marginalised women. His suggestion is further supported by Kabeer (2005) which emphasises literacy as a powerful tool to ignite women’s ability and social inclusion. In addition to the

perspective of Kabeer, Freire (1970) emphasises individual and collective agency through the notions of ‘conscientisation’ or awareness creation and dialogue, as tools for making marginalised people agents of social change and engagement in socio-economic development. The findings suggest that women can overcome their dilemma due to oppression through training and confrontation with reality as well as taking action upon the reality.

From the different voices of the women, cultural bias, non-literacy as well as lack of vocational skills have hindered women’s efforts to effectively head households and have access to family resources. While, non-literate women used tactics to deal with oppressive patriarchal structures, the strategies were inadequate. Therefore, women said they wanted skills in FAL and integrated vocational training to enable them to overcome the prejudices and stereotypes which affected their socio-economic development.

4.1.4 Sizes of the participants’ families

Table 6: Members of the participants’ families

Trained women	
Number of Household (HH)	Family size
1	0
1	1
3	2
1	3
4	4
1	5
2	6
6	7

1	8
3	9
2	11
1	12
1	15

Source: Generated by the researcher

It was significant to establish the number of family members to explore the impact of managing families on women’s socio-economic development prior to FAL and integrated vocational training. A family size of 5 or more (Table 6 above) indicated high dependency rate since the majority of women had a large family size. 17 out of 27 women had large families ranging from 5-15 members. The background of large families included husband, sons, daughters, and dependants (monogamous families) as well as extended family system, such as, orphans related to family members, step-brothers and step-sisters’ (polygamous families). The 2016/2017 Uganda National Household Survey revealed that higher dependency proportion poses a higher burden of taking care of dependents by the family heads (UBOS, 2018). This study indicates a larger family sizes and discriminatory gender relations which posed heavy burden on the women in managing the family compared to the men prior to their training in FAL as well as integrated vocational skills.

To illustrate, Olleka, a 50-year-old woman, peasant farmer, household headed by the husband, and with a family size of (7) said that,

Vocational skills in one area does not help, never...we cannot wait to sell the same item to the same person after 5 years, where will I survive from? A child will come and ask you, mum, what have you prepared for us? You will get stuck if you are still waiting to sell for example, only the winnow which takes ages for a customer to buy a new one to buy food items like beans and cassava. The child will further ask, mum, then what is your role at home?

Okati, a 38-year-old woman, peasant farmer, specialised in selling winnower, household headed by the husband, and with a family size of (7) lamented that,

Again, if I make winnowers, sell and generate my little money and buy domestic requirements, my husband also uses it, but he will ask me, who is giving you money to buy these items? It means you have got and now messing with another man.

Acoma, while in a FGDs articulated that, *“ah, men didn’t grab our handwork. The law protected us. But the men saw the work as useless, but we knew it generated for us some money”*. This is our secret.

While supporting Acoma’s voice, Atima, a 49-year-old woman, peasant farmer, household headed by husband, and with a family size of (9) children expressed that, *“Men didn’t grab our pancakes whenever we baked for sale because they thought that it had no financial value”*.

Olleka, Okati, Acoma and Atima’s storyline such as, *“...mum, then what is your role at home?”*, *“but we knew it generated for us some money”* and *“.... baked for sale”* indicate a heavy family burden on the women compared to the men despite their meagre resources and large families. Olleka, Okati, Acoma and Atima’s voices indicates that large families’ overburdens, strains and oppresses their little resources. The research study by Boden, Fergusson & Horwood (2015) also found that large households are associated with socio-economic dependency, financial difficulties, severe parental role stress and support. Freire (1970) observed the experiences of the oppressed women as a tragic dilemma which their education or training must take into account. Freire’s view is supported by Kabeer (2005) who emphasises literacy as a powerful tool to ignite women’s ability and social inclusion. Therefore, the findings suggest that the oppressed women can overcome the dilemma which they are caught up in through confrontation with reality and acting upon the reality and education or training, in this case FAL and vocational training.

4.2 Women's Experiences of Pre-FAL and Pre-Vocational Training

This section analyses women's experiences in relation to the themes generated which included community gatherings, mockery at home participation and lack of vocational skills.

4.2.1 Women's Humiliation in Community Gatherings

Women's participation in communities were examined in the context of village gatherings regarding community issues. A report from Acaye, Obongo & Kyeyune (2013) show that, community gatherings bring individuals together to deliberate issues which affect their lives and participate in community projects for the well-being of the members. In the Apac context, community gatherings are an avenue through which society attempt to resolve issues or problems which affect their communities, for example, clan issues. Kabeer (2005) observe community gatherings as an important step by the community members in order to take actions on issues or problems which affect their socio-economic lives.

Findings indicate that women who were non-literate and with no vocational skills experienced disgrace from community members during gatherings or meetings. For instance, Toka, a 49-year-old woman pointed out that,

Before FAL and integrated vocational training, whenever I was among people in the community, I used to feel very ashamed because those who are educated know how to write. Whenever something comes out that it should be written down, I would say, please kindly write for me. This made people to think that ohhh, this one is a useless woman.

Acoma, while sharing her experience added that,

In turn, people humiliated me with words such as, look at this very old woman, she is non-literate with no skills, does not even know merely how to write her name. People used to call me moron... We thought you were wise, but instead you are dull.

Arwako, a 61-year-old woman, peasant farmer, household head, with 4 family members explained that, *“Prior to the training, I could not interact freely with community members during gatherings including talking with confidence. I was even unable to talk to Local Council Leader I”*.

Auni, a 30-year-old woman, peasant farmer, household headed by husband, with 6 family members lamented that,

Our lives were really hard among other community members. If there was a community meeting, we would never attend. We would only attend the clan meetings. Most of our stay was centred around our homes. Community gatherings like the way we are doing now was not there. We saw no value of being among other community members because we were not knowledgeable except for cooking.

The above voices (Toka, Acima, Arwako and Auni), such as, *“...feel very ashamed”*, *“...people humiliated me”* portray this study’s participants as having a sense of low-esteem and shame stemming from their lack of literacy and integrated vocational skills. Their emotions seemed to oppress their self-confidence when it came to interacting within community gatherings. In addition, the above quotations, *“...this one is a useless woman”*, *“... you are dull”* and *“...we were not knowledgeable”*, are indicative of a strong reflection of the women’s feeling of inadequacy, lack of self-confidence within the community. In addition, the women’s bitter feelings indicate having a weaker voice resulting from their consciousness that they lacked literacy and vocational skills which is vital for their participation in community gatherings. As Sen (1999), Nussbaum (2001) and Freire (1970) affirm, women’s non-literacy status, lack of vocational skills and inability to participate in community gatherings can affect women’s socio-economic lives. The women’s storyline also tallies with previous reports who established the need to eradicate non-literacy (Bandiera et al., 2020; UN, 2015; UNESCO, 2006). In addition, the reports recognised the urgent need to promote individuals, especially women who missed the opportunity of formal education to acquire a basic set of literacy and vocational skills in order to enhance their ability to improve socio-economic lives and well-being. As Toka, Acima and Arwako had sensed, the aspect of lack of self-confidence and shame during community

gatherings agrees with Kabeer's (2005) argument that non-literacy as well as limited livelihood skills contributes to women's social exclusion.

To conclude, non-literacy with limited integrated vocational skills greatly contributed to women in Apac district being excluded from participation in community gatherings. The women met several hardships in participation in community gatherings, which included inability to register their attendance, humiliating words and low-self-esteem to contribute their views. As a result, they hindered women's ability in improving social and economic lives for themselves and their families.

4.2.2 Women's Mockery Within the Family

Other women noted that, they experienced mockery and bitter words from their spouse since they were non-literate and had no vocational skills to do anything. Acoma, in the FGDs had this to say, *"He used to call me dull and moron, non-literate."*

When asked the people who mock you as dull and moron, one of the women revealed as illustrated in the interview presented below: -

Interviewer: *Who says you are dull and moron?*

Acoma: *Ah, specifically, our husbands....*

Interviewer: *Who says you are dull and moron?*

Acoma: *Because sometimes they would ask us to do certain things, but we were unable. Life was really hard for us the non-literate women with no live skills.*

Interviewer: *Why do you think your life is hard?*

Acoma: *For example, the man would say, this dog who does not know anything, dull. I am going to look for another wife who is brilliant and knows how to do things. You are stupid like your family members. Eh, because you cannot do for me anything. Our husbands say we are dull like our mothers. We are really bitter with our parents.*

Interviewer: *Why do you feel bitter with our parents?*

Acoma: *We are really bitter with our parents who did not send us to school. We feel very annoyed with this kind of situation.*

Interviewer: *How did you handle the situation?*

Acoma: *I made a resolution, despite any condition, I must go for training .*

The above verbatim quotes demonstrate belittlement of non-literate women with limited vocational skills and as a result it contributes to their bitterness with particularly their parents who did not send them to school. Belittlement of women in the above storyline agrees with what Kabeer (2005) refers to as negative agency refers to as overriding women's ability to manage family affairs. In addition, Acoma's state statement, "... *I must go for training*" is in tandem with Freire (1970) and Stromquist's (2016) argument that literacy should contribute to the liberation of people as well as full development.

