

**IMPACT OF LITERACY PROJECTS ON RURAL POOR IN NORTHERN  
UGANDA: THE CASE OF RURAL EDUCATION EMPOWERMENT  
PROJECT IN NEBBI DISTRICT**

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

AFREA	= African Evaluation Association
CBO	= Community Based Organizations
CSOs	= Civil Society Organizations
DAC	= Development Assistance Committee
FAL	= Functional Adult Literacy
MDG	= Millennium Development Goals
NorSED	= Norwegian Baha'i Office of Social and Economic Development
RBME	= Results Based Monitoring and Evaluation
REEP	= Rural Education Empowerment Project
REFLECT	= Regenerated Frerean Literacy for Community Transformation
UEA	= Uganda Evaluation Association
UNDP	= United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	= United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

This study aims to examine the impact of Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) projects on the rural poor in Uganda with specific reference to Rural Education Empowerment Project (REEP) Uganda Program of Literacy for Transformation (UPLIFT) implemented in partnership with Norwegian Baha'i Office of Social and Economic Development (NorSED) from 2007 to 2009 (UPLIFT &NorSED, 2009) . It aims to focus on literacy as the independent variable and the impact of REEP on the rural poor as it's the dependent variables. Such as study is important because it will: (i) help policy makers decide whether programs are generating intended effects; (ii) promote accountability in the allocation of resources across public programs; and (iii) fill gaps in understanding what works, what does not, and how measured changes in well-being on the people in Nebbi are attributable to REEP (Khandker, Koolwal, &Samad, 2010).

This chapter presents the background to the study, the problem statements, the general and specific objectives, and the key questions that will guide the study. It also defines the scope of the study, provides the conceptual framework, and discusses the significance and justification for the study. It ends with the operationalization of concepts used in the proposal. The following section presents the background to the study.

### 1.2 Background of the study

#### 1.2.1 Historical background

Available historical accounts on evaluation suggest that it is not easy to pinpoint the start of programme evaluation. Bowman, cited in Mouton (2010, p. 10), points out that the notion of “planful social evaluation” can be dated back to as early as 2200 B.C. with personnel selection in China. Rossi and Freeman (2004, in Babbie and Mouton (2001) state that programme evaluation-like activities were already evident in the eighteenth century in the fields of education and public health. Potter and Kruger



(2001), recall the work of Ralph Tyler as being the catalyst in establishing evaluation as a “distinct” field. Evaluation approaches for development programs have evolved considerably over the past two decades, spurred on by rapidly expanding research on impact evaluation and growing coordination across different research and policy institutions in designing programs (Khandker, Koolwal, and Samad, 2010; Bashekaand Byamuhisha, 2015).

According to Mouton (2010, p. 10), most scholars’ trace the history of programme evaluation to the Second World War when the US federal government’s vast expenditure on the social sphere required a more systematic and rigorous review of spending. This resulted in the emergence of the field of programme evaluation. By the time programme evaluation reached South Africa, scholars in the United States had already been debating programme evaluation’s legitimacy as a discipline, conceptualized the different training options and delivered a multitude of theorists and evaluation paradigms. Among the earlier attempts in the 1980s to define monitoring and evaluation, Edmunds and Marchant (2008) reports were the guiding principles for the design and use of monitoring and evaluation in rural development projects and programmes in which monitoring and evaluation were seen primarily as project-related activities. While monitoring is seen as a continuous assessment, evaluation was presented as a periodic assessment of the relevance, performance, efficiency, and impact. However, 20 years later, DAC Network on Development Evaluation revised the above terms in which monitoring is seen to embody the regular tracking of inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts of development activities at the project, programme, sector, and national levels, while considering evaluation as the process of determining the worth or significance of a development activity, project, programme or policy to determine its relevance and fulfillment of objectives, development efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability.

In Africa in general and Uganda in particular, Monitoring and Evaluation is a recent occurrence with African Evaluation Association and Uganda Evaluation Association (UEA) emerging 1999 and 2001 respectively. With these professional bodies in existence, evaluation has now taken a firm root as a

discipline and profession in the continent. According to Basheka and Byamugish (2015, P. 75), “as a profession, over 30 national evaluation Associations under the Umbrella body – the African Evaluation Association (AFREA) are in existence and as an academic field of study, several universities now offer programmes in M&E; notwithstanding the focus and locus dilemma regarding the discipline”.

Although monitoring and evaluation is a recent phenomenon in developing countries including Uganda (Kusek & Rist, 2004), the demand for it has been on upward trend as demonstrated in Basheka & Byamugisha (2015). All institutions, whether in the public or private sector, are increasingly getting interested in rationalizing their available resources in order to implement their most strategic interventions. This is crucial in the current era because donors, governments, programme managers and beneficiaries want to know what works or does not.

UNDP (2009, p. 5) in its 2008 – 2011 strategic plan states that “all UNDP work – policy advice, technical support, advocacy and contributions to strengthening coherence in global development is aimed at one end result - real improvements in people’s lives and in choices and opportunities open to them”. Globally, monitoring and evaluation is now a requirement to assess the effectiveness and impact of the donor aid being invested in different countries. Despite the emergence of evaluation associations across the world such as Africa Evaluation Association and other national evaluation networks in Africa, evaluation capacity-building efforts were mostly driven by international development organizations (Mouton, 2010), making African evaluators to operate in an isolated context that constrained their ability to mobilize the necessary resources and capacities crucial to facilitate effective up-scaling of evaluation practices within their countries. It was until 1999 when African Evaluation Association was formed that more efforts have been made to create more evaluation associations in the continent.

Historically, literacy has been associated with positive benefits (UNESCO, 1976; Robinson-Pant, 2001; Oxenham, et al, 2002). This explains why UNESCO implemented its EWLP across the World way back

in the 1950-1960s, though with disappointing results (Moran & Jacobi, 1990, p.57). In Uganda the government piloted a functional literacy project in 1992 and rolled it out in 1997 (Ngaka, 2009). Since then many NGOs have implemented literacy projects in different parts of Uganda and in different forms such as Regenerated Frerean Literacy for Community Transformation (REFLECT); UPLIFT; REEP etc. (Archer and Cottingham, 1996; NorSED& UPLIFT, 2009). What has not has been uncommon is the assessment of the impact of such literacy projects. That is why Bhola (2006) emphasizes the need for establishing appropriate, organized, and duly comprehensive monitoring and evaluation systems, integrated into the programs and projects of education and development, so as to inform the processes of policy formulation and policy analysis on the one hand, and to enable an efficient and effective achievement of program objectives on the other.

### **1.2.2 Theoretical background**

Donaldson and Lipsey (2005) point out that although reference to theory is widespread in the contemporary evaluation literature, what is meant by theory encompasses a confusing mix of concepts related to three things: evaluators' notions about how evaluation should be practiced; explanatory frameworks for social phenomena drawn from social science; and assumptions about how programs function, or are supposed to function. Chen (1990) described theory as a frame of reference that helps humans understand their world and how to function within it. Donaldson and Lipsey (2005) distinguish the three most common types of theories encountered in evaluation namely: evaluation theory, social science theory, and program theory and discuss their respective roles and limitations.

Shadish, Cook, and Leviton (1991) trace the history of theories of evaluation as having evolved through three stages namely: (i) theories that emphasized the discovery of truth mostly associated with Michael Scriven & Donald Campbell; (ii) theories that focused on the way evaluation was used and its social utility mostly associated with Joseph Wholey, Robert Stake, & Carol Weiss; and (iii) theories that addressed the

integration of inquiry and utility commonly associated with Lee Cronbach & Peter Rossi. This means theories play important role in monitoring and evaluation of projects, programs or policies.

Alkin and Christie (2004) discuss evaluation theory and specify accountability and control, social inquiry and methods is the most important issues of concern in evaluations and use Ralph Tyler's work to group evaluation them into four branches namely: (i) objectives-oriented evaluation theories commonly linked to Huey-Tsyh Chen, Carol Weiss and Lee Cronbach; (ii) valuing evaluation theories commonly associated with Michael Scriven and Elliot Eisner; (iii) adversary evaluation theories commonly associated with Thomas Owens/Robert Wolf, Robert Stake, Ernest House and Egon Guba and Yvonna Lincoln; (iv) and evaluation use theories commonly linked to Daniel Stufflebeam, Michael Patton, Marvin Alkin, Hallie Preskill, Jean King and David Fetterman (Alkin and Christie, 2004). However, some distinguished evaluators such as Scriven (1998) and Stufflebeam (2004) have asserted that there is little need for theory or, at least, some forms of theory, in evaluation. Similarly, Stufflebeam (2001) particularly suggests that there really is not much to recommend theory-based evaluation, since doing it right is usually not feasible and since failed or misrepresented attempts can be counterproductive."

