Action research to improve youth and adult literacy

Empowering learners in a multilingual world

Hassana Alidou and Christine Glanz (eds)

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Acronyms and abbreviations

2PEB	Projet Education de Base/ Promotion de l'Enseignement Bilingue (Basic Education Project/ Promotion of Bilingual Education)
ACALAN	African Academy of Languages
ANFEAE	Adult and Non-formal Education Association
APENF	Association pour la promotion de l'éducation non formelle (Association for the Promotion of Non-formal Education)
ARED	Associates in Research and Education for Development
ANSD	Agence Nationale de la Statistique et de la Démographie
CONFINTEA VI	Sixth International Conference on Adult Education
CFCA	Centre de Formation des Cadres de l'Alphabétisation (Centre for Training Personnel in Adult Literacy Education) in Niger
CSA	Central Statistics Authority
DA	Development Agent
EFA	Education for All
ESDP	Education Sector Development Programme
et al.	et alii (in Latin), and others (in English)
ETP	Education and Training Policy
ff.	and the following (pages, paragraphs, etc.)
FAL	Functional Adult Literacy
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FTC	Farmers' Training Centres
GMR	Global Monitoring Report
GoE	Government of Ethiopia
GVEN	Gestion Villageoise des Espaces Naturels
IFAL	Integrated Functional Adult Literacy
IFAL-CVC	Integrated Functional Adult Literacy – Coffee Value Chain
IIED	Institut International pour l'Environnement et le Développement
IIEDH	Interdisciplinary Institute for Ethics and Human Rights (Institut interdisciplinaire d'éthique et droits de l'homme)
LIFE	Literacy Initiative for Empowerment

MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MARP	Méthode Active de Recherche et de Planification Participative
MLC	Minimum Learning Competencies
MoARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoYSC	Ministry of Youth, Sports and Culture
n. p.	no page numbers indicated
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
p. or pp.	page or pages
PRA	Participatory Rapid Appraisal
PROGRES	Programme Régional de Gestion conjointe des Ressources Agro-sylvo-pastorales
SHG	Self Help Group
UIL	UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNLD	United Nations Literacy Decade

Foreword

With this guidebook we would like to highlight the importance of multilingual and multicultural contexts for youth and adult literacy. Research and practice are leading the way, and the Post-2015 Agenda to follow the global Education for All initiative emphasizes the importance of culture. Culture gives languages, oral or written, a prominent place as a key means of communication and voice.

UNESCO perceives literacy as the foundation for lifelong learning. It is grounded in multilingual and multicultural practices in societies. In recent decades, research and practise has embedded youth and adult education in its linguistic and cultural context. Theory and good practice in literacy has helped improve the quality of learning outcomes and thereby improving lives of learners and enhancing their skills for participation in democratic developments of society. It has also helped to promote respect for diversity.

The present action research has identified five guiding principles for youth and adult literacy programmes: (1) inclusion; (2) lifelong learning; (3) literacy perceived from a multilingual and multicultural perspective and as an essential aspect of the human right to education; (4) a multilingual and multicultural ethos; and (5) sustainability. These guiding principles are the pillars of the quality framework for youth and adult literacy education and learning which is proposed in this book.

Youth and adult literacy programmes improve their quality substantially when applying participatory and collaborative action research. Action research is an inclusive way to expand knowledge that is at the direct and immediate service of practice. In action research, the knowledge of professionals, facilitators and learners is treated as equally important. It promotes a democratic and equitable approach to learning and helps to develop learning environments that empower adult learners to take part in shaping their education and learning. Good participatory action research benefits and connects people working at all levels in the learning and educational process, including services and policies.

With this guidebook we pay tribute to action research initiatives that anchor youth and adult literacy programmes in multilingual and multicultural social environments. We encourage UNESCO entities, partners, training and research institutions to use this guidebook to improve the quality of literacy and non-formal education policies and practices (programme management, teaching and learning, monitoring and evaluation, promotion of literate environments, resource mobilisation and networking).

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Gebre, Alemayehu Hailu
Alemayehu Hailu Gebre is currently leading the Ubuntu Leadership Institute in Ethiopia. He has over 20 years of experience working in both the NGO and public sector in the fields of community development, adult education and literacy, human resource and organizational development and management, project design, monitoring and evaluation. He has worked in the NGO sector in different capacities as development agent, supervisor, project coordinator, project manager, deputy director and director. From 2005 to 2009 he was Managing Director of the NGO Adult and Non-formal Education Association in Ethiopia (ANFEAE).

Glanz, Christine
Dr. Christine Glanz has worked as a Programme Specialist at the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning since 2003, specialising in youth and adult education in multilingual and multicultural contexts and with a special focus on Africa. She has conducted field research on literacy practices and obtained her doctoral degree with a dissertation on literacy practices in sexuality counselling by Sengas in Central Southern Uganda. She has published qualitative research on the social uses of literacy, on language in education in multilingual and multicultural contexts, on the creation of literate environments, on UNESCO's work from the perspective of social justice, and on educational management with a sector-wide approach.

Ly, Mamadou Amadou
Mamadou Amadou Ly is Director General of the NGO Associates in Research and Education for Development (ARED) based in Dakar, Senegal. His initial training was in mechanical engineering but he moved quickly into social work and education. He began his career in education in 1987 as a volunteer literacy trainer for the Association pour la Renaissance du Pulaar (ARP) in Senegal, and became a language teacher, trainer and supervisor for youth and adult literacy, including with the NGO Culture for African Development. Since the creation of ARED in 1991, he has worked as a trainer of trainers, curriculum developer for training modules and managed the research and training unit.

Mallam Garba, Maman
Dr. Maman Mallam Garba is the Director General of the Dept. of Reform, Promotion of National Languages and Civic Education at the Ministry of Primary Education, Literacy, the Promotion of National Languages and Civic Education in Niger. He is also a lecturer in linguistics and bilingual education at Abdou Moumouni University in Niamey, Niger, and an associate professor at the University of Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso in the Department for Education and the Development of Adults. In addition, he is one of the founders of the publishing house Éditions Gashingo. His work focuses on research, policies and practice for the promotion of African languages, and high-quality bi-/multilingual formal and non-formal education in Niger and the West African region.