Some trained women shared their experiences of bitterness with the parents as well having a hard life leading to mockery that education of girls was meant for only writing love letters and no other better value. To illustrate, Angwec, in her storyline explained,

Our mum would say, when girls are sent to school, they will learn how to write and will be writing letters to boyfriends/lovers/love letters. For example, my four brothers were sent to school and the girls were left home uneducated. The belief was that, girls would get spoiled and become "*Otingduli*" [prostitutes].

The statement, "*We are really bitter with our parents*" and "*...the girls were left home uneducated*", is indicative of ridicule, cultural oppression and lack of freedom by women to make choices. The research study by Pande (2015) also found that non-literate women lacked the understanding on the value of girls' education. As a consequence, lack of understanding of girls' education was a hindrance to their socio-economic development. Angwec's expression of negative agency by their parents, was manifested when her mum's action caused her to miss going to school (Kabeer 1999).

The participant's account, "*we feel very annoyed with this kind of situation*", illustrates how mockery of the women contributes to lowering their self-esteem in the family which Kabeer (2005) also express as negative agency. The constant negative remarks about un-trained women

confirm Freire's (1970) argument on more control and aggression by the oppressors to the oppressed, in this case the women. Likewise, Sen (1999) established that there are obstacles to what a person can do in life. For example, the obstacles include as lack of real freedoms enjoyed by members of the society, which in turn limit women's choices and socio-economic development. This illustrates that lack of freedom and socio-economic exclusion makes women to lose vital quality of life. Women's actions and thinking are controlled, and this impede their creativity in their daily lives.

Whereas the women suffer from lack of freedom and cultural oppression to make choices, Acoma's action of, "*I made a resolution, despite any condition, I must go for training*", show women's rejection and rebellion of their mockery. Acoma's expression of rejection and rebellion indicates an attempt for an opportunity to break into powerful spaces where the women have for long been excluded, and her determination to rebuild the ability to act and become active agent of socio-economic development. The above findings concur Freire's (1970, p.25) theoretical argument that "*[t]his suffering due to powerlessness is rooted in the very fact that the human equilibrium has been disturbed*".

Overall, non-literacy with limited vocational skills also greatly contributed to women in Apac district being excluded from participation within the family settings. The women experienced many sufferings while managing the family affairs. This included the use of degrading statements, negative remarks and lack of freedom to contribute to make choices. Consequently, like in the case of community gatherings above, they also slowed down women's ability in improving social and economic lives for themselves and their families. However, the women had alternative ways of enhancing their ability of performing tasks within the family by enrolling for FAL with integrated vocational skill training.

4.2.3 Women's limited FAL and vocational Skills: Experiences of Participation in Income Generating Projects

Income generating projects was another theme under investigation in this study. This section focuses on the influence of non-literacy and lack of vocational skills on women's economic lives.

The women revealed that prior to FAL and integrated vocational training, they lacked awareness and the value of FAL and vocational skills to generate income for their well-being. To illustrate, Atima, openly expressed her bitter experience that, *"before training, our life was very difficult. We did not know how to read, write and calculate for business income. For example, we did not value the skills of baking bread"*.

Ngeye, a 66-year-old woman, peasant farmer, household head with 5 family members explained that,

Prior to training, I lacked vocational skills especially handwork. We only had the local skills of making a winnower and farming. We did not know the importance of handwork. No one was there to open our minds. When you are not educated, you lack vocational skills, although we had the local skills of making winnowers and cooking pots. We were mainly subjected to hard labour farming and nothing else until when I grew old.

Amoli, while highlighting her experience added that, *"Prior to enrolling for FAL training, I did not know anything about vocational skills and this made my life hard financially"*.

While Ilela, a 52-year-old woman, specialised in selling soft broom and mingling sticks (see picture II) had this to say, *"I was moulding cooking pots and mingling stick prior to FAL and vocational training since I got married at only 16 years up to date"*.

The voices above, example, “...we did not value”, “We only had the local skills” and “I was moulding cooking pots” demonstrate that, there is an implied indigenous or home-grown knowledge on how to generate income from basic skills that enables the non-literate women to survive using their local resources. However, some of the common statements, “We did not know...” as articulated by the women demonstrates that the indigenous or home-grown knowledge has not been practiced in a systematic way due to women’s inability to interpret and understand written text. Atima, Ngeye and Amoli’s accounts are supported by Boserup (1970) who argued that, while women have always been an important component in development practice, but their status and opportunity have been reduced due to their lack of literacy and vocational skills. This implies that lack of literacy and vocational skills is associated with low income and poor well-being of women as well as their family. For example, Amoli’s statement of limited skills which, “...made my life hard financially...” prior to training, demonstrates unawareness and the difficulties non-literate women go through in generating income and improving upon their well-being.

Overall, from the different accounts of women, non-literacy and lack of vocational skills hindered women’s ability to generate income, improve on their socio-economic status and well-being. Although they had alternative ways of generating income using their local skills. This was not sufficient due to their non-literacy status and lack of professional skills to make quality products. Consequently, women’s non-literacy status and lack of vocational skills should be blamed for their low income and poor well-being, while struggling to improve on their socio-economic lives.



Picture II: Sample of mingling sticks locally made from trees

CHAPTER FIVE

INTRODUCTION TO LITERACY AND INTEGRATED VOCATIONAL SKILLS

This chapter which addresses the second objective of the study, namely, *“to explore the kinds and levels of skills acquired by FAL and vocationally-trained women.”* The themes are revealed into this chapter focuses on reading, writing, numeracy and integrated vocational skills. It presents findings about the different scopes of literacy skills that the 27 trained women of Apac district were introduced to in their FAL and integrated training. Also, the chapter examines how the women perceived the new aspects they were being introduced to in the training in relation to their previous experiences discussed in the previous chapter. Whereas the previous chapter did not consider any other views apart from those of the women, this chapter considers additional opinions of 11 Key informants (an official from MGLSD, DCDO, CDO and FAL instructors). This chapter analyses content of the different levels, kinds of skills as well as the awareness about the relevance of the different FAL and vocational skills acquired to enhance ability in improving socio-economic lives of the adult women. FAL and integrated vocational skills acquired and explored in this chapter are used in chapter six as significant benchmarks employed to examine changes in the women’s socio-economic lives. The three levels of FAL, that is, Level I (Basic), level II (middle) and Level III (advanced and self-learning level) are recognised globally as modules of basic FAL training (Khan, 2001; Olomukoro & Adelore, 2015). In line with UNESCO’s version of FAL, Uganda focusses on the areas such as farming, marketing, animal husbandry, gender issues, health, culture and civic consciousness as well as language (Hasaba, 2012). The areas underlined in the FAL curriculum/primer to a great echoes the UNESCO’s pillars of education for international understanding. Table 7 presents the details.

Table 7: Three Levels of FAL Training

Level	Reading	Writing	Numeracy
Level I (Basic Level)	Read and understand simple printed paragraphs	Write simple letters	Count and recognise figures 1-100
Level II (Middle Level)	Read and comprehend stories, songs, directions, instructions and simple parts of newspapers	Write simple notes and letters	Demonstrate proficiency in adding and subtracting
Level III (Advanced and self-learning level)	Analyse and synthesize main ideas of what they read	Write one or two pages on certain topics	Add and subtract large numbers with accuracy and speed

Source: ACCU and UNESCO. 2001. Handbook, Adult Learning Materials Development as Community Level p.13 (Khan, 2001)

In addition to the numeracy content for levels I, II, and III in table 7 above, subtraction, multiplication, division and fractions are in the FAL primer of MGLSD (Acaye & Omara-Akaca, 2012; Byabamazima et al., 2012; Hasaba, 2012). In contrast, the FAL primer shows no direct link between FAL and vocational training which was agreed in 2015, on the global agenda under the UNs’ SDGs 4.3 that by 2030, there should be “*equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university*” (UN, 2015, p. 19). This is indicative of the need to integrate vocational training in FAL curriculum/primer. Recent evidence suggests that, the SDGs also emphasizes on sustainable economic growth as well as decent work, while affirming the significance of inculcating suitable skills across goals (McGrath, Alla-Mensah & Langthaler, 2018).