Notwithstanding the above views, some scholars suggest that understanding theories in monitoring and evaluation is very important because they act as a frame of reference that helps humans understand their world and how to function within it (Chen, 1990). For example, Bhola (2006, p. 2) notes that; advances in theory and methodology of Monitoring and Evaluation have been impressive in the past four decades and cites the move away from linearity to a systems view, in which the application of the systems view becomes more systematic and less systemic as one of the most important advances in the theory and practice of monitoring and evaluation. Again in the case of evaluation theory, Shadish (1998) for instance introduced his presidential address to the American Evaluation Association, entitled "Evaluation Theory is Who We Are," and asserts that all evaluators should know evaluation theory because it is central to their professional identity. It is what they talk about more than anything else.

From the forerunning discussions, it can be said that theories play important role in monitoring and evaluation of development intervention and that there are different theories one can choose from depending on the context. There is therefore no best theory or approach or design to be used for conducting an evaluation and that is why it is sometimes better to use mixed designs than a single method and theory as suggested in Gayfer, ., et al., (2014). Bhola (2006) defends this view and maintains that along with the advances in evaluation theory is what has come to be called the paradigm dialog and resulting accommodations between positivism and constructivism. Mixed models are now routinely used where quantitative methods are joined with qualitative; and analytical with historical methods to create fuller understandings of reality. More evidence to support mixed methods approach is seen in the discussions surrounding the theory of change and programme based evaluations (Bamberger & Fujita, 2008; Brest, 2010; Clark and Taplin, 2012) that offer a usual way to understand impact evaluations. From the above mentioned theoretical perspectives, this study will pick useful ideas from the theory of change and empowerment discusses in details under 2.2.1 and 2.2.2 below.

### **1.2.3 Conceptual background**

The key terms in the conceptual framework that informs this study are: literacy project, empowerment, sustainability, impact, outcomes, outputs and activities. They are important because conceptual basis of the study is derived from the results based monitoring and evaluation framework which can best explained in the context of the theory of change and empowerment theory (Stein & Valters, 2012; Zimmerman, 2000; Adams, 2008). A literacy project is used in this proposal to refer to a project that focuses on teaching reading and writing skills with the hope learners using such skills for solving their everyday problems

Empowerment is used in this study to refer to some kind of increase in the degree of autonomy and self-determination in the lives of people and in communities in order to (re-)enable them to represent their interests in a responsible and self-determined way and acting on their own authority. This is why evaluation scholars sometimes talk empowerment evaluation. A detailed discussion of the term is provided in chapter two.

Impact is used in this study to refer to the net project impact, which means the total observed change minus the change which should be attributed to other factors not related to the project. The net impact can either be positive or negative. It can also be intended or unintended. According to International Initiative for Impact Evaluation, high-quality impact evaluations measure the net change in outcomes amongst a particular group, or groups, of people that can be attributed to a specific program using the best methodology available, feasible and appropriate to the evaluation question(s) being investigated and to the specific context. Hence, impact evaluations seek to answer cause-and-effect questions. In other words, they look for the changes in outcome that are directly attributable to a program (Gertler, et al., 2011).

In the world of programme monitoring and evaluation emphasis has now shifted from project inputs, activities and outputs (the resources and procedures) to project outcomes and impact and the need for sustainable benefits. The key question mostly asked is: What are results? Results or outcomes are the changes occurring as an effect of a development intervention and imply that a change of behavior by an individual, group of people, organizations, government bodies or society has taken place. Also within the results based monitoring and evaluation framework, the Department of Business Innovations & Skills (2011) distinguishes between output, outcome and impact and points out that impact evaluation studies seek to prove that the intervention had an effect (outcomes) that would not otherwise have been achieved without the intervention. Some studies, given methodological or data constraints, are able to measure outcomes and are not able to estimate impact, that is they are not able to show whether the measured outcomes would have happened in any way without the intervention or not.

Distinction between these terms is important in this study because the current focus of monitoring and evaluation is to go beyond inputs, activities and outputs to include results/outcomes and impact; and most importantly, sustainability.

#### **1.2.4 Contextual background**

In Uganda for instance, the National Policy on Public Sector Monitoring and Evaluation of 2011 provides a platform for CSOs and Private Sector Organizations (PSOs) to participate more actively in the evaluation field to aid decision making at various levels. Uganda signed the IHP+ Global Compact in February 2009, representing a commitment to get better health results by increasing support for national health strategies and plans in a harmonized way, including a strong emphasis on mutual accountability for results. Central to IHP+ is a commitment to get better health results by increasing support for national health strategies and plans in a well-coordinated way (Boerma& Gore, 2010). The Uganda Evaluation Association, a not for profit organization was therefore formed in 2001 to bring together evaluation practitioners to promote the practice, use, quality and ethics of Monitoring & Evaluation in Uganda's development process. Quality evaluations provide credible and useful evidence that strengthens accountability for development results as well as enhancing organization learning.

Hague (2001) acknowledges the successful implementation and an impressive set of economic and budgetary management reforms Uganda has registered in the recent decades and points out that the immediate challenge for national development management, as a whole, is to translate success in the macro-economic arena into greater success in poverty reduction. He adds that value for money in expenditures, quality of budget execution – or effectiveness of public service delivery, are serious concerns. However, from a monitoring and evaluation perspective, he notes the major problem is that both information management and decision making is focused on the administrative process of

expenditures and activities rather than on the poverty outcomes, impacts and goals that are being pursued. Monitoring and evaluation remain overly centred on compliance with government requirements and regulations rather than end-results of policy, program and project efforts. Civil servants get rewarded for doing paperwork well rather than making a difference in people's lives. However, government has recognized the importance of improving results orientation and has defined the effectiveness of public service delivery as its highest priority though these initiatives have often been approached from the perspective of narrow departmental responsibilities rather than comprehensive goals and government-wide ownership. Judging from the perspective Basheka&Byamugisha (2015) provide, the trend in evaluation is positive and the future prospects appear to be bright.

### **1.3 Problem statement**

Though old in developed countries, monitoring and evaluation is a recent phenomenon in most developing countries (Kusek&Rist, 2004). Whereas programme evaluation took root in America and Europe in 1960s - 1980s, interest in it in developing world started in the 1990s (Mouton, 2010) when professional bodies began to emerge. Bashekaand Byamugisha (2015) give a detailed account of the evolution of monitoring and evaluation in Africa and the current state of the field which clearly offers an opportunity for hope. This was after the realization that numerous development interventions in developing countries including literacy projects were not yielding the results donors expected. To see the effectiveness and impact of the dollars invested, donors, national governments and CSOs now require that all development interventions be evaluated at different stages using Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria, which Chianca (2008, p. 42) lists to include: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

Though old in developed countries, monitoring and evaluation is a recent phenomenon in most developing countries (Kusek&Rist, 2004). Whereas programme evaluation took root in America and



Europe in 1960s - 1980s, interest in it in developing world started in the 1990s (Mouton, 2010). For accountability purposes and demonstrating effectiveness of aid, donors, governments, CSOs and programme beneficiaries now require that all development interventions be evaluated at different stages using Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria, which Chianca (2008, p. 42) lists to include: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. With the increased demand for evaluation, several evaluation studies with literacy dimensions have been conducted in Uganda of which REEP is one. Implemented from 2007 to 2009, REEP aimed to equip 6,000 people with literacy skills (roughly 462 people in each of 13 out of the 18 Sub Counties in Nebbi), reduce illiteracy rates among women and build institutional capacity through forming CBOs. Although the mid-term evaluation report showed impressive project outcomes, the intended and unintended impact of REEP on the people has not been assessed. Whereas the evaluation studies cited above do exist, most of them never focused on the impact of literacy on the rural poor. Besides, none of the available impact studies have assessed the impact of literacy projects on the population in Nebbi. Hence, this study aims to assess what is happening to the people in Nebbi in the period 2010 – 2014 in terms of: (i) contributing towards realization of MDG on Education; (ii) developing human resources in Nebbi district with particular focus on gender; and (iii) building institutional capacities in the district.

#### **1.4 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study is to use ideas drawn from DAC evaluation criteria in Kaplan (2014) and Chianca (2008) namely: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability; to assess the impacts of FAL projects on the rural poor in Northern Uganda with specific reference to Rural Education Empowerment Project implemented in Nebbi District from 2007 to 2009.

