



CONCEPT OF FUNCTIONAL ADULT LEARNING (FAL)

1. Background

ADRA Uganda has adapted Functional Adult Learning as a broader concept that takes into account many components, the major component of this programme being Adult Literacy. ADRA Uganda believes that sustainable social, economic, political, environmental and cultural development can not meaningfully take place unless the population is literate. Illiteracy (ignorance), poverty and disease are the three major factors affecting human and societal growth and development. However, illiteracy is the worst of them all because it undermines the capacity of the individuals and societies to respond to poverty and disease.

Designed in line with the Government Functional Adult Literacy Policy Guidelines and strategic investment plan, ADRA Uganda's FAL is an expansion of the Government FAL curriculum which basically aims at community literacy. In addition to Adult Literacy, ADRA Uganda's Functional Adult Learning is a fully functional programme that involves practical application of class theories. The learners are given the opportunity to apply their knowledge by financially supporting viable and sustainable IGAs where they have comparative advantages.

2. Vision

For a better-informed and literate society, which has the ability to positively contribute to development activities in the local community and beyond.

3. Mission

To promote Literacy and Functionality for adult learners, by promoting their ability to exploit the limited resources around them, for the purposes of developing their surroundings and eventually become self-reliant.

4. The objectives of FAL projects:

- ❖ To empower adults with reading, writing and numeracy skills and raise current literacy rates to a projected percentage depending on the literacy levels in different areas.
- ❖ To equip learners with essential life skills for personal and community development.
- ❖ To build the capacity of the community for income generation and self-reliance.
- ❖ To administer micro-finance for income generating activities.
- ❖ To build the culture of continued learning at home and at work.
- ❖ To enable learners appreciate and conserve their environment for developmental purposes.

5. Target group

The target group is men and women who missed the opportunity of formal learning in their childhood school going years. Whatever category, they must be above 15 years of age; there is no upper limit.

The groups comprise of:

- ❖ Older women and men
- ❖ Youths
- ❖ Special groups of persons.
 - ◆ disabled
 - ◆ prison inmates
 - ◆ specific ethnic groups who are socially and economically disadvantaged, e. g. the Karimojong and pygmies

6. Benefits

- i. Increases knowledge of individual and one's ability to make informed choices
- ii. Builds an individual's confidence in life and therefore enhances self esteem.
- iii. Promotes the social and economic status of the learners thereby making them become self-reliant.
- iv. Increases economic productivity of the learners and the entire community.

7. ADRA Functional Adult Learning Process

The Functional Adult Learning Projects of ADRA are viewed as the real tool of community development because it targets and empowers the poorest of the poor in society. The FAL projects deal with the root cause of poverty, this being illiteracy, and

not its symptoms. The word functional means the ability of the learners to put into practice what they have theoretically learned. The components of the project are specifically designed to enable the disadvantaged groups in society become empowered and self-reliant.

The major components of the FAL concept are:

7.1 Functional Adult Literacy:

Functional Adult Literacy refers to a system of learning whereby adult learners undergo basic training in reading, writing and arithmetic (3 R's) in a language most appropriate to them and in this case, "mother tongue".

The community is first made literate by drilling them using modules, which are professionally and technically designed for adult learners. The topics are progressively set up in the learners books called primers. The intention here is to enable the individual learners become literate which is demonstrated by their ability to read, write and manipulate figures. This is a form of capacity building because the average man is empowered to read instructions, write, record his activities and count his money with confidence. At this level, the learners self esteem and confidence are enhanced and boosted.

7.2 Functional Skills enhancement and Development:

The adult learner needs to have a livelihood strategy that is viable and sustainable in order to make him/her self-reliant. Since sustainable livelihoods involve a complex network of socio-cultural, economic and political components, learners are trained in essential life skills activities which enhance productivity, social and environmental health and social and civic responsibility. In addition to these essential life skill training, the learners choose those activities in which they have a competitive niche and comparative advantage and receive training that makes them master such livelihood strategies. These include, improved agricultural methods, income generating activities and (IGA) identification and management. At this stage, the learners' capacity to be more productive and self-reliant is built.

The knowledge gained is integrated with practical skills through a participatory approach that motivates the learners to continue searching for knowledge and skills. An example of this is the development of model farms from which other farmers learn. These enables the learners improve on whatever activities they are engaged in and enlighten them towards new activities that can be ventured into for the betterment of their lives and their communities.

7.3 Administration of Micro-Finance (Revolving Loan Scheme):

Empowered and equipped with knowledge and skills, the learners, most of whom are poor, do not have the required investment capital to kick-start the economic activities they are interested in or to boost the already initiated ones. For this reason, the learners are trained in loan management and encouraged to form solidarity groups that act as collateral after which they are advanced micro-loans at an interest rate of 4% per quarter. the solidarity groups, where the guiding principle is "each for all and all for each" work on the fact that the learners are poor and have no security to advance against their loans. the group members therefore have full knowledge of what activity each member is involved in. therefore the notion that they are responsible for the failure of each member to pay back the loan will make them develop group pressure on each other to pay back the loan in time.

before the loans are disbursed to the learners to invest in IGAs, they are required to have at least an economic activity from where they are encouraged to save in a bank. Individual savings accounts are initiated and the learners deposit at their will until their savings reach 10% of the loan amount they wish to borrow. the 10% have to fall within the loan ceiling of Ushs. 50,000 to Ushs. 100,000 which is payable within four months.