5.1 Levels and Kinds of Skills Acquired by FAL and Vocationally Trained Women: Relevance in the Women’s Socio-Economic Development

This section focuses on the potential of FAL and integrated vocational skills to improve women’s socio-economic lives.

5.1.1 FAL training Level I

Table 8 presents a summarised curriculum that the participants were trained in at level I. The table’s content is discussed in subsequent sections.

Table 8: Level I of FAL training

	Topic	Tasks
1.	Reading	Vowels a, e, i, o, u; simple words and understand simple printed sentences
2.	Writing	Vowels; simple words and printed sentences
3.	Calculating	Recognising, identifying and counting figures 1-100

Source: Generated by the researcher

This section explores what women were trained at level I. This findings highlights that the women were trained on reading, writing and numeracy. To illustrate, Atima, during a discussion expressed that, “*we were trained how to read and write as well as to calculate our business expenses, income and profit*” (FGDs Atik Division Sub-County 15th July 2021 11:21 am to 12:05 pm).

While, a key informant, who is a FAL trainer in her 63 years noted that,

If I am training the women, level I is reading and writing. Numeracy is at both level I and II to help women in calculating their business incomes. Once I write something on the blackboard, the women write very well after learning how to read and write.

Another key informant, who is a FAL trainer in his 67 years added that,

At level I of the training, the women now know numeracy 1-100 which they could not write before. I have trained them on computing money or income. They know how to compute interest rates and profit from sales due to training. They can read and understand how much money a particular figure indicates. For example, if I say, Mr. Okello sold 5 cooking pots at Shs. 10,000, bought bananas for shs. 6,000, how much is Okello remaining with. The learners are now able to compute these figures on how much was generated, spent, the balance and the profit.

The above data portrays women's acquisition of basic reading, writing and numeracy skills during their level I of training. The awareness about the literacy skills that the women were being exposed to at this level is responsive to Freire's (1970) agitation for conscientisation or awareness creation by the teacher to open the minds for the learners in order for them to discover the world within which they live. The three women's storyline (Atima and the two trainers) all drive to one point of being introduced to numerical figures to enable them compute their business incomes, expenses and profit. Their voices are indicative that the women are able to make the practical use of basic calculating in their daily lives. Atima and the two trainer's voices concur with findings of the past studies which have identified that adult's need basic skill to function effectively in everyday context (Awofala & Blessing, 2014).

5.1.2 Level II and the Socio-economic Dimensions of Women's Participation in FAL and Integrated Vocational Training

The 27 sampled women who completed level I of training progressed to level II because they already knew how to read, understand and write simple written sentences in the Luo language. In addition, the women could recognise and count numbers 1 – 100 and even beyond. FAL training for level II was also carried out using the local language (Luo). In addition to the skills of relating level I of reading, writing and calculation in their daily lives which the women acquired,

at level II, women were introduced to extensive issues in improving their socio-economic lives by integrating vocational skills in this level's curriculum.

In this section, the two dimensions, namely, integrated vocational skills and teamwork that was first introduced in the conceptual framework are examined in relation to the skills acquired at level II of FAL and vocational training. The fact that the syllabus for this level did not focus directly to vocational skills, this section explored how integrating vocational with FAL skills at level II was relevant to women's socio-economic lives and well-being.

5.1.2.1 Women's FAL and Vocational Skills

Establishing the integration of FAL with vocational skills was an important factor to exploring how the training enhanced women's ability to improve on their socio-economic lives. This study found that while vocational training is not in the FAL curriculum, the women were trained with the vocational skills to enable them generate better income and have the ability to improve on their well-being.

Acoma in a FGD narrated that,

I am at level II. I was trained vocational skills because I did not know any livelihood and life skills. The best skills I have learnt is how to bake local bread which goes for Uganda shs.200 each. The high quality baking, awareness was created, but I still lack the practical skills, example, how to make the mixture. That one defeats me...Our main challenge is the materials and the resources to bake the cakes. For us, where are we going to get the materials and the resources? While we have basic and local skills, we don't have materials to use.

Ongoda, a 50-year-old woman, peasant farmer, focused on selling soft brooms, widow and household head with 15 family members had this to say,

From the training at level II, I learnt that I should get something of quality with better skills to generate income. We were trained on

moulding pots for sale and to generate income to improve on our well-being. Our trainer knows how to make it.

A key informant explained that, *“Handwork under vocational skills, I introduce it at level II although vocational training is not included in the FAL curriculum”*.

Another Key informant added that,

At level II, the women know how to read and write including the skills of baking bread. I invited a technical expert to speak to the learners and create awareness on the value of baking bread to generate income and how to bake the bread. As a trainer, I do not know how to bake bread. Right now among the learners, there are two women who knows how to bake bread very well after the training.

An official from MGLSD, at the position of Principal Literacy officer, in her 44 years added that,

When the learners, particularly, the women are enrolled in FAL classes, they come when they don't have any livelihood skills. After knowing how to read and write, the learners should graduate with some vocational skills to help them generate income and improve on their well-being. FAL is better when integrated with vocational skills. This training creates jobs for learners and generates income for them. Vocational training is not included in the FAL curriculum. MGLSD already have vocational skills in the new model ICOLEW where the component is included in the FAL training. This is already going on in the community by artisans, piloted in Nwoya District (Lango Region). They train both women and men in saloon/hairdressing, carpentry, catering, welding and bicycle repair. The maximum training should only be two years, that is when the learners already know how to write their names and letters. They should graduate and come out when they are

already carpenters, others brick layers, builders, hairdressers and others in urban farming.

The above storyline shows the value attached to level II of the training by this study participant's. With reference to the vocational skills, Acoma, Ongoda and the three Key Informants emphasised women's awareness and ability to utilise the FAL and integrated vocational skills acquired to be self-employed, generate income and improve on their well-being, for example, to compute the income, expenses and profits earned from their sales such as bakery and cooking pots. The above skills and ability acquired by her tally with Bose's (2021) study Bengal women that different vocational skills acquired enhances their inclusion and ability to improve their socio-economic lives and well-being compared to before when the women had no literacy and integrated vocational skills. Thus, in addition to reading, writing and numeracy at level II of FAL training, the women's knowledge and skills is broadened with additional vocational training.

Although, the women became aware as well as had the ability to utilise the vocational skills acquired, findings from this study indicates that at level II of the training, they experienced limitations. For example, their statements such as *"but I still lack the practical skills"*, *"materials and the resources to bake"* *"training is not included in the FAL curriculum"* indicates participant's yearning for a hands-on approach to systematic learning and integrated vocational skills in FAL primer as well as support to acquire learning materials. Further, the voices of the key informants, *"I invited a technical expert to speak"* and *"FAL is better when integrated with vocational and livelihood skills...creates jobs...generates income for them"*, therefore, suggests that there is a need to integrate vocational skills with systematic FAL training to enhance the women's knowledge and ability to practice high quality life skills and generate better income. The women's voices agree with the MGLSD (2019) report that integrating literacy and numeracy with livelihoods as well as life skills greatly contributes to poverty eradication, human and holistic development, particularly the women. Likewise, the findings of this study on the outcome of integration of FAL with vocational skills agree with Olagbaju's (2020) report that adult literacy and skills acquisition capacity building programme on women contributes to their inclusion and self-reliance.

5.1.3 Training Level III

The women who completed levels I and II should proceed to level III- the final and advanced stage of FAL training in Uganda (UNESCO, 2001; DCDO, 2021). At this level, the learners should be introduced to basic English language skills. According to the English primer learner's book, this level is based on the situations of the learners' daily conditions as well as experiences both in the rural or urban setting (Byabamazima et al., 2012). The lessons include, but are not limited to, alphabet letters, going to the market, time and days of the week. In comparison, the content of Luo is different. While the Luo primer is aimed at providing reading, writing and numeracy skills for economic, social and political development, the English primer focuses on enabling learners to communicate in simple English. This indicates a big variation in the content of Luo and English primer. Although level III of FAL primer comprises the topics above, the translated primer also linked listening, speaking, reading and writing ability in basic English language to the category of marketing and income generating activities.