## **1.5 Objectives**

The study will specifically seek to:

- a) Assess the extent to which the REEP activities suited the priorities and interests of the target group and the funders in Nebbi District
- b) Establish the extent to which the activities in REEP were able to lead to the realization of its set objectives in Nebbi District
- c) Find out the extent to which REEP was able to use the least costly inputs to produce the expected outputs in Nebbi District
- d) Examine the long-term intended and unintended changes (both positive and negative) resulting from the outputs or services produced under REEP in Nebbi District; and
- e) Establish the extent to which the benefits from REEP activities have and are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn.

## **1.6 Research questions**

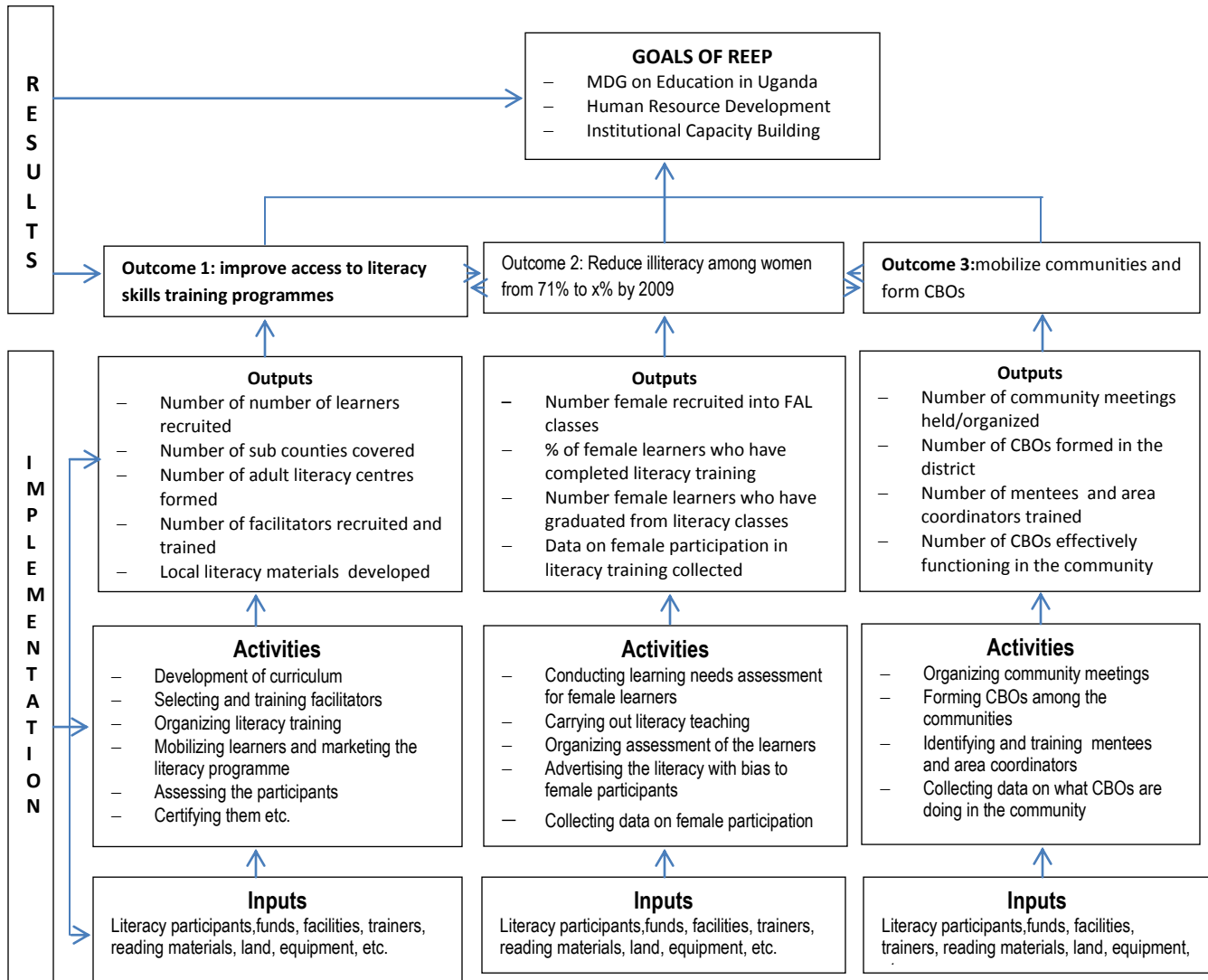
The study will be guided by the following five research questions:

- a) To what extent did the REEP activities suit the priorities and interests of the target group and the funders?
- b) To what extent were the activities of REEP able to lead to the realization of its set objectives?
- c) To what extent did REEP use the least costly inputs to produce its expected outputs?
- d) What are the intended and unintended long-term changes (both positive and negative) resulting from the outputs or services produced under REEP?
- e) To what extent have benefits from REEP activities continued or are likely to continue after funding from NorSED was withdrawn?

## **1.7 Conceptual Framework for the Study**

The conceptual framework that will inform this study illustrated diagrammatically in figure 1 below, uses ideas from the results chain drawn from Khan (n.d, p. 15); UNDP (2009) and Waidyaratna (2012, p. 13) and embedded in Results Based Monitoring and Evaluation (RBME) frame work in which emphasis is put on project outcomes, impact and sustainability instead of tracking inputs, activities and outputs. The conceptual framework assumes that usually a project like the REEP aims to achieve positive results (intended and unintended changes occurring as an effect of a development intervention) by carrying out activities that produce certain products or services known as outputs for its stakeholders. It is further assumed that if the stakeholders utilize the outputs very well, they will then change the way of doing a certain thing and experience benefits known as outcomes as a result. These outputs may eventually contribute, together with results of other development interventions, to higher development goals known as Impact. The idea behind this study is that REEP consumed some inputs in the course of implementing the above listed activities. The listed activities in turn led to some products and services which communities utilized or are utilizing, hence leading to changes in behavior, service delivery, people's participation in different activities and increase in the number of people graduating from literacy training. It is therefore expected that the long-term impact of REEP would be a meaningful contribution to the attainment of the MDG on education, human resource development efforts and institutional capacity building in the district as illustrated in figure 1 below.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework for Assessment and Analysis of the Outcomes and Impact of REEP**



**Source:** Adapted from Waidyaratna (2012, p. 13), UNDP (2009), Edmunds & Marchant (2008, pp. 20 - 22) and Khan (n.d, p. 15).

## 1.8 Scope of the study

The scope of the study is described in three dimensions namely: geography, time and content. Geographically, this study will be limited to Nebbi District in which REEP was implemented, which by 2009 consisted of 18 Sub Counties.

In terms of time scope, the study shall focus on the period January 2010 – June 2015. The focus on this period is seen to be appropriate because it provides an opportunity to see the impact of the intervention after the mid-term evaluation which was conducted in 2009. 5 years' period after the mid-term evaluation of REEP is considered to be sufficient enough to see the impact of the project outcomes on the population.

In terms of content, the study shall focus on the two of the three REEP goals namely: (i) contributing towards realization of MDG on Education in Uganda and (ii) developing human resources with strong focus on gender and four outcome areas which include: (i) delivery of literacy skills, (ii) training of mentors and area coordinators, (iii) establishment of CBOs; and (iv) community mobilization. The impact assessment will further lay emphasis on: (i) a review of various documents that depict the pre-REEP situation, an assessment of the intended and unintended changes the project has brought about on the population; and an analysis of the sustainability of the changes brought about by the project. Hence the evaluation criteria of interest in the study shall be to the project outcomes, impact and sustainability.

## **1.9 Justification for the Study**

This study is important and should be undertaken because of the following three important reasons advanced by evaluation experts:

First, if successfully conducted, the findings of this study will contribute towards improving the design and implementation of similar programmes outside Nebbi district. As Noar (2006) observe, periodic assessments and adaptation of lessons learnt to ensure that activities are effectively implemented to

contribute towards the outputs upon which project outcomes depend help in identifying areas for improvement and realization the stated project goals.

The second justification is that the findings of this study will demonstrate the impact of REEP on the poor in the current districts of Nebbi and Zombo. The information the study hopes to collect will provide an opportunity to communicate and share the impact of REEP with other stakeholders, which is critical for public relations, staff morale, and attracting as well as retaining support from current and potential funders (Hornik&Yanovitzky, 2003).