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Introduction

By Hassana Alidou and Christine Glanz

Tagbanwa is the writing system used by three of the more than 150 Philippine languages.

The Tagbanwa script was used in the Philippines until the 17th century. Closely related to Baybayin, it is believed to have developed from the Kawi script of Java, Bali and Sumatra, which, in turn, descended from the Pallava script, one of the southern Indian scripts derived from Brahmi.

Áfter more than 60 years of reflecting on peace, conflict prevention and empowerment by UNESCO and its member states, how are we going to use this knowledge about diverse people and their needs? How are we going to use the opportunity of the technological revolution through which we learned more about each other's suffering and triumphs and what affects people in our contemporary world? How do we use education in a transformative[1] manner to change our reality for the betterment of us all?

A lot of emphasis has been put on universal primary education and children. Yet we know that if young people and adults are not educated, the chance that children will be is low. Who are the teachers and models for the young generation? Who shapes the current world that is the foundation for tomorrow? Adults. Adult education is an integral part of the equation. Young people want to take part in the processes of democratization and decision-making for their future, and written language is an important means of communication in these processes. If they do not have access to literacy[2], how will they contribute? Literacy for youth[3] and adults has to be seen as a response to the quest for peace, democracy[4], emancipation and sustainable development.

The centrality of culture and language in inclusive and sustainable education

Our focus in this book is on adult and youth literacy in multilingual and multicultural contexts. We aim to re-open the discussion on what constitutes inclusive and sustainable education. In the debates about the international

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1 See the Glossary for a definition of 'transformative learning'.

2 See the Glossary for a definition of 'literacy'.

3 By 'youth' we mean young adults (not adolescents) at an age where they are already initiated into adulthood and able to take part in productive activities. Youth usually take part in adult education and literacy programmes.

4 See the Glossary for a definition of 'democracy'.

'post-2015 agenda' after the current international initiative for Education for All (EFA) has ended, culture[5] re-emerges as a central theme. Already in 1996, the World Commission on Culture and Development, mandated by UNESCO, recommended that culture should become an integral part in policymaking for social and economic development and for the well-being of people. Culture shapes our thinking, imagining and behaviour – yet its importance has been neglected by education (Pérez de Cuéllar et al., 1995, p. 7ff.). "In many ways culture constitutes the contextual factor with the deepest historical roots and greatest continuity; culture is also an arena of potential deep-level conflict …" (Hayhoe, 2007, p. 189). The global post-2015 agenda will help us talk about the centrality of culture in all our actions and interactions. In this agenda, education, development and culture will be intertwined in order to cater for the diverse learning and development needs of all people.

The reality of linguistic diversity and cultural difference requires people to be competent in several languages so that they can communicate appropriately in different domains of life and at different geographical levels: locally, regionally, nationally and across borders. It is therefore no surprise that research evidence suggests that the choice and use of languages in education have a major impact on the overall quality of learning processes and outcomes. Responding appropriately to these multilingual and multicultural contexts is therefore an integral part of initiatives to: (a) include and empower people; (b) develop relevant curricula; (c) train trainers; and (d) create literate environments so that people can make use of their literacy skills and fulfil the promise of literacy being relevant for human rights and social justice.

International recognition for multilingual approaches in education
Education and learning in multilingual contexts is one of the major themes of the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD) and UNESCO's Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE). The topic has been discussed on a global level at, for example, the Regional Conferences in Global Support of Literacy (2007–2008); the Regional Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) meetings of Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Arab States, and Latin America

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5   The concept of culture is today discussed as something that is complex, not closed, reflects its historical development, and the influences from other cultures. On the one hand, it serves to describe a group's beliefs, values and practices, and on the other hand, it accommodates the diversity of identities and practices of its individual members. When we speak of culture we do not mean only what is subsumed under 'arts' or 'folklore', we speak about the beliefs, values and practices that shape all relationships and areas of life, be it economic, spiritual, educational, or political. The values, beliefs and practices inherent in all domains of livelihood which are an essential part of adulthood. Ensuring and improving one's livelihood is a key task and central motivation for youth and adults' learning and an important area of applying of what has been learnt (see also the Glossary for a definition of 'culture').

and the Caribbean (2007–2008); the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI, 2008–2009); and the International Forum on Multilingualism (2009). The outcome documents of these high-level international meetings reflect the fact that mother-tongue-based, multilingual education is increasingly being accepted as a necessary element for (i) quality education[6], (ii) the development of literate environments, and (iii) social development that strengthens the potential of all citizens in a democratic society.

The new humanism: emancipation and empowerment of youth and adult learners

All in all, the search for a new humanism is based on the ability of states and communities to provide inclusive and sustainable lifelong learning for all. Lifelong learning allows individuals to acquire the capacity to transform their own reality, to know about themselves and others and to make important decisions which contribute to respect, tolerance and appreciation of human and ecological diversity. In this respect, the principles of learning as articulated in the Delors report (see Delors et al., 1996) prepare learners to become more peaceful and inclusive.

Social projects that promote inclusive and sustainable lifelong learning for all contribute to the enactment of the new humanism articulated by Irina Bokova, the Director-General of UNESCO, in 2010. Human beings are social beings, Bokova asserts: we are "free and proud shapers" of our own being. As such, "it is up to every one of us to bind the community of humanity together, to build a common space that excludes no one, regardless of continent, origin, age or gender" (Bokova, 2010, p. 3). This vision of human beings calls for a work of 'self-fashioning' in the spirit of lifelong learning. The Russian philosopher Mustafa Nizami Mamedov urges us, when putting this philosophy into practice, to take into consideration all aspects of human nature including its aggressive and violent dimensions, and to view culture from a socio-historical perspective, remembering that what exists today has evolved in reaction to the natural and social environment and the interconnectedness of all human societies (Mamedov, 2012). Suzy Halimi raised the question "What humanism for the 21st century?" (Halimi, 2014). It is discussed from different angles, such as from its pluricultural nature (Ouane, 2014), from its connection with sustainable development (Vauge, 2014), and from a call for reshaping our economies (Zaalouk, 2014).