A general finding for this section was that the majority of the trained women had just completed level II of the training which was conducted in the Luo local language as indicated in section 5.1.3 above. Nevertheless, the participants' acknowledgement that knowing how to read, write, calculate and communicate in the English language was significant since it was the language that is used and dominated official events as well as interaction with the visitors. For example, Amoli, while in a discussion expressed that, *“we feel our life is still hard among community members. In case people are communicating in English as well as writing something, we do not know how to write. This has made us fearful to interact with community members”*.

While supplementing Amoli's voice, Key Informant, who is a FAL trainer added that,

The DCDO visited us and told us that after level I and II, we should start training the women in English language to enable them interact with foreign visitors as well as market their products, but for this level, it needs another FAL trainer (expert) to handle that level. My expertise stops at level I and II. English is level III.

A 42-year-old male Key Informant and a trained explained that,

The women are appreciating the training. Their major challenge is speaking English because they only know basics. English language helps them in welcoming the visitors, greetings....it also helps in marketing their products. Other customers do not understand the local language and require to be communicated using English language. The learners do not know how to write well in English, but a few now can read and write. With constant training, they will learn and become better with English language at level III of the training.

The storyline by Amoli and the two Key informants that level III of training enables the women to participate to interact and participate with confidence as well as freely within the community activities. This is in line with Kabeer's (2005) perspective that literacy which in the case English language skills contributes to women's ability in exercising their agency during community activities where English is used as a medium of communication. The women's voices are in line with Freire's (1970) view that the acquisition of literacy skills should not be an end in itself, but a means to an improved learner's critical consciousness of his or her social reality. This implies that, when women acquire the English language skills, they will be able to be part of the team to handle issues in their communities.

The voices above also indicate that English language would enhance women's ability to speak with foreign visitors when marketing their product. In addition, if the women acquire English language skills, in turn, they will have a better opportunity, access wider market on all categories of customers as well as ability to generate higher income. The above finding is consistent with the study by Hasaba (2012) which focused on Mpigi District in the Central Uganda, Jinja District and Kamuli District both in Eastern Uganda and Bose (2021) in Bengal. They found that high literacy levels with different vocational skills acquired are a positive indicator of socio-economic development.

From the several views of the women, the levels II and III of FAL and integrated vocational training provides numerous skills for improved socio-economic well-being of the women, their family and the community. The skills set includes ability for self-employment, management of their income generating activities and marketing their products. For instance, the women gained skills in computing their income, expenses and profits earned from sales.

CHAPTER SIX

FAL AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: LIFE-CHANGING FOR WOMEN BENEFICIARIES

This chapter focuses on the third objective of the study namely, *“to establish whether there was any socio-economic improvement in women based on literacy and vocational skills in Apac District compared to previous non-literary status”*. The chapter includes the views of all the study participants including the 27 women who completed level II of training from 5 FGDs and 11 Key Informants. The findings are presented and discussed based on categories which guided the study and debates. The findings are presented and discussed under the following categories: community gatherings, teamwork and income generating projects.

6.1 Community Gatherings: Women’s Experiences After FAL and Vocational Training

This study revealed that women’s confidence and free interaction was enhanced by FAL and integrated vocational training. Findings indicate that FAL and vocationally trained women became leaders such as woman representative at Local Council II level within their community. To illustrate, Acoma asserted that,

FAL and vocational training have improved our lives. We are now strong and confident among community members. I am now at ease. No one humiliates. I know how to communicate to community members. I am very strong. We even have Local Council members amongst us. I have moved forward. I persevered and now a woman Local Council II member.

Arwako, stressed that, *“I can now interact freely with community members during gatherings after acquiring FAL and integrated vocational skills”*.

The key informant and a FAL trainer also affirmed that, *“after training the women, they interact confidently with other community members”*.

The accounts indicate that women's opportunity and confidence to participate in community undertakings as well as become community leaders such as Local Council II greatly improved. The finding therefore suggests that the training opened up women's opportunity to participate in political leadership positions. This fits within Kabeer's (2005) agency theory that training enables women to become active agents of their socio-economic development through involvement in positions of governance. In addition, the women's story line is consistent with the recent study by Olagbaju (2020) which indicated that adult literacy and skills acquisition in the form of vocational training were found to have a significant relationship and impact on women's inclusion and self-reliance in Gambia.

6.2 Women's Experiences of Teamwork after Training in FAL and Vocational Skills

This study revealed that, in comparison the time when the women were non-literate, the FAL and vocationally trained women cherished the value of training in forming groups or teams (see picture III) which as result contributed to their development in terms improved income status and well-being. To confirm, the following participants had this to say:

Auni expressed that, *"we now know and value teamwork. It has greatly contributed to our development and improved on our well-being"*.

A key informant, who is also a FAL trainer affirmed that, *"The women already have their group savings after selling the pots and soft brooms in the market"*.

A key informant in her early 30s highlighted that, *"we have enrolled the women under Uganda Women's Entrepreneurship Project (UWEPI). It is a loan project. They have been given cows and ox-ploughs. They also have savings groups"*.

An official from MGLSD, while supplementing on the women's voices about the value of teamwork explained that,

After the training, the programme should be sustainable and lifelong to enable women generate better income for themselves and improve on their well-being. All women's projects where there

are investments and savings for example, from farming, carpentry, hairdressing, catering services.... should be in groups. A member can also do individually like planting soya beans but belonging to a group is a must.

The above voices demonstrate how working in groups has improved women's financial status and well-being compared to working on individual basis. The voices of Auni and the three key informants indicates women's awareness on the value of teamwork in terms of contributing to their sustainable development, generating better income, saving and re-investing the income generated as well as improving their well-being. Hence, the women's storyline concurs with Freire (1970) and Kabeer's (2005) advocacy that enhancing women's awareness and understanding of the dominant socio-economic structures that oppress them in turn contributing to their development. In addition, Freire's (1970) and Sen's (1999) argument that the skills acquired from training help as a form of liberation as well as a process for development, above all, in the case of marginalised women. Research findings by Bandiera et al. (2020) also points towards the need to promote individuals, especially women who missed the opportunity of formal education to acquire a basic set of literacy and integrated vocational skills in order to enhance their ability to improve socio-economic lives and well-being.



Picture III: FAL and Vocationally Trained Women Group/Team

6.3 FAL and Diversified Vocational Skills

Although working groups improved women’s financial status, the women suggested diversified vocational skills in FAL group learning which in turn would contribute better to diversification of their sources of income. To illustrate, Acoma, narrated that,

We were made to form groups for vocational skills training. In our group, we were thinking that our trainers could give us other skills in addition to baking bread and making winnowers. We were proposing to be trained on high quality baking and how to preserve it where we can supply in shops when it has not gone bad. In

addition, we are proposing that a sowing machine should be acquired from somebody so that we can start training on tailoring. Although I have problems with my sight, if you put for me the thread in the needle, I will be able to learn and do tailoring.

While Atima added that,

As a group, we are proposing that we should write a project if we can solicit for funding with guidance of like you the technical person or any person. We can identify a place in our community where we can set for diversified projects. We shall write the requirements of the different projects. If this projects could be successful, our families could be at peace. For instance, we have children whom we should cater for their fees, our parents amongst us, some are now widows. If God allows, any adult literacy researcher could write a proposal on our behalf to run the women's project.

While supporting the women's voices, a key informant as well as a FAL trainer added that, expressed that,

I am proposing acquiring a sowing machine which we are lacking, that is when we can begin training women. We already have a trained and technical person who is willing to come and start training the women. I also talked to the hairdresser and she is very willing to come and start training the women on salon business. The local hairdressing the women know, they only lack skills which require technical knowledge. Even jewels, they already have basic skills of beading, except for the materials, designs and decorations where we lack the skills.

The storyline of Acoma, Atima and the Key Informant above with statements such as, "*give us other skills in addition to...*", "*...we should write a project*" and "*I am proposing acquiring a*

sowing machine ...”, is indicative that income generated from one or very few skills is not sufficient to improve on the socio-economic lives of FAL and vocationally trained women. The women working groups would generate more income if they are trained with diversified skills in generating income, how to identify and write project proposal as well as solicit for funding to support their businesses. The three voices above corroborate with MGLSD’s (2019) situation analysis report that integrated learning endeavours to address the needs of adult learners by imparting FAL and life skills for socio-economic progress.