The third justification for this study stems from the fact that the researcher has not come across any study that has focused on the impact of REEP on the population in Nebbi and Zombo, save for the mid-term evaluation report. This study hopes to contribute towards answering the key questions for evidence-based policy making namely: what worked, what did not, where, why and for how much? This important because impact evaluation studies have received increasing attention in policy making in recent years in both Western and developing countries' contexts as an integral part of the global efforts to improving effectiveness of aid delivery, public spending and more generally in improving living standards of the development aid target beneficiaries (Stern, 2015).

### **1.10 Significance of the Study**

This study is significant for some individuals, groups and institutions who may benefit from its findings in different ways. The following individuals and entities may variously benefit from the study as follows:

- a) Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and the Office of the Prime Minister, who are responsible for promoting best practices in evaluation use in different sectors of the economy. The findings of the study will expose what worked, what did not worked, the

unintended long-term effects of the project on the people and environment which will future decisions on similar project in other areas.

- b) The Project beneficiaries and CBOs that were formed out of REEP as the findings of study will enable to look backwards and use the lessons learnt to improve future interventions in the districts; and
- c) Academics and students who will use the findings of the study as part of their academic work as the report of the study will enrich the existing body of literature on the impact of literacy project on rural poverty. The researcher will actually use the report of the study as a partial requirement for the award of a Master's Degree in Project monitoring and Evaluation of UTAMU. The study findings are expected to contribute towards some of the knowledge gaps in the body of literature on literacy, empowerment and poverty reduction.

### **1.11 Operational Definitions**

A number of unfamiliar terms have been both implicitly and explicitly used in used in this proposal and some of them are defined as below. Their usage should be done within the context of the proposed study.

Some of them include the following:

**Empowerment** - The term empowerment shall be used in this study to refer to some kind of increase the degree of autonomy and self-determination in the lives of people and in communities in order to (re-)enable them to represent their interests in a responsible and self-determined way and acting on their own authority

**Impact evaluation** – This refers to an evaluation conducted to measure outcomes and impacts of an activity and to distinguish these from influence from other factors. It assesses the specific outcomes

attributable to a particular intervention or program and does so by comparing outcomes where the intervention is applied against outcomes where the intervention does not exist (Rappaport, 1984).

Functional Literacy – This term will be used as suggested by Gray (1956, p. 21) in which the term refers to “the training of adults to 'meet independently the reading and writing demands placed on them’”. In this case, the ‘functional illiteracy’, the opposite of functional literacy is the reading and writing skills that are inadequate to manage daily living and employment tasks that require reading skills beyond a basic level.

Rural education – The meaning of rural education as used in this study is adopted from Dunne (1981, p.4) offers in which the term is used to refer to: a system of education characterized by rural strengths - a lack of distinction between what belongs in school and what belongs in the community, a kind of generalism which expects people to do whatever they are able without filling specialized roles or performing strictly age-graded functions, close and supportive ties between families and schools, a sense of comfort and cooperative spirit among school children; and rural independence and self-reliance translated into the school.



## **CHAPTE TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents a review of literature that is relevant and related to the impact of functional adult literacy programmes on the rural poor in Northern Uganda. It reviews the relevant theoretical perspectives on evaluations in general and impact evaluation in particular in relation to the five impact evaluation criteria that guided the formulation of the objectives of this study. It then reviews the available empirical studies scholars have contacted on impact of literacy on people with a view to identifying the existing missing links and knowledge gaps in the body of literature reviewed and ends with knowledge gaps identified in the course of the review.

#### **2.2 Theoretical Review**

A growing body of literature exists on a number of theories that scholars can use to understand evaluations in general and impact evaluation in particular. According to Abrahams (2007), a theory connotes a body of knowledge that organizes, categorizes, describes, predicts, explains, and otherwise aids in understanding and controlling a topic. He cites objectivity through indicators as important theoretical aspect of monitoring and evaluation and makes reference to three theoretical perspectives one can choose from namely: (i) manipulable solution theory that aims to reduce uncertainty about programme effects; (ii) generalizable explanations theory, which admits the knowledge of complex interrelationships among multiple causal determinants; and (iii) stakeholder service theory which is tailored to information needs of stakeholders. In light of the above views Abrahams (2007) provides, it is

possible to use a mixture of the theoretical perspectives to explain the complexity involved in the processes and activities the current research topic is focusing on, that is, an assessment of the impact of literacy projects on the rural poor in Northern Uganda. Two possible theories the researcher has chosen to locate the study briefly highlighted below are the theory of change and empowerment theory.

### **2.2.1 Empowerment Theory**

The first theoretical perspective in which the current study can be located is the notion of empowerment, a term that has been used to mean different things to different people. In simple terms, it refers to policies and measures designed to increase the degree of autonomy and self-determination in the lives of people and in communities in order to enable them to represent their interests in a responsible and self-determined way, acting on their own authority. This idea is emphasized in the work of Adams (2008, p. xvi) in which he defines empowerment as:

the capacity of individuals, groups and/or communities to take control of their circumstances, exercise power and achieve their own goals, and the process by which, individually and collectively, they are able to help themselves and others to maximize the quality of their lives.

Judging from the above definitions, it can be said that theoretically, empowerment revolves around power and control over resources which individuals and groups need to transform their lives. Talking about power and control, Zimmerman (2000, p. 43) discusses empowerment theory and he refers to it as:

both a value orientation for working in the community and a theoretical model for understanding the process and consequences of efforts to exert control and influence over decisions that affect one's life, organizational functioning and the quality of community life.

According to him, while value orientation of empowerment suggests goals, aims and strategies for implementing change, empowerment theory provides the principles and a framework for organizing our

knowledge. This idea of focusing on people is very important in the current study because all development interventions whose impact we seek to examine are about transforming the quality of lives of the people. Rappaport (1984, in Zimmerman, 2000, p. 43) supports this idea in that she defines empowerment as “a process; the mechanism by which people, organizations and communities gain mastery over their lives’. Related to the above definition is the view from Mechanic (1991, in Zimmerman, 2000, p. 43) who conceptualizes empowerment as “a process when individuals learn to see a closure correspondence between their goals and a sense of how to achieve them and a relationship between their efforts and life outcomes”. A further and more comprehensive definition of empowerment was provided by Cornell Empowerment Group (1989, in Zimmerman, 2000, p. 43) in which they define the term as: “intentional ongoing process centred in the local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of the valued resources gain greater access to and control over those resources”.

In sum, it can be said that the views by Cornell Empowerment Group (1989), Rappaport (1984), and Zimmerman (2000) presented above are all relevant for the current study because the rural education empowerment project which was implemented from 2007 to 2009 was a complex social process with a variety of activities involving people of differing socio-economic backgrounds whose impact could best be understood using such a theoretical frame of reference and another one called the theory of change briefly described below.

### **2.2.2 The Theory of Change**

There is a wealth of literature available on theory-based evaluations in general and impact evaluation in particular, but experts disagree on whether theory based evaluation is a common and clearly defined approach. For instance, Bamberger & Fujita (2008, p.3) discuss program theory-based evaluations in which observed changes in performance or output indicators in a project are compared with the pre-

project situation (“before/after” comparison). According to this approach, the observed outcomes are results of the project, “more or less.” However, they reject this assumption and argue that it is almost never valid because almost all projects operate in dynamic environments where many social, economic, political, environmental and demographic changes are occurring, any of which might have influenced the observed outcomes. Similarly, Stein &Valters (2012) discuss the theory of change approach to evaluations and link its origin to the United States in the 1990s, in the context of improving evaluation theory and practice in the field of community initiatives. One key tenet of the theory of change according to them is that it represents an increased desire for organizations to be able to explore and represent change in a way that reflects a complex and systemic understanding of a given development intervention. According to Stein &Valters (2012), the theory of change is essentially a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. It particularly focuses on mapping out or “filling in” what has been described as the “missing middle” between what a programme change initiative does (its activities or interventions) and how these lead to desired goals being achieved. It does this by first identifying the desired long-term goals and then works back from these to identify all the conditions (outcomes) that must be in place (and how these related to one another causally) for the goals to occur. These are all mapped out in an outcomes framework. The outcomes framework then provides the basis for identifying what type of activity or intervention will lead to the outcomes identified as preconditions for achieving the long-term goal.

In a related development, Brest (2010) and Clark &Taplin (2012) discuss the theory of change and refer to it as a specific type of methodology for planning, participation and evaluation that is used in various disciplines and sectors to promote social change. According to them, it defines long-term goals and then maps backward to identify necessary preconditions and explains the process of change by outlining causal linkages in an initiative in terms of its shorter-term, intermediate, and longer-term outcomes. The identified changes are mapped as the “outcomes pathway” – showing each outcome in logical relationship to all the others, as well as chronological flow. The links between outcomes are explained by “rationales”

or statements of why one outcome is thought to be a prerequisite for another. According to Clark & Taplin (2012), the theory of change is very innovative in that: (1) it makes a clear distinction between desired and actual outcomes, and (2) it requires stakeholders to model their desired outcomes before they decide on forms of intervention to achieve those outcomes.