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6 See the Glossary for a definition of 'quality' in adult learning and education.

Understanding that an education system is an evolving cultural product with its own history allows us to step back from what we think of as 'normal' and take a broader perspective. The history of what is called 'education' today is in many parts of the world interwoven with a recent history of colonization, power struggles, and resistance. We need to acknowledge this fact. From our perspective, the ultimate goal is to reshape education and lifelong learning so that they are conducive to the building of more productive, democratic, just and peaceful societies. All the contributions to this book reflect in one way or another on policies and programmes that contribute to the emancipation and empowerment of youth and adult learners.

The purpose of this guide book

This guidebook is about the quest for quality, which is a lifelong pursuit linked to social justice. As we move in time and space new challenges emerge, but our vision is that no one should be left behind in the quest for self- and collective realization. We have to consider all possible means for enabling the active participation of all citizens in education. We must look at both challenges and opportunities, such as those that technology offers us for making linkages and improving access to information, knowledge and skills. We must seek out possibilities for retaining positive values and acquiring new ones which foster deeper appreciation for human, linguistic, cultural and ecological diversity.

Action research for ownership and transformative learning
We perceive action research as an approach (not a fixed and closed model) through which control over the development and implementation of educational policies and programmes is given to the people concerned. They have the right to define their own problems, find their own solutions, have their own experiences, make their own mistakes, and create their own successes. We see quality as a process of becoming better, advancing and improving, rather than as an ideal state of perfection. Quality education does not mean importing a template or model, applying it wholesale, and watching it fail or remain alien to the social context. Such an approach is a waste of time for the people concerned. Action research[7], by contrast, is an empowering and emancipatory approach which uses dialogue and reflection to offer tremendous opportunities for individual and collective empowerment and transformation through learning.

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7 See the Glossary for a definition of 'action research'.

Action research for developing a culture of critical reflection on practice
Action research has been conceived as a means for practitioners and researchers to improve their practice. It is a process of systematic reflection, inquiry and testing which investigates what is being done and suggests how it might be improved by the 'reflective practitioner'. Many good quality adult literacy programmes in multilingual contexts and other initiatives which create a multilingual literate environment[8] share a common feature: they use action research to work systematically and continuously on improving their practice. They do not use the same methods, but we can observe them using common *principles*. In this book, we therefore focus on these principles and not on specific methods. If you are interested in reading about specific methods, we have listed some guidebooks on action research in the bibliography. We understand this book as complementary to them.

Conducting action research is not without risks because there is no change without risk-taking. Conducting action research is a learning process in which we learn about self-reflection, ethics, and critical approaches to research itself, as well as discovering ways of dealing with conflicts, hurdles and frustration.

The target group of this book
This book provides guidance for those who train people in the field of youth and adult education and who manage the implementation of non-formal education and curriculum[9] development programmes for youth and adult literacy. It is also aimed at those who work in the literary world (publishers, authors, etc.). Most of the people for whom this book is intended are based in universities, ministries, education districts and non-governmental organizations and have a bachelor's degree. The tasks and professional roles we have in mind are:

- training future personnel for youth and adult education in higher education institutions
- improving the quality of adult literacy and non-formal education programmes (a task often assigned to middle-level managers and technical advisors)
- training trainers for adult literacy and non-formal education programmes
- providing opportunities to use literacy in everyday life in different languages

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8 See the Glossary for a definition of 'multilingual literate environment'.

9 See the Glossary for a definition of 'curriculum'.

- developing curricula for adult literacy programmes
- training trainers, publishers, authors, and content and application developers for digital media

Building on theory and practice

This book links theory and practice, which are often treated separately. Adult literacy personnel often receive only practice-based training, but we believe that a dose of theory is beneficial for broadening our reflection base. The focus of the book is on building your understanding of action research and how it can be used to improve education and learning in the field of youth and adult literacy in multilingual and multicultural contexts. We see this book as extending UNESCO's capacity-building publications such as the series *African Perspectives on Adult Learning*. Through this book we share knowledge on how collaborative and participatory action research can be used to continuously develop good quality adult literacy programmes by integrating the multilingual and multicultural social context as a resource. The challenge for education today is to adapt and respond to the complex realities of a linguistically and culturally diverse world, and to combat social disintegration and discrimination. We can use action research to reflect on this, moving from theory to practice and from practice to theory.

Interplay between bottom-up and top-down

The advantage of action research is that it does not preconceive solutions from the top down. Rather, it gives practitioners the power to decide, and encourages them to root their services in the realities of their social context. Conducting action research requires understanding the logic of systematic 'reflective practice' and adapting it to one's needs. This book attempts to clarify both of these steps.

We begin by discussing the theory of what action research is. Three case studies show how it was applied in an African context to provide cultural and linguistic grounding for programmes and initiatives. Each case study is written by a specialist from the country concerned who was involved in the case. The first case is about establishing multilingual publishing in Niger. Action research is used to serve multilingual education and a multilingual reading and writing culture that responds to local readers' interests. The action research in this case entailed developing the capacities of the whole book chain. The second case describes a participatory literacy and numeracy curriculum development process for the capacity development of smallholder coffee producers in Ethiopia. The curriculum is context-specific and gender-responsive, and is based on prior knowledge as well as local practices. The third case is about an emancipated community in Senegal that needed help in researching some of the challenges they face. The involvement of action

research in the process led to an effective adaptation of the research method and capacity development of the local community, which was then able to apply the research tools independently. New training tools were devised which also proved relevant for other communities in the sub-region that share socio-cultural features.

A frame of reference for good quality youth and adult literacy in multilingual contexts

We also address the question of how quality in education is conceptualized from macro to micro level. Our frame of reference for good quality youth and adult literacy in multilingual contexts builds on the fundamental guiding principles[10] of social justice and rights-based education. We are inspired by the critical questions posed by Leon Tikly on education and social justice (2010, 2011) and by the Interdisciplinary Institute for Ethics and Human Rights (IIEDH) and the Association for the Promotion of Non-formal Education in Burkina Faso (APENF) on the right to basic education (Friboulet et al., 2006). We recommend scrutinizing the processes of policymaking and planning, resource mobilization, implementation, monitoring and evaluation from macro to micro level in order to ensure that enabling environments for education and learning are created and seamlessly linked to each other so as to serve learners' interests and needs. Only then can we talk about education for inclusive growth and sustainable development.