In addition, the above statements such as, “*we were thinking*”, “*we are proposing*” and “*I am proposing*”, illustrates women’s increased awareness and active agency in their groups due to FAL and integrated vocational skills acquired. These findings agree with Freire (1970) and Kabeer’s (2005) argument on awareness and active agency; a situation in which agents are able to make choices due to the skills acquired. In addition, the findings are in tandem with Freirean literacy perspective which emphasises individual and collective agency through the notions of ‘conscientisation’ or awareness creation and dialogue, as tools for making marginalised people, especially women, agents of social change and engagement in socio-economic development.

6.3 FAL and Vocational Training: Women’s Participation on Income Generating Projects

In this section, women’s improved income status and well-being is discussed in terms of improved calculation in their income generating activities, based on the expenses incurred, income generated and profit earned. The storyline below provides a general overview of improved women’s involvement in income generating activities after experiencing FAL and integrated vocational training:

Acoma, expressed that,

There is a great improvement in our lives compared to when we were non-literate without vocational skills. I now sell winnowers and also save my money for re-investment. For me, in my home, I don’t ask my husband money to buy items such as cooking oil and soap. I buy it from town on my way back home. I buy clothing for

my children and life continues. The major challenge is that I have only one knowledge on vocational skills. Winnowers (**see picture IV below**) takes time to get worn out like 5 years before a person can buy a new one...



Picture IV: Locally Made Winnower Which has lasted about 20 Years Bought Since 2001

Ejangu, a 60-year-old woman, specialised in millet flour and handwork business, household head with 2 family members asserted that,

After the training, I now earn better income. I started baking bread for business. I sell each at shs. 500. When I bake a packet, I earn between shs. 25,000 to shs. 27,000. For example, the cost of baking flour is shs. 7000, cooking oil at 1 litre at shs. 7,800 and blue band at shs. 2, 000 tolling to about shs. 14, 800. In a week I

sell three times like Monday, Wednesday and Fridays. Each week I earn shs. 75, 000 and shs. 300,000 in 4 weeks. This is the value of FAL with integrated vocational skills.

A key informant, who is also a FAL trainer acknowledged that,

The financial status of the women has greatly improved after selling cooking pots (see picture V) and soft brooms (see picture VI). Like the pot goes for shs. 2,000 and we would almost ten and generate shs. 10,000 in each market day per week and shs. 40,000 per month. The income generated, part of it we save in the group savings and part of it we use it to cater for our well-being. For the group savings, we borrow among ourselves with a low interest rate of 5% to generate profits. Example, if you borrow shs. 10,000, you refund shs. 10,500. We charge lower interest rate for the benefit of group members. However, COVID-19 has affected our market due to lock down.

Acoma, Ejangu and the key informant's affirmations on, "*great improvement in our lives*", "*I now earn better income*" and "*financial status...greatly improved*" demonstrates that, the skills acquired from FAL and integrated vocational training contributed to their improved economic status. The findings concur with Bratsberg, Nyen & Raaum's (2020) report that, adult learning and integrated vocational education lead to a considerable and lasting earnings for women by 27%. Likewise, the voices above are in line with MGLSD's (2007b) report that trained adult women in Uganda became self-employed based on FAL in addition to integrated vocational skills acquired, profited from income generating activities and re-investments of savings from the income generated. Kabeer (2005), Hasaba (2012), Okech & Carr-Hill (2001) and Sen (2003) agree with Acoma, Ejangu and the key informant's' voices above that the provision and accessibility of FAL as well as integrated vocational skills specifically by women is a major opportunity and gateway to inclusion as well as sustainable social and economic development. In addition to the reports by Kabeer, Hasaba, Okech and Sen, (Bukuluki, 2020) provides that adult learning besides integrated vocational skills acquired such as making dreadlocks, liquid soap,

shampoo and conditioner helped women to gain self-confidence and self-worth to start up their own business and earn extra income (Bukuluki, 2020). The findings indicate that FAL and vocationally trained women have better prospects to earn higher incomes and improve their well-being by engaging in productive activities such as selling winnowers, bread, cooking pots and soft brooms compared to when they were non-literate. The above findings also concur with Kabeer's (2005) agency theory that training enables women to become active agents of their socio-economic development by participating in productive activities to generate income as well as improve on their socio-economic status.

Furthermore, Acoma's statement, *"I have only one knowledge on vocational skills"*, indicates the significance of different training in FAL plus integrated vocational skills. The women's craving for diversified vocational skills under FAL training is also supported by other participants. To exemplify, A Key Informant argued that, *"many women now does baking of bread for sale, but their main problem is the market because many people are doing the same kind of business..."*

The above storyline implies that the women who acquired different skills gained in terms of diversification of income as a result relieving them from financial burden to cater for their well-being as well as for the entire family. Acoma's voice is in tandem with MGLSD's (2019) situation analysis information that integrated learning endeavours to address the needs of adult learners by imparting FAL and as livelihood skills under integrated vocational training for socio-economic inclusion. The above findings are consistent with Freire, (1970), Kabeer (2005) and Bukuluki's (2020) views on the positive impact and the part played by literacy as well as incorporated vocational training on women's active agency, increased income generation and improved socio-economic status.

This study concludes that FAL also integrated with vocational skills have enhanced the trained women with an opportunity to generate better income, make re-investments from savings and improve their well-being compared to when they were non-literate. Women's socio-economic status improved in many aspect, for example, buying household requirements like cooking oil and soap, catering for children's clothing, re-investing the income generated and improved

family well-being. As a result, the increase in the number of women taking part in income generating activities and improved socio-economic progress is based on the skills they have acquired through FAL and incorporated vocational training.



Picture V: Sample of moulded pot based on FAL and Vocational training for Women's Income Generation.



Picture VI: Trained Group showing a soft broom, one of the Income Generating Projects

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Conclusions

This chapter is the result of women's experiences of FAL and integrated vocational skills acquired and its transformative elements in the perspective of socio-economic development. The main study question was: *"Have the women in Apac District derived any socio-economic benefits from FAL and vocational training?"* The investigation and discussion of the findings was guided by three study objectives. These comprised: analysing the women's experiences in Apac District prior to their training in FAL and vocational learning, exploring the kinds and levels of skills acquired by FAL and vocationally-trained women and establishing whether there was any socio-economic improvement in women based on literacy and integrated vocational skills in Apac District compared to previous non-literary status. The study concludes that to a great extent non-literacy and lack of integrated vocational skills contributed to women's low self-esteem, humiliation and shame in community gatherings and limited ability to generate income. Regarding the kinds and levels of skills acquired, the women beneficiaries acquired improved reading, writing, numeracy as well as integrated basic vocational skills. Additionally, they were introduced to livelihood, life skills as well as basic English language to enhance them in marketing their products and improve on their socio-economic lives and well-being. Overall, the study established that FAL as well as vocational skills training greatly contributed to improved socio-economic status of the trained women. As a result, the women gained self-esteem as well as confidence and ably participated in community gatherings. They also experienced improved income status as a result of group formation and participation in income generating projects. Below are the general conclusions stemming out from the research which are later followed by recommendations for possible forward action planning.

While exploring and analysing Adult Literacy Programmes and integrated vocational training in Uganda, findings indicates that that FAL programme has been expanded in a planned, systematic and controlled manner to cover the whole country. Furthermore, the findings show that, whereas FAL training programme covers the entire country, government of Uganda recognised the

usefulness and contribution of faith-based civil and society organisations to provide adult literacy services using diverse approaches. In addition, the government through the MGLSD also revealed that innovative ways of adult literacy should be promoted to reduce poverty. Therefore, acknowledgement of other actors by the government in the provision of adult literacy services and innovative learning is a gateway to engage all individuals, particularly, the marginalised non-literate women in the acquisition and use of knowledge and skills for socio-economic development.

This study based its argument on extensive review of literature which advocated that communal and national development require members of the entire community (women, men, girls and boys) to undergo literacy and acquire life skills in terms of integrated vocational training. Many literacy scholars, specifically, Freire (1970) argued in the national and international debates that the majority of women missed the opportunity of attaining formal education. In developing countries, more women compared to men are non-literate with limited or no vocational skills. Consequently, this has contributed to low levels of socio-economic development for the women in the locality. Despite many women having benefited from FAL training as a gateway to improve their socio-economic status, qualitative information about the impact of innovative adult literacy integrated with vocational training on their agency in socio-economic development is insufficient. Therefore, this study aimed at addressing this need.