It is expected that through above approaches, the precise link between activities and the achievement of the long-term goals are more fully understood. This then leads to better planning, in that activities are linked to a detailed understanding of how change actually happens. It also leads to better evaluation, as it is possible to measure progress towards the achievement of longer-term goals that goes beyond the identification of program outputs as reflected in result based monitoring and evaluation approaches which lay particular emphasis on going beyond project outputs and focusing on results and impact of a particular intervention (Kuseka & Rist, 2004). Weiss for instance simply describes it as a theory of how and why an initiative works.

In view of the forerunning discussions, it can be seen that both programme theory based evaluations and theory of change are related to and relevant for understanding the dynamics in the current study because they offer a unique opportunity for evaluators to assess whether the observed changes can be attributed to the project impact and the extent to which projects, programs, and policies have produced their intended impact and benefited the intended target populations. Impact in this context refers to the net project impact; that is, total observed change minus change which should be attributed to other factors not related to the project. It is important to note here that impact can be positive or negative and intended or unintended. Unfortunately most of our projects are poorly monitored and evaluated and as a result some of them tend to miss their target group and end up benefiting those who were not meant to be the primary target beneficiaries (Okwir, 2012). This means that it is important that all projects be thoroughly monitored and evaluated; and their impact be assessed to learn lessons for future interventions in terms of the five DAC Criteria highlighted in the objectives of this study.



## **2.3 Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability of Literacy Projects**

### **2.3.1 Relevance of Literacy Projects**

Relevance in the context of a literacy project relates to its importance in addressing the problem at hand. According to Hjørland & Christensen (2002), something “A” is relevant to a task “T” if it increases the likelihood of accomplishing the goal “G”, which is implied by “T.” In terms of REEP, this study seeks to find out whether REEP of all the things that mattered to the people of Nebbi in the period from 2000 to 2009, rural education empowerment was the really important or not and whether it did increase the chances of reducing poverty and illiteracy among the rural population in the project area.

### **2.3.2 Effectiveness of Literacy Projects**

Effectiveness refers to the extent to which stated objectives of a given intervention or activity are met. In the context of an intervention, it could refer to whether the project being implemented achieves what it was intended to achieve. (Chaffey, 2014) simply refers to effectiveness as "*doing the right thing*", that is, the degree to which something is successful in producing a desired end results or the capability of doing something as intended. For purposes of REEP, the study seeks to find answers to whether REEP achieved the objectives for which it was implemented or not.

### **2.3.3 Efficiency of literacy Projects**

Chaffey (2014) distinguishes efficiency from effectiveness and refers to it "*doing the thing right*" by minimizing resources or time needed to complete a process. Efficiency, according to the Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English, is the quality of doing something well and effectively, without wasting time, money, or energy. In other words, it is the ability to avoid wasting materials, energy,

efforts, money, and time in doing something so that the intended objectives are reached within the least possible cost (Commonwealth of Australia, 2013). In terms what REEP set out to do in Nebbi district as reflected in UPLIFT and NorSED (2009; 2012), this study seeks to find out the extent which the REEP activities were implemented well, successfully and without waste, that is, the extent to which inputs were used for the intended tasks to yield the intended outputs.

#### **2.3.4 Impact of Literacy Projects**

All projects aim to bring about development which Ramjohn (2008) describes as the act of altering and modifying the resources of the natural environment in order to obtain potential economic and social benefits. Development according to Ramjohn (2008) involves the application of human, financial and biophysical resources to satisfy social and economic needs, inevitably leading to some modification of the biosphere. This is why the present study intends to assess the impact of REEP on the various dimensions of the biosphere not only in Nebbi but also the surrounding districts.

#### **2.3.5 Sustainability of Literacy Projects**

Ideally, the benefits that accrue to the target beneficiaries of a given project are supposed to continue beyond project funding. In the context of REEP, it is important to establish the extent to which the literacy skills participants acquired the training they received (UPLIFT and NorSED, 2009) is helping them engage in different poverty reduction activities, enhancing their chances of taking leadership positions in the community and sending their children to school etc. Sustainability issues Ramjohn (2008) raises in a project like REEP may include use values, property rights, taking up duties in a society, and participation which entail preferences, consultations and democratic practices.



## **2.4 Empirical Studies Related to Literacy Projects**

### **2.4.1 Some Studies on Literacy Projects in Different Parts of the World**

The connection between literacy and development on the one or illiteracy and poverty on the other has been a matter of ongoing debate for a long time (Ngaka, 2009; UNESCO, 2005; Torres, 2006). While many seem to agree that people experiencing high levels of poverty tend to have low literacy levels, it has not been possible to arrive at a common understanding of the meaning of literacy. However, the consensus that is emerging is that literacy facilitates the acquisition of other skills that are necessary for survival in the present knowledge-based economies (Stromquist, 1992) and is closely related to human dignity, self-esteem, liberty, identity, autonomy, critical thinking, creativity, participation, social awareness, and transformation (Torres, 2006, p. 11). Viewed from these angles, literacy should be conceptualized as the minimum ability to read and write in a designated language, as well as a mindset or way of thinking about the use of reading and writing skills in everyday life, requiring active, autonomous engagement with print and stressing the role of the individual in receiving as well as assigning independent interpretations to messages for addressing everyday life challenges (Venezky, 1995, in Ngaka, 2009, pp. 103 104).

In view of such positive beliefs about literacy there have been global and local efforts directed towards fighting illiteracy. For example, in its 1996 country report on Uganda, the World Bank (1996) raised a concern about this and observed that illiteracy among the productive sector of the Ugandan population was one of the major setbacks for growth in the country. Indeed, illiteracy especially among the Ugandan women has been a matter of concern as reflected in UNESCO (n.d.) which puts the adult literacy rates (15 years and above) among Ugandan females and males in the period 1995 – 2004 at 58% and 77% respectively. Meanwhile the illiteracy rate among females in Nebbi stood at 71% (UPLIFT & NorSED, 2009), promoting UPLIFT and NorSED to join hands to implement Rural Education Empowerment

Project in the district. The Nebbi project follows many other projects such as the Experimental World Literacy Programme (EWLP) of UNESCO implemented in the 1950s and 1960s (UNESCO, 1974) which all produced disappointing results. One of the reasons for the dismal performance by Literacy programmes across the world often cited has been that of lack of monitoring and evaluation at different stages. Examples of such project are many and some are discussed below.

In the 1950-1960s, UNESCO carried out its EWLP in many countries to test and demonstrate the social returns on literacy and more generally to study the mutual relations and influences which exist or may be established or strengthened between literacy training particularly among the working population and development. According to Moran & Jacobi (1990), this ambitious project did not failed yield the expected results. In fact, they put it that, “by all estimates, the EWLP Campaign was unsuccessful. Jonathan Kozol claimed that UNESCO in its own assessment of the effort, virtually conceded that it had just wasted thirty-two million dollars” (Moran & Jacobi, 1990, p. 57). At the end of it all, some concerned individuals asked themselves the question: what have we learnt? The first lesson was that the extreme complexity they came to experience was unexpected (UNESCO, 1976). Their self-reflection on why EWLP failed made them conclude that the meaning of literacy was more complex than what they thought at the beginning of the project. They argued that literacy is not solely a technical problem, just as lack of development in a country is not just the result of uneducated and illiterate workforce and that, for literacy programmes to be fully functional, the programmes must accord importance to social, cultural and political change as well as economic growth.

The case of EWLP reported above underscores the importance of monitoring and evaluation in campaigns to promote literacy interventions across the world. Bhola (2006) emphasizes the need for establishing appropriate, organized, and duly comprehensive monitoring and evaluation systems, integrated into the programs and projects of education and development, so as to inform the processes of policy formulation and policy analysis on the one hand, and to enable an efficient and effective achievement of program

objectives on the other. This will help researchers assess the long term effects of literacy campaigns on the rural poor in different parts of the world, but this has not been a common practice, especially in developing countries though cases of search for evidence of the impact of literacy on people's lives are common (Oxenham, et al, 2002).