Using the skills attained during the learning process, the learners are able consolidate their businesses and IGAs or start and manage economic activities successfully and meet their domestic and personal obligations easier.

7.4 Socio- Economic Empowerment of Learners

Functional Adult Learners are empowered and ready to apply all the knowledge and skills and react positively towards socio-economic issues like:

- Better community environmental health and sanitation
- Child immunization and nutrition
- Antenatal care and safe motherhood
- Human rights especially the rights of women and the minority groups
- Appropriate agricultural skills
- Environmental conservation skills
- Business entrepreneurship skills
- Intermediate and appropriate technology

Apart from building the individual learners' capacity, the FAL program also aims at community and organizational capacity building for the sustainability of the project activities when ADRA finally phases out.

8. Organizational/Community Capacity Building:

During project implementation, the community members form an association/committee with a community-oriented constitution and is registered as a Community Based Organization (CBO) with legal rights and powers. The committee or the association then elects the office bearers who are then trained to takeover the administration of the project when ADRA phases out. The office bearers usually have the executive offices of a chairperson, vice chairperson, secretary, and treasurer. These positions are created according to the needs of the project. These officials are then trained by the ADRA officials on how to run the project especially the loan fund. Upon handing over the project to the community, ADRA does monitor the project for some time to ensure an efficient sustainability.

The Community Based Organization is usually made up of the beneficiaries of the project and they have patrons drawn from the local government and the line ministry concerned with the project. The local government, as a collaborating partner of the community, is expected to budget for the activities of the project in their annual budgets to co-finance salaries, and other overhead costs of the project. This is done with the major aim of enhancing project sustainability and ownership by both the beneficiaries and the local administration.

9. Sources of Funding for Sustainability:

Community capacity building begins with building the capacity of the individual members who collectively make up the community. However, the most critical factor that will prove that capacity has been built among a community is their ability to provide alternative sustainable sources of finance to fund the sustainability of the project activities with the aim of revolving the funds among the community members to enable them become self-reliant.

Below are some of the possible sources of funding for sustainability.

- Interest charged on the loans borrowed by the beneficiaries
- Membership fee from the association members
- Investments made by the Community Based Organization
- Contribution from the local and central government

10. Training component:

FAL training comprises of instructors and learners.

10.1 Instructors

The instructors are volunteers who are drawn from a cross-section of people within the community and are chosen by the learners themselves. They may be schoolteachers, health workers, civic leaders or opinion leaders who offer service to guide the learners on voluntary basis. They get a monthly stipend as a form of motivation.

10.2 Qualifying characteristics of an instructor

- Should have a basic education background higher than that of the learners.
- Should be competent in the language used.
- Should be acceptable by their communities and the learners in particular.
- Should be of integrity and with concern for developing their communities.
- Should have attained a mature age of 18 years and above.

The above are given inductive and follow up training to instruct learners in literacy, life skills and Income Generating Activities (IGA).

10.3 Learners

They are grouped into manageable groups of between 40-70 students per class. They are given 6 hours weekly training divided into sessions of 2 or 3 hours per day depending on the season (learners usually prefer to come for two to 3 hour sessions per week during the raining/planting season). These are taught continuously for a period of 9-12 months before they sit for evaluation examinations known as proficiency tests. When they pass the test, they are given certificate of proficiency and those who fail are advised to repeat.

10.4 Training materials

The topics that the learners cover are reading, writing and arithmetic integrated with functionality (the ability of the learners to put into practice what they have learned). The topics are progressively set up in learners' books known as primers in level 1 and level 2.

The teaching aids such as blackboards and paper charts are provided on cost sharing basis from the government, community or donor. Where possible the community contributes towards providing the premises.

11. Stake-holders in implementation of Functional Adult Learning

- Local communities
- Government line Ministries
- Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs)
- Community Based Organizations (CBOs)
- Religious institutions
- Cultural leaders
- Donor agencies (local & foreign)

12. ADRA Uganda's experience

ADRA Uganda is now operating six FAL projects in the Western, Central, Eastern, and Northern, parts of Uganda with An average retention rate of 80% so far. There are over 18,500 learners in total out of which 90% are female.

The project goal is to improve learning and the income levels of the different target communities. It is for this reason that micro-finance components are also put in place for purposes of boosting the activities in the form of inputs, loans and demonstration sites.

In all project areas, learners show enthusiasm and this inspires local authorities, political leaders and opinion leaders to contribute in the form of moral, material and monetary terms for the worthy cause.