Inquiry of the information on the socio-economic characteristics of the women as discussed in chapter four suggests that age, occupation, household head and family size of the participants were factors related to women's effort to improve their socio-economic lives. The findings revealed that majority of women in this study were older in the age group 41-70 which is indicative that there was discrimination and exclusion of older women due to cultural settings. Besides, low self-esteem and limited participation of women in community gatherings amongst these age groups was justified by their non-literacy status and limited or no life skills in terms of vocational training.

Further inquiry revealed that male-headed households were still slightly dominant in the society compared to female-headed households due to the patriarchal structures. The study revealed that,

even within this background, there was cultural marginalisation where, for example, both the married and the widows were denied access to or ownership of resources on the ground that women were unable to or less knowledgeable to make family decisions. Consequently, this stifled women's efforts to improve their socio-economic status. In addition, findings showed high dependency rate to many women due to large families comprising of husband, daughters, sons and dependent relatives as well as extended family systems such as orphans, step sisters and step brothers. As a result, the high dependency rate posed heavy burden on the women in managing the family compared to men due to their non-literacy status and limited vocational skills to generate adequate income to cater for the family's well-being.

Regarding women's experiences prior to their training in FAL as well as integrated vocational training, this study revealed that the women experienced social exclusion during community gatherings as well as within their families due to their lack of literacy and vocational skills. They had low self-esteem and shame to participate in community gatherings. In addition, majority of them lacked awareness on the value of vocational skills. The non-literate women experienced many hardships such as disgrace and mockery during the community gatherings and within their families as well as low income and poor well-being for themselves as well as their families. However, some women had the local skills, for example, moulding cooking pots to generate income, but non-literacy status and lack of vocational skills hindered their ability make quality products, market them, generate better income and improve on their well-being.

With regard to the levels and kinds of skills acquired by FAL and vocationally-trained women, this study revealed that integrated FAL training with vocational skills enhanced women's ability to improve on their socio-economic status. The women became aware of the value of FAL combined with integrated vocational training. They were able to compute the income, expenses and profits earned from their sales such as bakery and molded cooking pots. However, despite the skills acquired, they lacked materials and resources to apply the practical skills acquired hands-on during the training as well as at home. It is clear that, while the curriculum of vocational training is not directly included in the FAL primer, it was significant in improving women's socio-economic status. Therefore, the findings suggest why the participants unanimously wanted FAL primer to be integrated with the curriculum for vocational training.

In addition, this study established the benefits of literacy with integrated vocational training on women's socio-economic lives. Compared to when they were non-literate, the women's opportunity and confidence to participate in community undertakings as well as become community leaders such as Local Council II greatly improved. Above all, they became self-employed based on FAL and integrated vocational skills acquired, profited from income generating activities, re-investments of savings from the income generated as well as improved the well-being for themselves and their families. The women's engagement in community gatherings, leadership positions and productive activities indicates that FAL as well as integrated vocational skills training greatly improved the socio-economic lives of women. Therefore, the findings suggest that, many vocational skills should be integrated with FAL training to diversify their income in order to relieve them from financial burden in order to cater for their well-being as well as for the entire family.

The notion of this study was informed by Agency Theory and Freirean Literacy Perspective as well as Kabeer's Socio-Economic Perspective which is related to training in FAL in addition to integrated vocational skills. Based on training, women's opportunity in FAL and integrated vocational skills acquired in the available learning centres has contributed to creating awareness, understanding of their environment and the dominant cultural norms that impeded their socio-economic their progress.

On the other hand, from the theoretical mapping, findings show that women face many challenges in their daily lives as they endeavour to improve their socio-economic lives. For instance, women's attempt to participate in community gatherings as well as management of family affairs and resources came with humiliation, cultural bias and mockery from community members and spouses resulting to missed opportunities to contribute to socio-economic development. However, enhanced awareness or conscientisation gives women the capacity and a chance to recognise the challenges, question, analyse and challenge the patriarchal structures which creates constraints and inequalities in their socio-economic lives.

To conclude, this is a very important study. It contributes to knowledge about adult literacy training as well as integrated vocational skills. In addition, the study expands our knowledge about the general area of adult literacy and integrated vocational training.

7.2 Recommendations

The study recommends that the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MGLSD) which coordinates FAL training in Uganda along with other departments, such as international Partners, NGO's and civil society, should prioritise, support and strengthen training by integrating FAL with vocational training. For example, MGLSD can include vocational training curriculum in the FAL primer to promote a hands-on approach to learning rather than theoretical method. This is based on the response by the women that through hands on skills, their capacities are enhanced to create their own jobs, generate better income, reduce poverty and helplessness.

MGLSD needs to create awareness of the benefits of FAL and integrated vocational training, particularly to the marginalised women. Considering the monumental hurdles, the women went through before accessing FAL as well as integrated vocational training, MGLSD, international development partners, NGO's and civil society should mount a special publicity campaign to popularise the training. The campaign will also facilitate change of public opinion towards non-literate adult women. It takes serious effort to change attitude through media and other knowledge management institutions to make the public and family look at non-literate adults with more respect.

The study recommends that this should start with policy review and action plan for integrating and diversifying both learning components as well as collaborating with vocational training institutions to reduce poverty and improve women's socio-economic lives and well-being. This is in response of the dire need of many women that they should be trained on many integrated vocational skills in addition to FAL to generate better income and improve on their well-being. This is also in line with the MGLSD policy in line with National Adult Literacy Policy Framework for wealth creation at household level.

To ensure that FAL besides integrated vocational training yields tangible socio-economic dividends for the women graduates, MGLSD should establish, as part of its affirmative policy, a special funding mechanism for grants, soft loans and token stipends to facilitate the graduates. This would help them to put their ideas and skills into practice in order to prevent the risk of

losing those skills due to disuse. Such a robust scheme would also help in sustainable transformation of their socio-economic lives.

Further research on the study can be undertaken in the areas below:

First, the research for this study was carried out in only one district of Lango-Region, Northern Uganda which may leave the readers with one-sided questions, for example, what the studies would contribute in the context of developing and developed nations. Therefore, the lessons learnt from this study serves as a basis for future and comparative studies of FAL and vocationally trained women across other districts in in the region as well as Uganda, in Africa and beyond. This could help in assessing the progress and gaps the national FAL training programme is facing, and therefore suggest remedies thereto.

In addition, the study explored the changes resulting from the FAL and integrated vocational training. This study recommends an investigation on the learning process, whether the methods of training were capable of unlocking socio-development potentials of women.

Finally, the research recommends a review study, for example, annually and a monitoring mechanism to this study at regular intervals to establish the socio-economic status of the participants in this study. There might be other remarkable findings for policy review of women's opportunity in FAL and integrated vocational training as well as changes into their socio-economic lives.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: In-depth Interview Guide for the Key- Informants

Title: Functional Adult Literacy and Women’s Socio-Economic Development in Lango region, Northern Uganda.		
No	Informant’s name (Optional)	
1.	Age	
2.	Occupation	
3.	Marital status	
4.	Household head	
5.	Number of family members	
6.	Years of lived in the community	
7.	Literacy status (Literate/non-literate)	

A. Socio-Economic Experiences of Apac Women Prior to Their Training in FAL

- i. How would you describe women’s everyday life before FAL and Vocational training? (responses to be probed)
- ii. How would you describe everyday life of non-literate women before FAL and Vocational training? (responses to be probed)
- iii. With your experience of FAL and vocational training, what can you say are the key hindrances of women prior to FAL and vocational training?
- iv. What do you think can be done to overcome the above difficulties?

B. The Level of FAL The Women Have Acquired

- i. What does vocational training mean under FAL training programme?
- ii. How do you rate the level of understanding of vocational training to FAL-trained women?
- iii. How do FAL-trained women apply vocational skills in their every day life?