#### **2.4.2 Studies on Literacy Projects in Africa**

Archer and Cottingham (1996) studied the effect of literacy on participation in formal and non-formal organizations using REFLECT programme in Bangladesh, Uganda and El Salvador as a case study and found out that although the programme positively affected the nature of women's interaction within the all-women committees, it was unable to change men's and women's attitudes towards women's participation in public formal and non-formal organizations. A similar study on women's literacy and health Robinson-Pant (2001) conducted in Nepal, Asia found out that adult literacy programmes participants developed positive attitudes towards family planning and made them more open to speaking up for change in practice. She noted that participants value learning reading and writing for symbolic as well as functional reasons, in preference to receiving health and other development knowledge. Similar claims have been reported about literacy project in different countries of Africa (Oxenham, et al., 2002; Oxenham, 2004).

A study by Ayodele and Adedokun (2012) in Nigeria attributes women's exclusion from effective participation in development activities to lack of functional literacy and recommends that improvements in the area may be achieved by including training in life skills under the umbrella of literacy and numeracy which are generally designated adult literacy and basic education. They call for the establishment of more centres for adult education in the country so that everybody will have easy access to education and thus become more functional on their job performance and in the community in which they live. Adedokun (2008, in Ayodele&Adedokun, 2012, p. 212) summarizes why literacy projects are

important and note that:Adult literacy, adult basic and continuing education and lifelong learning are key tools to address global challenges in such area as democracy, peace and human right; preservation of diversity, education for all, learning for sustainability, HIV and AIDs, conflict resolution and work force development.

### **2.4.3 Studies on Literacy Projects in Uganda**

Studies with similar claims about the effect of literacy on people have also been reported in Uganda. A survey Okech, et al. (2001) conducted in Uganda revealed that graduates of a literacy programme expressed somewhat more modern values than those who have not attended at the same time the difference in attitude was found narrower than the difference in knowledge. Rogers (2008) conducted a process review of Uganda's FAL in Kalangala and Buvuma Islands and reported that although FAL sought to combine the teaching of adult literacy with functionality, the relationship between these two elements in the programme was uncertain and the measures of success are not clear. As if that is not enough, little efforts have been made to assess the impact of the FAL programme on the rural poor in Uganda. Rogers' finding is particularly disturbing because of the low status accorded to literacy programmes by the government as opposed to the high status formal education enjoys in which skills acquired outside the formal setting does not count as literacy (Ngaka, 2009, Ngaka, Openjuru& Mazur, 2012; Ngaka&Masagazi, 2015). These studies whose findings have been reported above are all relevant for the current study because it raises a fundamental issue related unclear measures of success which is crucial for tracking impact of an intervention

### **2.5 Synthesis of the Literature**

A burgeoning literature on the effects of literacy programme on the lives of people in different parts of the world exists. A good number of them refer to change of attitude, increase in level of participation by

women, taking up positions of leadership in society and social inclusion as some of the positive effects of literacy on participants. Although there are many evaluation studies that report effects of literacy programmes on various aspects of human life across the world, many of the projects have tended to fail because they missed their intended target group (Okwir, 2012) and this is partly due to lack of monitoring and evaluation of the project. Most of the reports on literacy projects that have been evaluated suggest that the majority of the evaluation studies have focused on process or formative evaluation and not the impact. This is crucial in the present world because the donors and project beneficiaries are now more interested in the outcomes, impact and sustainability of development interventions than merely focusing on tracking project activities and outputs. Most improbably, the body of literature reviewed reveals that no ex-post evaluation studies have been undertaken to assess the impact of literacy projects on the rural poor in northern Uganda and no evidence is available to show the impact assessment of REEP on the Local people of Nebbi district been undertaken. This explains why it is important to undertake the current study in the context of a case study design immersed in an interpretive paradigm to produce a thick description of the processes and activities of REEP in accordance with the five evaluation criteria namely relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability is necessary.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter describes the methodological parameters of the study. It presents with justification the details regarding the research paradigm, design and approach that will be adopted. It also describes study population, study sample, sampling techniques, data collection methods and instruments; and the research procedure. The chapter ends with description of ethical considerations and anticipated methodological and practical challenges that are likely to be encountered in the course of the study.

#### **3.2 Study paradigm, design and approach**

Usually, a study needs an appropriate design chosen from many alternatives. Such designs should be located in a relevant paradigm. A research design is “a blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that may interfere with the validity of the findings” (Burns and Grove, 2003:195). Taylor, Kermode, and Roberts (2007, p. 5), define a paradigm as “a broad view or perspective of something”. Weaver & Olson (2006, p. 460) assert that “paradigms are patterns of beliefs and practices that regulate inquiry within a discipline by providing lenses, frames and processes through which investigation is accomplished”. This study will be located an interpretive qualitative research paradigm and adopt a multi-design approach anchored on a case study that will draw on a qualitative comparative analysis approach and use lenses from non-experimental and counterfactual evaluation designs. A case study design and a qualitative comparative analysis approach are seen to be appropriate for this study because of the complexity of the problem at hand. A case study design is an ideal methodology when a holistic, in-depth investigation is needed. Stake (1995) further argues that whether the study is experimental or quasi-experimental, the data collection and analysis methods are known to hide some

details and case study designs are therefore intended to bring out the details from the viewpoint of the participants by using multiple sources of data.

Ragin (n.d.) and Stern (2015) defend the proposed design and approach because they focus on combinations or configurations of factors within single cases; and allows generalisation only to the extent that these holistic combinations are preserved. Stern (2015, p. 3) argue for multi-designs and multi-methods in evaluation studies and assert that relying only on traditional approaches and designs to undertake impact evaluation does “not fit well with the kind of customized, complex, locally engaged and often sensitive programmes that CSOs undertake”. The design shall use ideas from ex-post evaluation designs which lay emphasis on issues of sustainability in evaluation (Stockmann, 1997) and Jean King's 'interactive evaluation approach' which leads to participatory evaluation. Ex-post evaluation approach is relevant in this study because it hopes to focus on the assessment of the impact of a project whose mid-term evaluation was conducted in 2009 rather than inputs, activities, and outputs for which adoption of multiple designs, approaches and methods is necessary (Cresswell, 2014; Yin, 1994). Triangulating designs, approaches and methods is important because using only one approach may be defective (Barifaijo, Basheka&Oonyu, 2010).

### **3.3 Study Population**

A study population refers to generally a large collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of a scientific query. Akuezilo (1993: 43) describes it to include ‘people, events, animals and objects who/which are members of the target of the study’. It is any group of individuals that have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher. Hence, the population for this study will be constituted by the different Functional Adult Literacy programmes in Northern Uganda and the target beneficiaries, project staff and leadership of the respective district local governments who interacted with REEP.

### 3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Strategy

A sample is a sub set of a particular population in a given study (Mugenda&Mugenda, 1999). Sampling is the process of selecting sufficient numbers of elements from the population so that a study of the sample and its characteristics would make it possible for the researcher to generalize such characteristics to the population elements (Sekeran, 2003). This study will be based on a sample of sample 46 participants comprising 18 individuals who participated in REEP activities, 18 of those who did not participate, six Sub County Officials; and four and project staff as shown in table 1 below. A purposive sampling strategy shall be employed to pick the study sample. According to Amin (2005) purposive sampling is preferred in selecting people holding positions that are more knowledgeable with issues going on in their areas. Given the case study design adopted for this study, focusing on a small sample will help the researcher optimize time, money, efforts and other resources needed to accomplish the objectives of this study. Creswell (2014) observes that there is no definite sample size in qualitative research tradition. Whatever study sample one chooses to use depends on the qualitative design which in this case is a case design.

**Table 1: Categories of study participants**

Category	Target	Gender		Sampled	Sampling method	Proposed method
	Population	Males	Females			
Project Staff	14	2	2	4	Purposive	Key informant interview
Sub County Chiefs	13	3	3	6	Purposive	Key informant interview
Project participants and non-participants from 6 Sub Counties	2,772	30	30	60	Random	Focus group discussion
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,799</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>70</b>		



### **3.5 Data Collection Methods**

When thinking about evaluations we often consider the merits of combining methods; that is, using mixed methods approach that borrows from both quantitative and qualitative methods than using a single method. REEP is a complicated dynamic and multidimensional social reality for which a single method approach with rigid designs may not work; so this study will adopt multi-method approach (Talisayon, 2009, p. 33). Mixed methods can refer to the use of multiple types of data collection methods that are aligned with both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Cohen et al., 2011). It is particularly justified by the need for completeness, abductive inspiration and to a less extent confirmation (Robson, 2011). Palinkas, L. A., et al (2013) advocate for the use of mixed methods when “interventions and programmes are sufficiently complex that a single methodological approach is often inadequate” This is exactly the picture portrayed of REEP in this study. The use of mixed methods will strengthen confidence in conclusions when they are based on several different sources of information gathered in different ways, therefore avoiding the risk of what researchers sometimes call ‘instrument effect’ (*Christensen, 2007, p. 377*). What the logic of impact evaluation designs underlines, is that in impact evaluation in particular it may be mixed designs rather than mixed methods that are most useful. Often what are required are several well-chosen designs, each of which will use a variety of methods, and be tailored to answer the various impact evaluation questions posed by evaluation commissioners and other stakeholders (UNDP, 2009; Stern, 2015, p.13). Data for this study will be derived from both primary and secondary sources and be collected using documentary reviews, key informant interviews, focus group discussions and direct observation of some of the activities going on in the community as described below.