Voices from three adult education specialists and our peer reviewers

We close this section on the purpose of the guidebook by sharing the views of three specialists in adult literacy and of peer reviewers on the quality and relevance of this guidebook. They shared these views with us after our first testing and training workshop in Nigeria.

Jennifer Birkett (South Africa) says
I think that this guidebook can be a useful entry point into the concepts and practices involved in action research, and a basis from which people in the field can experiment with new and constructive ways of approaching the issues that emerge for them.

She observes that bureaucratic constraints with regard to practitioner implementation of action research can emerge in some contexts and should be addressed. *'In South Africa, I think the guidebook would be useful in conjunction with other training guides and approaches, such as REFLECT (Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques).*

10 See the Glossary for a definition of the term 'guiding principles'.

The latter offers specific skills and facilitator training; the UNESCO guidebook could support such training, as it offers more depth through exploration of relevant concepts and cases of action research in practice. The guidebook would also be useful in universities, as a resource in adult education curricula.

Robert Jjuuko (Uganda) thinks
The guidebook is a very valuable tool for building the capabilities of personnel at the meso-level. There is emerging consensus that adult literacy personnel need to shift their approach so as to implement more relevant and life-changing youth and adult literacy interventions. The guidebook is prepared in a manner that helps adult literacy personnel to understand and respond appropriately to the literacy needs of youth and adult learners and readers. I suggest that we recommend this guidebook to lecturers in university departments that offer bachelor and diploma courses in adult education. For instance, in East Africa we could explore innovative ways of organizing a regional conference for such personnel from Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania, South Sudan, Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda. We could start by carrying out online discussions with interested people, who could begin using the guidebook at their own discretion as supplementary resource material.

Bernard Hagnonnou (Benin) states
Many books on youth and adult education develop unilateral, rigid models. By contrast, this guidebook details a systematic and participatory action research process whereby all stakeholders are involved in assessing, reflecting and strategizing collectively, thereby ensuring ownership. Rather than follow a 'one size fits all' approach, the guidebook recognizes that a relevant, customized solution can be collectively devised and applied only after the actual situation is assessed. This makes the action research developed in this guidebook relevant to any context in which it is applied.

As regards quality, the purpose of the approach is to improve intervention in programmes and to ensure greater effectiveness and efficiency. In this regard, the book highlights linkages between theory and practice, and between content and final use. Case studies provide background and specific challenges that contextualize the approach and its principles. All these factors underline the practicability and quality of this guidebook.

Francophone Africa has sizeable experience with action research, but there is as yet no guidebook available. This UNESCO action research guidebook can therefore serve as an action research 'mother manual', providing a framework for building upon existing experience to improve literacy education and lifelong learning. An action research training guide specifically for francophone practitioners could then be developed from this guidebook.

How to use the book

This book proposes action research for an iterative process back and forth between theory and practice in order to further quality in education and the creation of literate environments that support youth and adults in multilingual and multicultural contexts.

What this book offers

The book's chapters build on each other, relating the two major themes: action research and quality education for youth and adult literacy in multilingual and multicultural contexts. It aims to inspire and prepare you to try out action research. This book does not explain specific research methods as other guidebooks do. Action research is an approach that can accommodate many methods and is open to expansion. In this guidebook we look at action research from a meta-perspective, focusing on the essential steps. The aim is to help people understand why action research is used and how to use it to define and solve a problem. We therefore perceive this book as complementary to other guidebooks on action research. You will find some examples of these in the first part of the reference section.

In chapter two, we introduce you to the purpose and key features of action research. We outline its origins and how it has been applied in different cultural contexts. We address the question of what is 'good' action research by introducing you to the quality principles that emerge from practice and theory.

In chapter three, three case studies from Niger, Ethiopia and Senegal illustrate how the principles of action research have been applied in practice to foster the creation of a multilingual literate environment and to support curriculum development and the training of trainers. In this chapter we aim to enhance your understanding of action research and guide you into reflecting on what kind of action research could be useful in your context.

The fourth chapter suggests a framework[11] that emerges for us from theory and practice, and that may help you ask questions about the quality of youth and adult literacy education and learning. This frame of reference is meant as a source of inspiration that is open for discussion and revision, because what matters ultimately is that an activity is adequate in a particular context. The realities, and thus what means and measures are appropriate, differ from one context to another. Our approach to quality builds on UNESCO's core

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11 See the Glossary for a definition of 'framework'.

values, social justice and peace, and takes into account the diversity of the social conditions under which youth and adults live. The frame of reference underlines the importance of looking at how conducive these conditions are to effective learning.

In order to give you some ideas on how the basic principles are reflected in concrete programmes and what quality criteria emerged, we provide examples from Asia and Africa in chapter five.

At the end of each chapter we propose that you stop reading and take time at a 'Point for reflection', so that you can digest what you have read and think about action research that could be meaningful in your own literacy work. The book includes a bibliography. The glossary explains the technical terms that we use.

How and by whom the guidebook was produced

The production process of this guidebook can be described as reflective action. It started in 2009 with UNESCO and partners[12] during a cross-regional dialogue on 'Adult Literacy in Multilingual Contexts in Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Arab States'. The meeting was attended by specialists on the training of trainers and curriculum development for the creation of a literate environment, and by researchers with longstanding practical and research experience relating to bi-/multilingual approaches; and the national focal points of UNESCO's Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) from countries with practical experience of bi-/multilingual adult literacy and the development of multilingual environments. The participants came from fourteen countries: Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gambia, India, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Senegal, and South Africa. Successful programmes were analysed for their quality principles and criteria[13] with regard to three areas: curriculum development, training of trainers and the creation of a multilingual literate environment.