C. The Benefits of Literacy Programme on Women’s Socio-Economic Lives:

- i. How has vocational training improved the lives of FAL-trained women? (probe for changes)

Appendix B: Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) Guide – FAL and Vocationally Trained Women

Title: Functional Adult Literacy and Women’s Socio-Economic Development in Northern Uganda.		
No	Informant’s name (Optional)	
1.	Age	
2.	Occupation	
3.	Marital status	
4.	Person that headed the Household	
5.	Number of family members	
6.	Years of lived in the community	
7.	Literacy status (Literate/non-literate)	

A. Socio-economic Experiences of Apac Women Prior to Their Training in FAL

- Tell me about your everyday life before involvement in FAL and integrated vocational training (Probe for details of experiences)
- With your experience, what can you say are the key hindrances in participating in the FAL and integrated vocational training? Probe more

B. The Level of FAL and vocational skills the Women Have Acquired

- i. What did you learn in vocational training integrated under FAL (Probe more)?
- ii. Tell me about the skills you acquired in vocational training under level II of FAL (Demonstration required)

C. Women and FAL Training: An Opportunity for Socio-Economic Progress

- How has FAL training and integrated vocational skills changed your lived experiences? (Probed for changes)

Appendix C: Observation Checklist (FAL Participants)

Guidelines

The following were observed and information recorded systematically:

1. Expression of confidence
2. Eagerness
3. Shyness
4. Bitterness

Appendix D: Document Review Guide: Sampling of Documents and Data Analysed

Documents Selected	Data Analysed
Acaye, A., & Omara-Akaca. (2012). <i>Ryeko aye Lonyo: Buk me Acel (Luo Primer)</i> . Kampala: Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development.	Information of FAL primer/curriculum-Local language
Byabamazima, V., Sabano, S., & Baryayebwa, H. (2012). <i>Knowledge is Wealth, English Primer, Learner's Book One</i> . Kampala, Uganda: MoGLSD.	Information of FAL primer/curriculum-English language
DCDO (2021, 23 rd August). [Status Report on Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) in Apac District].	Information about ongoing FAL and integrated vocational training. Helped to determine the choice of learners who have been trained on FAL and integrated vocational skills for the period 202-2021
MoGLSD (2007). <i>The Uganda Gender Policy (2007)</i>	Policy issues regarding gender in Uganda
MoGLSD (2015). <i>Uganda National Adult Literacy Policy</i>	Policy on Adult Literacy Programmes in Uganda
MGLSD. (2019). <i>Integrated Community Learning for Wealth Creation (ICOLEW) Programme</i> . Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development	Policy issues on FAL as well as livelihood and life skills based on integrated vocational training.
NDP. (2020). <i>Third National Development Plan (NDP III) 2020/21-2024/25</i> . Uganda.	Policy issues about adult literacy and ingrated vocational trainind
Okech, A., & Carr-Hill, R. A. (2001). <i>Adult Literacy Programs in Uganda</i> .	Adult literacy programmes in Uganda
Rogers, A. (2008). <i>Report of Consultancy on Functional Adult Literacy Programme in Kalangala and Buvuma Island</i>	Adult literacy programmes in Uganda
UBOS statistical abstracts and reports (2016-2021)	Women's Literacy Status and Development (Global and East Africa literacy trends)
UN. (2015). <i>Transforming our world: The 2030 agenda for sustainable development</i> .	Issues on vocational training integrated with FAL for sustainable development
UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2017-2021)	Women's Literacy Status and Development
UNESCO Reports (1974-2020)	Issues on Human Rights for literacy and Adult literacy programmes in Uganda

Appendix E: Developing Qualitative Content Analysis Themes (Extract)

a) How women’s socio-economic experiences in Apac District prior to their training in FAL and vocational skills were generated:

Theme/Category	Code
Community Gatherings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Before FAL and integrated vocational training, whenever I was among people in the community, I used to feel very ashamed because those who are educated know how to write. - Whenever something comes out that it should be written down, I would say, please kindly write for me. This made people to think that ohhh, this one is a useless woman -
Mockery-Family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “He used to call me dull and moron, non-literate - Interviewer: Who says you are dull and moron? - Acoma: Ah, specifically, our husbands.... - Interviewer: Who says you are dull and moron? - Acoma: Because sometimes they would ask us to do certain things, but we were unable. Life was really hard for us the non-literate women with no live skills. - Interviewer: Why do you think your life is hard? - Acoma: For example, the man would say, this dog who does not know anything, dull. I am going to look for another wife who is brilliant and knows how to do things. You are stupid like your family members. Eh, because you cannot do for me anything. Our husbands say we are dull like our mothers. We are really bitter with our parents. - Interviewer: Why do you feel bitter with our parents? - Acoma: We are really bitter with our parents who did not send us to school. We feel very annoyed with this kind of situation. - Interviewer: How did you handle the situation? - Acoma: I made a resolution, despite any condition, I must go for training

Income Generating Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “before training, our life was very difficult. We did not know how to read, write and calculate for business income. For example, we did not value the skills of baking bread” - Prior to training, I lacked vocational skills especially handwork. We only had the local skills of making a winnower and farming. We did not know the importance of handwork. No one was there to open our minds. When you are not educated, you lack vocational skills, although we had the local skills of making winnowers and cooking pots. We were mainly subjected to hard labour farming and nothing else until when I grew old
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b) The Levels and Kinds of Skills Acquired by FAL and Vocationally-Trained Women in Apac District.

Theme/Category	Code
Reading, writing and Numeracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - “we were trained how to read and write as well as to calculate our business expenses, income and profit” - If I am training the women, level I is reading and writing. Numeracy is at both level I and II to help women in calculating their business incomes. Once I write something on the blackboard, the women write very well after learning how to read and write
FAL and Vocational Skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I am at level II. I was trained vocational skills because I did not know any livelihood and life skills. The best skills I have learnt is how to bake local bread which goes for Uganda shs.200 each. The high quality baking, awareness was created - but I still lack the practical skills, example, how to make the mixture. That one defeats me...Our main challenge is the materials and the resources to bake the cakes. For us, where are we going to get the materials and the resources? While we have basic and local skills, we don’t have materials to use. - “we feel our life is still hard among community

	<p>members. In case people are communicating in English as well as writing something, we do not know how to write. This has made us fearful to interact with community members”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The women are appreciating the training. Their major challenge is speaking English because they only know basics. English language helps them in welcoming the visitors, greetings....it also helps in marketing their products. Other customers do not understand the local language and require to be communicated using English language. The learners do not know how to write well in English, but a few now can read and write. With constant training, they will learn and become better with English language at level III of the training
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c) Socio-economic improvement in women based on literacy and vocational skills in Apac District compared to previous non-literary status.

Theme/Category	Code
Community Gatherings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - FAL and vocational training have improved our lives. We are now strong and confident among community members. I am now at ease. No one humiliates. I know how to communicate to community members. I am very strong. We even have Local Council members amongst us. I have moved forward. I persevered and now a woman Local Council II member - “I can now interact freely with community members during gatherings after acquiring FAL and integrated vocational skills”
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We now know and value teamwork. It has greatly contributed to our development and improved on our well-being - The women already have their group savings after selling the pots and soft brooms in the market - we have enrolled the women under Uganda Women’s Entrepreneurship Project (UWEPI). It is a loan project. They have been given cows and ox-ploughs. They also have savings groups

<p>Diversified Vocational Skills</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In our group, we were thinking that our trainers could give us other skills in addition to baking bread and making winnowers. We were proposing to be trained on high quality baking and how to preserve it where we can supply in shops when it has not gone bad. In addition, we are proposing that a sowing machine should be acquired from somebody so that we can start training on tailoring. Although I have problems with my sight, if you put for me the thread in the needle, I will be able to learn and do tailoring - I am proposing acquiring a sowing machine which we are lacking, that is when we can begin training women. We already have a trained and technical person who is willing to come and start training the women. I also talked to the hairdresser and she is very willing to come and start training the women on salon business. The local hairdressing the women know, they only lack skills which require technical knowledge. Even jewels, they already have basic skills of beading, except for the materials, designs and decorations where we lack the skills
<p>Income Generating Projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - There is a great improvement in our lives compared to when we were non-literate without vocational skills. I now sell winnowers and also save my money for re-investment. For me, in my home... I buy it from town on my way back home. I buy clothing for my children and life continues. The major challenge is that I have only one knowledge on vocational skills. Winnowers (see picture below) takes time to get worn out like 5 years before a person can buy a new one... - After the training, I now earn better income. I started baking bread for business. I sell each at shs. 500. When I bake a packet, I earn between shs. 25,000 to shs. 27,000. For example, the cost of baking flour is shs. 7000, cooking oil at 1 litre at shs. 7,800 and blue band at shs. 2, 000 tolling to about shs. 14, 800. In a week I sell three times like Monday, Wednesday and Fridays. Each week I earn shs. 75, 000 and shs. 300,000 in 4 weeks. This is the value of FAL with integrated vocational skills

Appendix F: Permission Letter for Data Collection



LIRA UNIVERSITY

P.O Box 1035, Lira Uganda
Tel: +256 414 670 610
Web: www.lirauni.ac.ug

Email: judithakello@yahoo.com/jabal@lirauni.ac.ug

FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCE

The Resident District Commissioner
P.O Box 1, Apac District.