#### **3.5.1 Documentary reviews**

As explained in Bowen (2009) document analysis is a social research method which is used as a tool for obtaining relevant documentary evidence to support and validate facts stated in a research, especially

during literature review. It involves analytic reading and review of lots of written material. In this study, the researcher will review various documents related literacy projects in general and REE in particular to complement data from other sources. Although documents are associated with a number of challenges such as the need for consent, inaccessibility and obsolesce, Hardon, Hodgkin & Fresle (2004) defend their uses because they are a cost-efficient way of doing research and tend to avoid duplication of efforts.

### **3.5.2 Key Informant Interviews**

Amin (2005) describes an interview as an oral questionnaire where the investigator gathers data through direct verbal interaction with participants. In light of this, key informant interviews are qualitative in-depth interviews with people who know what is going on in the community with the purpose of collecting information from a wide range of people who have firsthand knowledge about the community. In this study, 10 key informant interviews will be conducted to get data from people who are knowledgeable about REEP.

### **3.5.3 Focus Group Discussions**

A focus group discussion (FGD) is a form of group interviewing in which a small group, usually ranging from 10 to 12 people is led by a skilled moderator in a loosely structured discussion of different topics of interest in a study. It is method of data collection used to gather together people from similar backgrounds or experiences to discuss a specific topic of interest (*Ames, 1998*). Though associated with a number of weaknesses such as the need for skilled moderator, the unpredictability of a group discussion; and dominance of few participants, Hardon, Hodgkin & Fresle (2004, p.30) defend their use because the method is quick and cheap; it offers a greater pool of expertise that can be tapped at a go as compared to individual interviews; it offers a more diverse picture of the whole process and activities. In this study, the researcher will conduct six FGDs to gain in-depth understanding of perceptions on the intended and unintended changes that were brought onto the people in the project areas and also whether those who

participated in the project had some observable changes as compared to those who did not participate in REEP.

### **3.5.4 Observation**

McLeod (2015) describes observation method as the process of watching what people do for purposes of collecting data. There are different types some of which in controlled observation, naturalistic observation and participant observation. He notes that observations can either be overt or disclosed, in which case the participants know they are being studied; or covert/undisclosed where the research keeps their real identity a secret from the research subjects, acting as a genuine member of the group. Although observation is criticized for pretense on the part of some participants when they realize that they are being observed, the is advantageous because data obtained through structured observations is easier and quicker to analyze making this a less time consuming method as compared to naturalistic observations. Hardon, Hodgkin &Fresle (2004, p.31) add that direct observation produces more reliable information than interviews on actual Behavior. The above named data collection methods in general and direct observation in particular shall be complemented by photographic method.

### **3.6 Data collection Instruments**

The researcher shall use a number of research tool some of which shall be conceptual and theoretical while others shall be practical in nature. Four appropriate data collection tools namely: documentary review guide, key informant interview guide, Focus group discussion guide and observation checklist shown in Appendices 3 - 6. The selection of these instruments will be guided by the nature of data to be collected, the time available and the objectives of the study. Digital audio recorders and digital cameras shall be used to complement the conceptual/theoretical tools.

### **3.7 Validity and Reliability of the Research Instruments**

‘Validity’ and ‘reliability’ are very important concepts in research. Validity refers to accuracy in measurements to ensure that a particular data collection instrument actually measures what it was intended to measure or the extent to which inferences or conclusions drawn from data are reasonable and justifiable, while reliability refers to the consistency of measurements to ensure that a particular data collection instrument, such as a questionnaire, will elicit the same or similar response if administered under similar conditions on the other (UNDP 2009, p. 54).

Validity and reliability in a qualitative study are usually handled differently as compared those in quantitative research (Golafshani, 2003; Jalil, 2013) using terms like credibility, which according to UNDP (2009, p. 54) concerns the extent to which the evaluation evidence and the results are perceived to be valid, reliable and impartial by the stakeholders, particularly the users of evaluation results. Golafshani (2003) and Lincoln & Guba (1985) discuss the reliability issues in qualitative research and identify credibility, neutrality, confirmability, consistency, dependability, applicability, transferability as the essential criteria for quality in qualitative research. Mays & Pope (2000) add that validity of qualitative research should be addressed through triangulation, respondent validation, clear exposition of methods of data analysis, reflexivity, careful attention to negative cases and fair dealing. Hence, validity and reliability in the proposed study will be addressed in accordance with the parameters suggested in various literature on the subject (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mays & Pope, 2000).

### **3.8 Data analysis**

Qualitative researchers suggest that data analysis in qualitative studies starts as soon as the collection process begins and then continues after data collection ends (Creswell, 2009; 2014). In light of the research design and approach proposed, data in this study will be analyzed using mainly qualitative

methods described in Creswell (1998). Data will therefore be analysis thematically following the various steps outlined in Creswell (2009; 2014). Braun & Clarke (2006) describe thematic analysis as a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data and this approach will be good because it will help in organizing the raw data into meaningful patterns and themes. However, simple quantitative techniques will be used to complement qualitative analysis.

### **3.9 The research procedure**

This proposed study started with identification of a topic and discussion with appointed supervisor. After approval of the research topic, the researcher focuses on development and defense of the research proposal and research instrument that will be used to aid data collection. A successful defense will lead the researcher to seek an introductory letter and research clearance letters from UTAMU and National Council for Science and Technology of Uganda as part of the ethical requirement. These letters will be used to introduce him to gatekeepers and targeted research participants in the course of accessing the community. The researcher will identify a guide with good language skills to assist him in the course of the study. Before going to the field the will test the research instruments on a sample outside Nebbi, but exhibiting similar characteristics of the actual sample. The researcher will then proceed to administer the research instruments to the target research participants. Before starting the key informant interviews, focus group discussions the researcher will ask the participants to sign a consent form. Detailed field notes will be taken and edited after every day's work. The data will be organized, cleaned and used to compile a report which will be defended and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of Master's in Project Monitoring and Evaluation of UTAMU.

### **3.10 Ethical Considerations**

In conducting this study, the researcher shall adhere to the six ethical principles discussed in the American Psychological Association [APA] (2010). Ethical issues in a study focus on relationships with research participants in terms of dos and don'ts a researcher must observe while in the field and may

include: choice of field sites; providing feedback; clarifying the rights and ‘ownership’ of evaluation outputs; ensuring confidentiality and avoiding endangering participants; and maintaining the independence of the evaluation, such that it is not captured by any one interest group (Stern, 2015, p.9). The researcher will first seek the consent of the respondents, assure them of anonymity, and the confidentiality and with which the data collected will be kept and accessed.