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12 UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL), UNESCO Field Office Addis Ababa, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in Africa (BREDA), UNESCO Asia-Pacific Regional Bureau for Education / Asia-Pacific Programme of Education for All (APPEAL), dvv international East Africa, Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA).

13 See the Glossary for a definition of 'criteria'.

The result of this work laid the foundation for the frame of reference for adult literacy in multilingual and multicultural contexts which we present to you in chapter four. Agatha van Ginkel of SIL worked with us on an outline and on compiling summaries of case studies.

This book has undergone an extensive peer review process prior to publication. We received feedback from many specialists at different stages and from different countries. Thomas Büttner (Niger), Abdou Diarra (Mali), Sidia Jatta (Gambia), Mamadou Amadou Ly (Senegal), Maman Mallam Garba (Niger), and Moustapha Mountaga Diarra (Mali) gave their feedback on the first outline. Jennifer Lyn Birkett (South Africa) and Robert Jjuuko (Uganda) carried out a thorough peer review of the first draft and provided further feedback later on. Ulrike Hanemann (UIL) also commented on the draft. The participants in our session at the 10th International Language and Development Conference (14–17 October 2013, Cape Town, South Africa) gave feedback on the frame of reference. The final draft of the guidebook was reviewed by a critical mass of specialists in adult education from federal and local governments, representatives of mass education projects and universities in Nigeria, and international specialists in the first training workshop based on this guidebook (16–18 April 2014, Abuja, Nigeria). We integrated Bernard Hagnonnou's (Benin) presentation and plaidoyer for using action research for quality assurance (see chapter five).

Point for reflection 1

At the end of each chapter we invite you, a reflective practitioner, to think about some questions that take you through a reflection process about possible action research in your own context. We recommend that you reserve a notebook for your interaction and learning process as you go through this book, in which you can keep all your notes, ideas, questions etc.

As you are now at the beginning of the book, we would like to invite you to become aware of how you start. We ask you therefore to think about the following questions and, if possible, exchange your ideas and responses with co-learners:

1. Why are you interested in learning about action research in the context of adult literacy in multilingual and multicultural contexts?

2. Do you have any questions at this point about action research and how it could be used to improve the quality of youth and adult literacy in your multilingual and multicultural context? If yes, please write them down so that you can refer to them later on and check whether this book could answer them.

3. Do your questions point to a concrete recurrent problem? If yes, please write it down. It could be the theme for your own action research.

2

Action research from a theoretical perspective

By Hassana Alidou and Christine Glanz

علم

علم

The word »Ilm« meaning
»Knowledge« in two different
Arabic styles: Naskh and
Nastaleeq.

The Arabic script evolved
from the Nabataean Aramaic
script and has been used
since the 4th century. In the
7th century new characters
were created by adding
dots to existing characters
because Aramaic has fewer
consonants than Arabic.
Diacritics indicating short
vowels were also added,
mainly to ensure the correct
loud reading of the Qur'an.

- to understand the main features, purposes and principles of participatory action research that emerge from studies of the topic
- to understand that action research differs from purely academic research
- to understand that an action research process is a learning experience in itself

In recent years, there has been a shift in the field of adult literacy away from a top-down methodology (developing non-formal literacy programmes at the central level for different communities) towards a more inclusive approach which recognizes the diverse learning needs of individuals and communities. It is increasingly recognized that adult learners and communities should be involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of their own programmes; indeed, this involvement is now considered one of the main aspects of quality. The use of methodologies that allow individuals and communities to reflect on challenges and solutions is critical. This is aligned to the concept of literacy for empowerment advocated by seminal Brazilian emancipatory educator Paulo Freire and UNESCO. Action research plays an integral part in these participatory and reflective practices, promoting literacy for the sake of empowerment and freedom.

In this chapter, we explain what action research is and describe why and how it can be used to improve the quality of adult literacy in multilingual and multicultural contexts. We first look at action research theory, its origins and main principles, and how it relates to adult education and professional

development processes. In the following chapter, we move to practice. Three specialists from Niger, Ethiopia and Senegal share with you a concrete example from their practice. They demonstrate how action research has been used in three central areas of youth and adult literacy: (1) the creation of a multilingual literate environment; (2) curriculum development; and (3) the training of trainers.

What is action research?

Action research is a special way of doing and using research; it is not a method or a research instrument like observation, interviews, mapping, etc. As the term suggests, action research is about researching action through action. Action research takes a systematic approach, as opposed to the more random 'learning by doing'. In action research, we define the problem and question to be addressed, reflect on how to address it, plan a new way of dealing with it, monitor our alternative approach, evaluate our action, communicate the results, and, if they are satisfactory, change the practice.

Action research was invented to democratize research and knowledge generation (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller, 2014). Action research abolishes the elitist tradition whereby only the systematic knowledge generation of university-trained scientists is accepted as research (see for example Millot, Neubauer and Storup, 2013). In action research, practitioners can work as a team with researchers or conduct their own action research with other key stakeholders. Many community organizations, NGOs and educational institutions use action research to find their own solutions to questions that arise from their practice. They thereby improve their practice and further their professional development (Bourassa, Bélair and Chevalier, 2007). The REFLECT approach is a popular kind of action research in adult literacy work, and Participatory Rural Appraisal a popular methodology (Fagerberg-Diallo, 2007). In this section, we introduce you to the historical foundations of action research, its main features and its use in different cultural contexts.

The historical and philosophical foundations of action research can be traced back to the beginning of the 20th century (Masters, 1995), or even further as the Encyclopaedia of Action Research attempts "to capture the often unrecognized history of action research – going back as far as Aristotle and Confucius, among many others" (Coghlan and Brydon-Miller 2014, p. xxv). However, it was not until the 1940s that the term 'action research' was introduced. Promoting the view that research needs to be contextualized and ought to serve groups and communities by improving the quality of people's lives, the social psychologist Kurt Lewin coined the term 'action research'

(Lewin, 1946). Lewin was a social psychologist who emigrated in the 1930s from Germany to the USA to escape Hitler's fascist regime. He wanted to involve people as actors in their own research, and encourage them to support each other's learning processes (Somekh and Zeichner, 2009). Traditional research methodologies were criticized for their lack of support for improving practice. Action research made this link by inviting practitioners to participate in or conduct research relevant to their concerns.