Thru:

The District Community Development Officer
P.O Box 1, Apac District

11th July, 2021

Dear Sir,



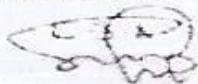
RE: Permission for a Post-Doctoral Research in Apac District.

I am writing this letter to grant me permission to carry out Research Project on: "Functional Adult Literacy and Vocational Training: Women's Opportunity for Socio-Economic Development in Uganda. A Case Study of Apac District-Northern Uganda" on Thursday 15th to 30th July 2021. Despite lockdown due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the time Schedule and Itinerary for data Collection, entry, cleaning and analysis between Uganda and Dresden University- Germany was for the period of July 2021 with a strict deadline. Within Apac district, I have selected four divisions (Arocha, Atik, Akere and Agulu) from the Municipal Council and two sub-counties (Apac Town Sub-County and Chegere Sub-County) in consultation with the District Community Officer.

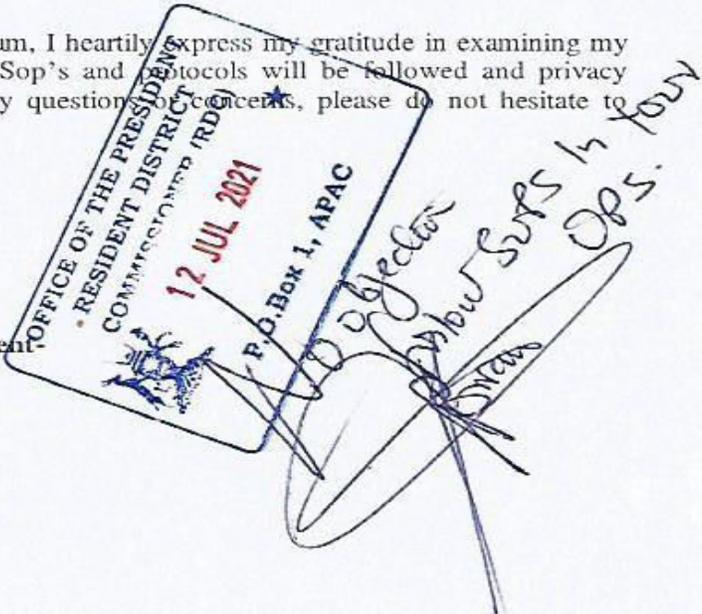
The data collection shall include In-depth Interview Guide for female participants and Key-Informants from each of the selected study area.

On behalf of myself and my research team, I heartily express my gratitude in examining my request for data. I assure you that all Sop's and protocols will be followed and privacy regulations adhered to. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me on 0772592115.

Yours Sincerely



Dr. Judith Akello Abal
Senior Lecturer and Head of Department
Commerce and Business Management
Faculty of Management Sciences.



**Appendix G: Status Report- Current Enrolment of Adult Learners in Apac District
2020/2021**



The Republic of Uganda

APAC DISTRICT LOCAL GOVERNMENT

COMMUNITY BASED SERVICES,
P.O BOX 1,
APAC.

23/08/2021

The Chief Administrative Officer,
P.O Box 1,
APAC.

**RE: STATUS REPORT ON FUNCTIONAL ADULT LITERACY PROGRAMME (FALP)
IN THE DISTRICT.**

This programme is currently covering the whole district. The total enrolment is 1664 with gender breakdown of 436 males to 1228 females.

The district has 73 FAL Instructors with gender breakdown of 21 females to 52 males.

FAL INSTRUCTORS STATUS AS AT 2020/2021.

Sub – County	Male	Trained		Untrained		Total
		Male	Female	Male	Female	
Ibuje	11	04	15	02	01	03
Chegere	11	09	20	02	02	04
Apac	14	03	17	04	01	05
Akokoro	06	01	07	02	-	02
Grand Total	42	17	59	10	04	14

ENROLMENT OF ADULT LEARNERS AS AT 2020/2021

No	Sub – County	Male	Female	Total
1.	Ibuje	95	287	382
2.	Chegere	148	443	591
3.	Apac	151	321	472
4.	Akokoro	42	177	219
	Total	436	1228	

ADULT LEARNERS AS AT LEVEL ONE

No	Sub – County	Male	Female	Total
1.	Ibuje	37	102	139
2.	Chegere	45	220	265
3.	Apac	50	135	186
4.	Akokoro	20	46	66
	Total	152	504	656

ADULT LEARNERS AS AT LEVEL TWO

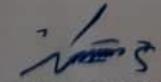
No	Sub – County	Male	Female	Total
1.	Ibuje	52	165	217
2.	Chegere	91	203	294
3.	Apac	90	155	245
4.	Akokoro	19	119	138
	Total	252	642	894

ADULT LEARNERS AS AT LEVEL THREE

No	Sub – County	Male	Female	Total
1.	Ibuje	06	20	26
2.	Chegere	12	20	32
3.	Apac	11	20	41
4.	Akokoro	03	12	15
	Total	32	82	114

Challenges;-

- Motivation of FAL Instructors and Supervisors still very low.
- Inadequate financial support from both districts and Sub – County.
- Some FAL Instructors still not yet trained.
- Inadequate learning and teaching materials.
- Inadequate transport means inform of bicycles.
- Participation of men in FAL programme is still very low.


OKELLO TOM.

DISTRICT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT OFFICER, APAC.



C.C The CAO, Apac.

C.C LC V Chairperson, Apac DLG.

C.C The Secretary, Community Services, Apac DLG.

Appendix H: Information Sheet and Consent Form

Functional Adult Literacy and Vocational Training: Women's Opportunity for Socio-Economic Development in Uganda. A Case Study of Apac District-Northern Uganda

Dear Participants,

I am writing this thesis to explore whether and how the participants in FAL programme in Apac District have derived socio-economic benefits from skills acquired from the training. As part of this research process, I will be holding meetings with Key Informants, that is, District Community Development Officer (DCDO), Assistant Community Development Officer (ACDO), participants that graduated from FAL training, non-literate participants. This is a request to you to be part of this research.

Participation in this research is voluntary and you can withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. If you decide to participate in this research, using recording devices, you will be made to fill the consent form and interviewed for approximately 40 minutes to 01 hour. However, you have the right to:

- Decline to answer any question, but the right to volunteer shall be honoured
- Provide information. For confidentiality, this study will use pseudonyms or official titles for Key Informants to report direct quotes of the participants and information obtained from the informants will remain confidential.
- Ask any question about the research during the interview process
- Access the summary of the findings after the research is concluded

This research has low risk to the study participants and it has been approved by Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST). The researcher is responsible for ethical conduct of this research. For further information, please contact the researcher using the address below:

Judith Abal Akello (Ph.D), Senior Lecturer and Head of Department-Commerce and Business Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, P.O Box 1035, Lira-Uganda, Mobil: +256772592115 Email: judithakello@yahoo.com/labal@lirauni.ac.ug

Thank you

Dr. Judith Abal Akello (Principal Investigator)

Lira University

Consent Form

Functional Adult Literacy and Vocational Training: Women’s Opportunity for Socio-Economic Development in Uganda. A Case Study of Apac District-Northern Uganda

Consent Form: Individual Participants

I have understood the purpose of the research clarified to me. I understand that participation in this research is voluntary. I may ask further questions any time during the interview process and access the findings after the research is concluded.

I agree/do not agree this interview to be recorded and pictures taken using voice recorders and camera.

I also agree for my pictures to be used in this research as per the conditions stated in the fact sheet.

Signature..... Date.....

Name (pseudomysed or official title)



Uganda National Council for Science and Technology
(Established by Act of Parliament of the Republic of Uganda)

**Our Ref: SS 3992
2021**

21st September

Akello Judith Abal
Principal Investigator
Lira University
Lira

**RE: UNLOCKING THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
POTENTIALS: WOMEN'S EXPERIENCES OF FUNCTIONAL
ADULT LITERACY INNORTHERN UGANDA**

This is to inform you that on 21st September 2021, Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) reviewed the progress report and application for renewal and approved the continuation of the above study.

UNCST granted continuing approval valid until 14th December 2025. If, however, it is necessary to continue with the study beyond the expiry date, a request for continuation should be made to the Executive Secretary, UNCST.

Yours sincerely,

Samuel Barasa
for: Executive Secretary

UGANDA NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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