Ms. Heidrun Siebeneiker of the German Development Service and a technical advisor to FAL projects in the Ministry of Gender, Labor and Social Development, calls the ADRA Mbale FAL a 'success' and writes in an independent evaluation that the method ADRA Uganda has used to empower the community has yielded the following:

- There is money to send children to school.
- Women have become more independent, because they earn their own money.
- There is less drinking abuse, because people have an aim.
- Houses and people are cleaner.
- The people are healthier, because they are more hygienically aware and can afford medicine.
- Farming and animal husbandry are managed more successfully.
- People have higher self esteem, as they can manage their own affairs.
- Businesses are more successful because of the new management skills
- Successful management of their lives has encouraged family planning
- Communities have become more peaceful.

13. Conclusion

ADRA Uganda's experience is that, Illiteracy and functional learning are the keys to positive development.

ADRA Uganda upholds that Functional Adult Learning is one of the best avenues, which can prepare communities to tread along the road to development because it deals with the cause of poverty, this being illiteracy. Illiteracy is the driving motor of underdevelopment because it undermines the capacity of individuals and societies to respond to critical health issues and to be innovative towards eliminating poverty.

With an increased universal primary education and a stepped-up functional adult learning, community social, economic, political, environmental and cultural dimensions of development can be attained which will result into aggregate national growth development.

SUMMARIZED INFORMATION ON ADRA UGANDA FAL PROGRAM

PROJECT	FUNDER	BUDGET IN US\$	NUMBER OF LEARNERS	START	END
<p>1. <i>Stewardship II</i> Goal: To improve the quality of life of at least 5000 impoverished households in Luwero District.</p> <p>Current achievements: -Training 2500 adult learners in reading, writing and numeracy integrated with practical/functional skills. - Established 2 demonstration gardens and 2 nurseries with improved seedlings. -Constructed 2 training halls. -Distributed 45 hybrid goats to the community. -Distributed 67,000 grafted fruits trees and 50 demonstration beehives. -Trained beneficiaries in improved agricultural methods and environmental management.</p>	Sweden	197,607	2,500	March.2001	Feb.2003
<p>2. <i>Kisoro FAL IV</i> Goal: To provide functional knowledge, skills and affordable micro-finance services to 5,200 beneficiaries as a means of developing their capacity to become self-reliant.</p> <p>Current achievements -Currently training 9,420 adult learners in reading, writing and counting integrated with functional knowledge and skills. -Trained 2,047 beneficiaries in Micro-enterprise development skills. -Extended soft loans to 307 beneficiaries. 75% of the 130 established FAL classes have started their own micro-credit schemes from their own savings. -Training beneficiaries in basic hygiene and sanitation practices -Beneficiaries have realized the importance of education and they are now more willing to send their children to schools. -Training beneficiaries in improved farming methods. -Distributed 33,030 coffee seedlings to 306 farmers.</p>	Sweden	200,900	9,420	Jan. 2002	Dec.2003
<p>3. <i>Mbale FAL III</i> Goal: To improve both the literacy and income levels of 780 less privileged persons in Bungokho County Mbale District.</p> <p>Current Achievements -The project is currently training 1,960 adult learners in reading, writing and counting integrated with functional skills. -Beneficiary house holds have improved hygiene and sanitation -More female beneficiaries are taking up political posts and leadership roles. -There is increased environmental awareness among the beneficiaries. -Beneficiaries are more willing to send their children to school. -More women are participating actively in community meetings.</p>	Sweden	113,950	1,960	Jan.2002	Dec-2002
<p>4. <i>UWDP Development.</i> Goal: To Improve the social economic status of women in the 3 townships of Kampala, Masaka and Jinja.</p> <p>Current Achievements The project is in the initial stages of the second phase. -Held stakeholder sensitization workshops in Kampala and Masaka.</p>	Sweden	209,710	3,900 (targeted but not yet recruited)	May 2002	Dec.2003
<p>5. <i>Rural Development Initiative</i> Goal: To empower disadvantaged rural communities in Luwero and Wakiso Districts.</p>	Sweden	134,850	1,400	March 2002	Feb 2004

<p>Current Achievements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Currently training 508 beneficiaries in reading writing and counting integrated with functional knowledge and skills. -Established a demonstration garden for training. -Trained 29 voluntary extension workers. -Purchased cows for distribution to the beneficiaries. -Training beneficiaries in micro- finance management skills. 					
<p><i>6. Bunya Integrated Health Project.</i> Goal: To improve the health conditions of the targeted communities especially women and children through improved health facilities and services, functional adult literacy education, water and sanitation and income generating activities.</p> <p><u>Current Achievements under FAL intervention.</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Currently training 2000 adult learners in reading, writing and counting integrated with practical knowledge and skills. -331 learners provided with micro-loans abd74 IGA group leaders equipped with leadership and group dynamic skills. 	Danida	1,223,842	2000	June 2001	May 2004
<p><i>7. Karamoja Integrated Education Program</i> Goal: To improve the socio -economic status of the disadvantaged Karamajong communities through an integrated program.</p> <p><u>Current achievements:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The project is still in the initial stages. -So far key staff has been recruited. -Baseline survey done, but the report is not yet out. 	Danida	2,411,545	2,000 (targeted but not yet recruited)		