Two main strands of action research emerged. The first strand focuses on the individual 'reflective practitioner' who takes responsibility for his or her own practice, is self-critical and evaluates and improves her or his action as a means of professional development. The second strand pursues a collaborative approach by inviting concerned stakeholders to participate. Collaborative and participatory action research involves the people who can inform on the issue at stake and who will be involved in implementing the solution envisaged. According to the action researcher Jean McNiff, the following principles are inherent in all forms of action research: "justice and democracy, the right of all people to speak and be heard, the right of each individual to show how and why they have given extra attention to their learning" (McNiff, 2002, p. 5). These principles correspond to a rights-based, participatory approach to learning which is also promoted by UNESCO.

Critical research as part of democratic practice
Social and political concerns have shaped the philosophy and methodology of action research (Somekh and Zeichner, 2009). The concern that the research design should be open to change so that it remains sensitive to the context is an example of this (Corey, 1949). Critical educational science sees collaborative and participatory action research as a means to expose oppression and to promote democracy[14] and social justice (Carr and Kemmis, 1986). Critical educational science privileges practice over theory. It holds a self-critical stance towards educational theory and practice in order to realize equal rights in practice (Wulf, 2003). It analyses the interdependence of the education system with ideologies and historical and social conditions, and proposes concrete and constructive interventions for change.

The reflective teacher-researcher
The positioning of the teacher as researcher is typical in action research (Stenhouse, 1985, Elliott, 2007). The teacher is reconceptualized as a facilitator of learning and dialogue, supporting students to explore and conduct research in the classroom in order to inform practice and policy.

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14 See the Glossary for a definition of 'democracy'.

In Elliott's multi-level model the teacher-researcher is supported by the second-level research of a university-based researcher (Elliott, 2007). In Namibia's educational reform since independence in the 1990s, for example, teachers learn to engage critically with learning and education in order to empower themselves as professionals and to build a local educational knowledge base (Somekh and Zeichner, 2009).

Paulo Freire described his attitude towards the role of teacher-researcher tellingly:
There is no such thing as teaching without research and research without teaching. One inhabits the body of the other. As I teach, I continue to search and re-search. I teach because I search, because I question, and because I submit myself to questioning. I research because I notice things, take cognizance of them. And in so doing, I intervene. And intervening, I educate and educate myself. I do research so as to know what I do not yet know and to communicate and proclaim what I discover (Freire, 1998, p. 35).

An approach for developing contextualised adult education and learning

As part of the peer review process, Bernard Hagnonnou (Benin) described the relevance of action research for adult literacy education in francophone Africa from a historical perspective. Adult literacy practice was introduced in a context where little theoretical research was available to nourish the academic training of trainers at the outset (Bélanger, 1993; Baba-Moussa, Moussa and Rakotozafy, 2014; Paré Kaboré and Bakyono-Nabaloum, 2014). In this context, action research has been the main approach for developing quality adult education services in many countries. Literacy practitioners and NGOs have engaged in action research in order to design and evaluate projects and programmes. Measures have been implemented based on their findings, including the short term training of facilitators who were then exposed to innovative approaches such as the REFLECT approach (see for example De Broqueville and Sibomana, 2011 and Duffy, Fransman and Pearce, 2008) and the Pedagogy of Text approach (see for example Faundez, Mugrabi and Lagier, 2012). Over the past two decades, a sizeable body of experience in action research has built up.

A cyclic process of professional inquiry

Action research methodology builds on basic problem-solving processes and turns them into systematic, conscious action to improve practice. Figure 2.1 below synthesizes the main processes of the various approaches to action research (Waters-Adams, 2006; Koshy, 2005; McNiff, 2002; Liu, 1992). The process usually starts with the question of how to improve work being done. By reflecting on current practice, a problem is identified for investigation. This problem is studied and a solution determined and planned. The solution

is then tried out and the results monitored and evaluated in order to see whether it has improved practice. The findings are shared and practice modified according to the results. If the proposed solution fails to improve practice satisfactorily, an alternative solution is tried out. In practice, the sequence of these processes might be changed and repeated before a satisfactory solution for a particular issue is found. Some researchers choose a single research question; others choose several questions. The involvement of academic researchers and the extent to which scientific research methods are used to construct theory from practice vary.