### **3.11 Measurement of Variables**

The key variables in this study namely relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability will be measured using the operational definitions provided in section 1.12 below. According to Newman (2012), operationalization is the process by which the researcher forms conceptual definitions out of rudimentary “working ideas” used while making observations or gathering data in the field and does this by describing how specific observations and thoughts about the data contributed to working ideas.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1: WORK PLAN/GANTT CHART - SHOWING THE STUDY TIME LINES



P.O.BOX 73307-Kampala-Uganda

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ACTIVITIES TO BE CARRIED OUT IN THE COURSE OF THE STUDY	2015					2016				
	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY
Continuous and extensive search for relevant and related literature										
Developing a proposal and research tools in consultation with the allocated supervisor										
Effecting corrections in the proposal and research tools as per the supervisor's suggestions										
Presenting and defending the proposal										
Identifying relevant journals for publishing at least two papers from the research process										
Field reconnaissance visit and pre-testing the research instruments										
Field work to collect data										
preparing and field notes for writing the draft dissertation										
Analyzing field data and writing draft chapters in consultation with the supervisor										
Effecting changes recommended by the supervisor										
Submitting the draft dissertation and preparing for defense and including comments and corrections per the thesis panel										

Submit final thesis to MUST – UTAMU																			
Clearing with administration and awaiting graduation																			

## APPENDIX 2: DRAFT CONSENT FORM



**P.O.BOX 73307-Kampala-Uganda**

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I .....agree to participate in this study to be conducted by Dr. Willy Ngaka, a graduate student of the Uganda Technology and Management University (UTAMU) (Reg. No. MAY15/PM & E/0403U) under the supervision of Prof. Benon, C. Basheka, which focuses on the Impact of Literacy Projects on Rural Poor in Northern Uganda with specific reference to Rural Education Empowerment Project (REEP) in Nebbi District

I do understand that:

- 1) The information I give will be used as part of the data for writing Dr. Ngaka’s Master’s thesis
- 2) The data will be kept with the highest degree of confidentiality it deserves and that my right to remain anonymous in the course of reporting the findings of the study will be observed
- 3) My participation in the study is voluntary and I have the right to withdraw from the study at any time of my choice
- 4) I am entitled to question anything that is not clear to me in the course of the interview
- 5) I will be given time to understand and where necessary, consult other people about certain points expressed in this document
- 6) In event of wanting to seek more clarification concerning my participation in this study, I can refer to the supervisor of the research project, Prof. Benon, C. Basheka using the contact details of the school as shown above

On the basis of the above clear points, I hereby give my informed consent to take part in the interview that is expected to generate information to realize the set objectives of this study.

**Name of the Research participant:**.....

**Signed**..... **Date**.....

Name of the Witness: .....

Signed..... Date.....

### APPENDIX 3: DOCUMENTARY REVIEW/ANALYSIS GUIDE



**P.O.BOX 73307-Kampala-Uganda**

**[www.utamu.ac.ug](http://www.utamu.ac.ug)**

This guide is aims to guide the process of accessing and analyzing documents related to the Impact of Rural Education Empowerment Project (REEP) in Nebbi District on the local population. The review process shall be shall be guided by and tailored to the following:

- Location of the documents and the relative ease of access to the
- Recognizing the type of document accessed
- The generator of the document
- The conditions and circumstances under which the document was generated
- Purpose the document is/was meant to serve
- The contents of the document and the potential target audience for the document
- The language in which the document has been prepared
- The level of the document and its suitability for the present research

In view of the guidelines above, some useful documents to look for shall include the following:

- UPLIFT &NorSED. (2009). Rural Education Empowerment Project (REEP) Under the UPLIFT Adult Literacy Program in Uganda: A Midterm Review Report

- UPLIFT Uganda Annual reports from 2010 - 2014.
- UPLIFT Uganda records of minutes of meetings held about REEP
- Some Statistical Summaries and correspondences about the project if available

## **APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR KEY INFORMANTS**



**P.O.BOX 73307-Kampala-Uganda**

[www.utamu.ac.ug](http://www.utamu.ac.ug)

### **1. Introduction**

This key informant interview is intended to generate information on the impact of literacy projects on rural poor in Northern Uganda with specific reference to Rural Education Empowerment Project (REEP) which UPLIFT implemented in Nebbi District in the period 2007 – 2009. You were purposively selected to take part in this study because of the wealth of experience and knowledge you have accumulated over the years as you interacted with various people and processes in the course of undertaking REEP activities. The information being gathered will be used by the interviewer Dr. Willy Ngaka, a graduate student of the Uganda Technology and Management University (UTAMU) (Reg. No. MAY15/PM & E/0403U) under the supervision of Prof. Benon, C. Basheka to write his dissertation for submission to the School Business and Management of UTAMU in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Project Monitoring and Evaluation (MPM&E) of UTAMU. Your responses will be kept with the utmost degree of confidentiality they deserve and strictly used for academic purposes. Also note that your anonymity in the course of reporting the findings of the study will be ensured through the use of pseudonyms instead of your real names. Your cooperation on this subject will highly be appreciated.

## **2. General/Personal Information**

FGD date..... Name of the Group.....  
FGD venue..... Number of participants in the group.....  
FGD start time..... Number of female participants.....  
FGD duration..... Number of male participants.....

## **3. Educational and Socio-economic Background of the Participants**

- Age
- Gender
- Religion
- Marital status
- Village of residence
- Languages spoken
- Etc.

## **4. Experience in and Knowledge about REEP**

- Length of time taken in the project
- Activities participated in
- Mechanism for joining the project
- Languages used in the project work
- Lessons learnt in the course taking part in the project
- etc

## **5. Relevance of REEP**

- The extent to which the project was:
- in line with the needs of the local people

- liked by the people
- appropriate for the environment

#### **6. Effectiveness of REEP**

The extent to which the project was able to achieve its set objectives and meet the needs of the people

#### **7. Efficiency of REEP**

- The extent to which the project used least costly inputs to successfully implement the activities that were designed to yield benefits or contribute to the outputs

#### **8. Impact of REEP**

- What are the long term effects, both good and bad the project has left on the people?
- Were/are there some unintended effects of the project on the people and the environment?
- How has the project affected those who did not take part in it directly?
- What do the local people best remember the project for?

#### **9. Sustainability of REEP**

- What has happened or is happening to the benefits the project has been generating after donor funds dried up

#### **10. Any general comment**

Thank You Very Much for Your Time and Cooperation

**The End**



## APPENDIX 5: FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR BENEFICIARIES



**P.O.BOX 73307-Kampala-Uganda**

**[www.utamu.ac.ug](http://www.utamu.ac.ug)**

### **1. Introduction**

This focus group discussion is intended to generate information on the impact of literacy projects on rural poor in Northern Uganda with specific reference to Rural Education Empowerment Project (REEP) which UPLIFT implemented in Nebbi District in the period 2007 – 2009. Your group was purposively selected to take part in this study because of the wealth of experience and knowledge it has accumulated over the years as members interacted with different groups, people and processes in the course of undertaking REEP activities. The information being gathered will be used by the researcher Dr. Willy Ngaka, a graduate student of the Uganda Technology and Management University (UTAMU) (Reg. No. MAY15/PM & E/0403U) under the supervision of Prof. Benon, C. Basheka to write his dissertation for submission to the School Business and Management of UTAMU in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Master of Project Monitoring and Evaluation (MPM&E) of UTAMU. Your responses will be kept with the utmost degree of confidentiality they deserve and strictly used for academic purposes. Also note that your anonymity in the course of reporting the findings of the study will be ensured through the use of pseudo names instead of your real names. Your cooperation on this subject will highly be appreciated.



## **2. General/Personal Information**

FGD date..... Name of the Group.....  
FGD venue..... Number of participants in the group.....  
FGD start time..... Number of female participants.....  
FGD duration..... Number of male participants.....

## **3. Educational and Socio-economic Background of the Participants**

- Age
- Gender
- Religion
- Marital status
- Village of residence
- Languages spoken
- Etc.

## **4. Experience in and Knowledge about REEP**

- Length of time taken in the project
- Activities participated in
- Mechanism for joining the project
- Languages used in the project work
- Lessons learnt in the course taking part in the project
- etc

## **5. Relevance of REEP**

- The extent to which the project was:
- in line with the needs of the local people
- liked by the people
- appropriate for the environment

## **6. Effectiveness of REEP**

The extent to which the project was able to achieve its set objectives and meet the needs of the people

## **7. Efficiency of REEP**

- The extent to which the project used least costly inputs to successfully implement the activities that were designed to yield benefits or contribute to the outputs

## **8. Impact of REEP**

- What are the long term effects, both good and bad the project has left on the people?
- Were/are there some unintended effects of the project on the people and the environment?
- How has the project affected those who did not take part in it directly?
- What do the local people best remember the project for?

## **9. Sustainability of REEP**

- What has happened or is happening to the benefits the project has been generating after donor funds dried up

## **10. Any general comment**

Thank You Very Much for Your Time and Cooperation

**The End**

**APPENDIX 6: OBSERVATION CHECK LIST**



**P.O.BOX 73307-Kampala-Uganda**

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In the course of data collection, the researcher will make efforts to observe some of the following things:

- Overt differences between project participants and non-participants
- Participation levels by gender in different community activities such as:
  - Community meetings
  - Political rallies/campaigns
  - Religious functions
  - Adult literacy classes
  - Socio-cultural events
  - etc
- Physical state of adult literacy learning centres that were established
- Possible impact of the project on the state of physical environment in the project area
- What is happening in different groups that were created
- Different activities women are currently undertaking in their respective CBOs
- Any other strange thing that might catch the researcher's eyes in relation to REEP