Figure 2.1 **The six main reiterative processes of action research**
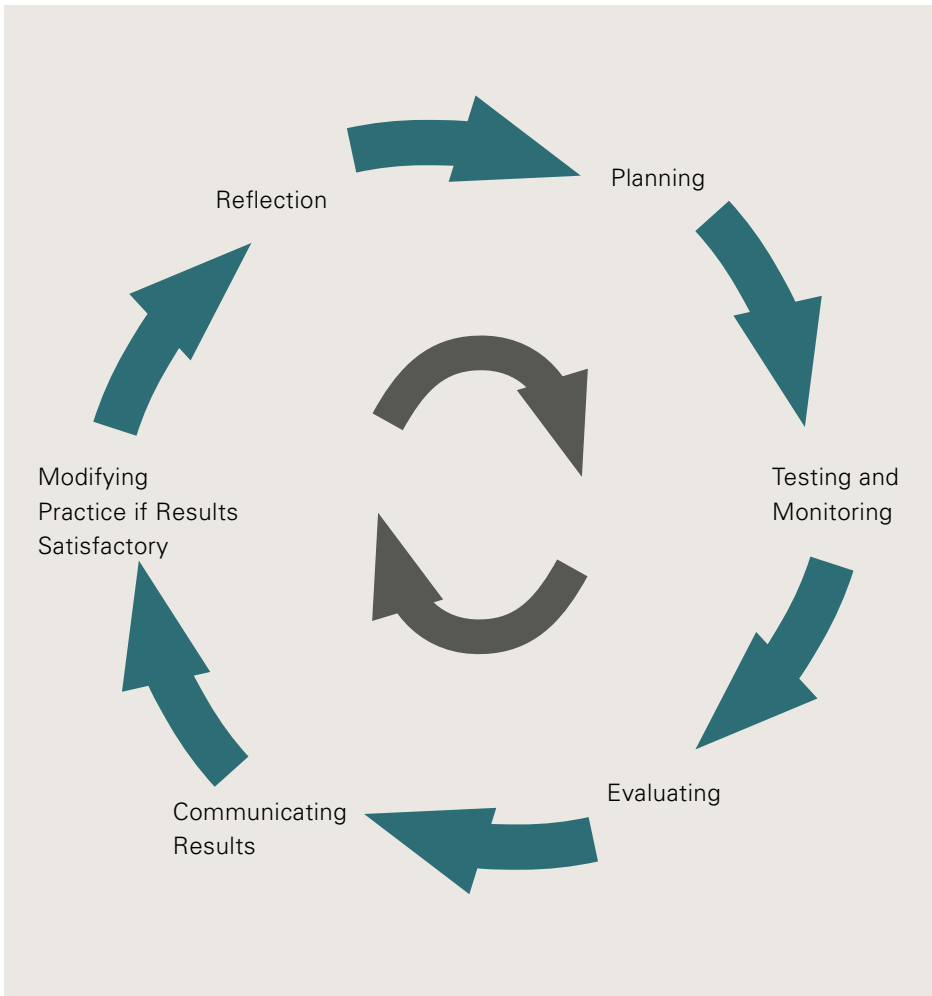
We emphasize that the cycle presented in Figure 2.1 does not suggest that there is a standard process. It visualizes the main processes in an abstract way. The cycle can be repeated many times, and does not have to include all processes if they are not appropriate. The three case studies in chapter three illustrate how differently the principles and processes of action research can be applied for different purposes and in different contexts. Nevertheless, in each case you will find each of the processes feeding into the others. The guides in our bibliography on how to use action research give you many examples. The guide on participatory action research by Pain et al. (n.d.) describes the recurrent stages of action and reflection that they observed and which we share with you to illustrate the process:

Action:	Establish relationships and common agenda with all stakeholders
	Collaboratively decide on issues
Reflection:	On research design, ethics, knowledge and accountability
Action:	Build relationships
	Identify roles and responsibilities
	Collectively design research processes and tools
	Discuss potential outcomes
Reflection:	On research questions, design, working relationships and information required
Action:	Work together to implement research and collect data
	Enable participation of all members
	Collaboratively analyse findings
	Collaboratively plan future actions
Reflection:	On working together
	Has participation worked?
	What else do we need to do?
Action:	Begin to work on feeding research back to all participants and plan for feedback on process and findings
Reflection:	Evaluate the action and reflection processes as a whole
Action:	Collectively identify future research and impacts

…etc. (Pain et al., n.d, p. 3.)

Action research in different cultural contexts

Action research is a response to the positivist approach to research which does not recognize the importance of specificity and subjectivity in understanding natural and social phenomena and how these impact on people's lives. In particular, the positivist approach neglects the role played by power and historicity in shaping individuals' and communities' lives. Action

researchers understand the importance of relying on both subjectivity and objectivity in accounting for situations and in seeking productive collective solutions. Dialogic engagement helps both the researcher and the participant community of learners to develop a common understanding of problems and culturally responsive solutions. Action research is therefore a culturally sensitive strategy which can be applied in different ways depending on the socio-cultural context.

Eight key aspects of action research

The action researchers Somekh and Zeichner (2009) give insights into the use of action research in education in different world regions and describe how the concept and methodology have been adapted to different cultural and institutional contexts. They found that the following eight points are helpful when we want to compare approaches to action research in different contexts. Consider these key points to help you shape your awareness about action research and to explain your approach to others:

1. the purpose for which action research is conducted
2. the contexts in which it takes place
3. the philosophy about teachers/trainers/facilitators and their learning that guides the action research
4. the initiator and sponsor of the action research
5. whether and which incentives are provided to the action researchers
6. the forms of inquiry that are used
7. the relationship to other research (e.g. is other research used as a starting point, as a resource, or not…?)
8. the way in which what is learned during the action research is presented to others

For each of these points we need to acknowledge the "political purposes of action research, its shaping by epistemological[15] traditions, and the need for action researchers to position themselves strategically to have local impact" (Somekh and Zeichner, 2009, p. 19).

From their analysis of action research in different cultural and political contexts, Somekh and Zeichner conclude that action research is being adapted by local actors in a process that can be termed 'globalization from below'. The attractiveness of action research lies in its potential for educational

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15 Epistemology is the study or a theory of the nature and grounds of knowledge, especially with reference to its limits and validity (www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/epistemology (Accessed 19 November 2014).

reform "because its core principle of combining *action* with *research* inevitably challenges the routines of the *status quo*" (Somekh and Zeichner, 2009, p. 19). Somekh and Zeichner report that, in the 1990s, action research received a lot of attention in East Asia with regard to reforming schools. Its adaptation to the Singaporean culture, for instance, has been described in detail by Salleh (2006). Two cultural values made the process challenging because they touched on two main principles of action research. Firstly, the Singaporean culture did not encourage taking initiative from the bottom of the hierarchy, which made it difficult for teachers to develop agency. Secondly, high value was placed on being productive and efficient, which precluded the view that exploring and making mistakes is professional and productive for improving practice. The introduction of action research (remodelled to suit the culture) softened these positions and led to relevant innovations. The adult literacy programmes from Africa and Asia that are introduced to you in this book employ action research in different ways and give you further insights into how it could be used.

Action research as a tool for resistance and building agency[16]

In the African region, participatory emancipatory action research has a tradition as a postcolonial response to problems that are rooted in the exclusion and oppression of local communities (Chilisa and Preece, 2005, p. 195ff.). The reason for this is that "development models that came after political independence in Africa largely followed colonial administration methods, which had already dismantled indigenous community institutions in favour of centralisation" (Chilisa and Preece, 2005, p. 197). Feminist movements have also drawn on emancipatory action research for overcoming patriarchal domination and demanding equal rights and opportunities for women in all spaces in private and public domains.

The formal and non-formal education that is today perceived as standard emerged from European history (see for example Daff, 2014 and Elliott and Grigorenko, 2007). It is a cultural import that was brought by force to many societies in the world, yet it is often incompatible with local educational cultures. Mainstreaming the European education culture as part of colonization and globalization has contributed to the devaluing of local educational cultures, knowledge, and in many cases the languages that people use in their everyday lives. We should also not forget that the European style of education has its own problems for which countries are seeking answers: for example the

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16 See the Glossary for a definition of 'agency'.

strong emphasis on cognitive aspects of learning (including literacy), the monolingual and monocultural stance, etc. We need therefore to understand what it means for other societies to create ownership of education, and to acknowledge that this process is an important feature of good quality. Action research has helped people to ask questions and find answers in this quest, for example in relation to curriculum development and the training of trainers.

Building agency through a multitude of participatory methods

The aim of emancipatory action research is for the community or social group concerned to have ownership and control over the processes, ideas and knowledge that affect it. A central principle of participatory emancipatory action research is acknowledging and balancing power differences. One consequence of this approach is that the affected group becomes researchers and 'shapers' instead of being the objects (the 'consumers and followers') of top-down research. Through their hands-on experiences they gain new knowledge and skills. Participatory methodologies such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)[17] and the more inclusive Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) (Chilisa and Preece, 2005, p. 198ff.; Chambers, 2007) are typical of participatory emancipatory action research. "The main pioneers were not academic intellectuals but workers and staff in NGOs in the South, especially India, and a few from research institutes in the North, all of them learning through engagement in the field. And the detail of the methods came from the creativity and inventiveness of local people, once they had the idea of what they could do, as well as from the outside facilitators" (Chambers, 2007, p. 11). Robert Chambers referred to a new pluralism of methodologies in this field where people borrow from each other and develop new approaches to fit their purpose.

The case study from Senegal in chapter three describes how PRA was critically received by the community and adapted in order to become truly participatory. Indeed, the challenge for participatory and collaborative approaches is making them live up to what they claim to be. Practitioners observed that PRA processes and outcomes often remain donor-driven and imposed, the required training for practitioners does not always take place, and methods are used to extract information from people rather than to empower them.[18] "Good practice has moved towards an eclectic pluralism in which branding, labels, ownership and ego give way to sharing, borrowing, improvisation, creativity and diversity, all these complemented by mutual and critical reflective learning and personal responsibility" (Chambers, 2007, p. 3).

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17 See the Glossary for a definition of 'PRA'

18 We thank Robert Jjuuko for this point.

Using action research to improve the quality of adult literacy education

A study on outstanding practice in adult basic education and training in South Africa concluded that outstanding practice is a complex mix of institutional, organizational, professional, contextual and personal factors. However, all participants in this research, across a wide range of education and training sites, identified reflective practice as the one constant feature of outstanding practice (Kerfoot and Winberg, 1997).

Individual and collective learning of reflective practice
The action research process supports individual and collective learning as a basic condition for improving quality in whatever we do, hence also in adult education. This style of learning provides space to reflect on practice, both individually and collectively. In action research, adult education personnel and learners learn together with and from each other. They may work jointly on improving curricula, on producing reading materials that motivate people to read and write, on including literacy in community practices, etc. These examples are illustrated in the case studies presented in chapter three.

All stakeholders involved in action research are viewed as both *knowers* (of the practices under scrutiny) and learners. An important principle of action research is that the power relationship between knowers and learners is equal (Bucci, 2011). The communication process is characterized by a dialogue about the practice in which participants recognize each other's knowledge and experience. As a result of this collective and participatory process, a learning community is built. The learning community is empowered through the positive reinforcement of improved practice and shared ownership, which is also cost-effective.

Linking action research and training
It can be beneficial to embed training in action research processes. Stake-holders may need to expand their knowledge and skills as a result of findings, to implement ideas for new solutions, or to implement the action research process itself. The benefit of integrating training in action research is that it offers a context where the knowledge gained can directly serve practice, benefitting both the individual and collective learning processes. An action research process is not a 'one-shot' training session, workshop or crash course. It is part of ongoing practice, with the aim of changing it for the better for everybody involved. The action research process offers a different learning environment from that of modern training approaches where the trainer is seen as a facilitator or coach, because the facilitator or coach still has a higher status as the knower and as the person who guides. The learners come to

learn from her/him. The people who are recruited to play a role in action research can be from the community or the adult training institution; they can be the researchers, other stakeholders, or all of the above. Some participants may need additional training for their role in the action research. In short, training and action research are different types of learning spaces. As such, it can be a good idea to link them to improve the quality of practice.

Table 2.1 **Features of traditional training and participatory action research as learning process (based on McNiff, 2002)**	
Features of action research as a learning process	**Features of traditional training/ capacity building/crash course**
The participants in the action research process are all knowers and learners. They build a learning community.	The facilitator/trainer is the expert/ knower vs. the practitioner who is the trainee/learner.
Equal power relation based on dialogue about practice and recognition of each other's contribution.	Unequal relation of power between facilitator/trainer and trainee/learner.
The learning is practice-based and contextualized and supports individual and collective learning.	The learning content is subject-based and can be decontextualized from practice if not carefully planned.
The transfer to practice is embedded in an ongoing process. The people who will make use of the solutions developed through action research understand their importance and have developed the required competences during the process.	Learners need to find ways to transfer what is taught into practice.
The action researchers are empowered through positive reinforcement and improved practice.	Contact with the facilitator/trainer is short-term and not always revisited to assess whether problems identified have been solved.
Ownership of the process by practitioners - which is cost-effective.	Possibly no ownership of the process by practitioners, although modern training approaches give space for learners to influence the process.

All stakeholders need to learn

For the creation of a 'quality-culture' we have to strengthen the capacities of all stakeholders so that they learn to define, analyse and solve problems as they arise. In this respect, the issue is not traditional training versus action research, but how we use both in an optimal manner in order to improve practice. For training to be more effective, it should be integrated within action research processes. A 'quality-culture' establishes processes to ensure that all aspects of quality (such as access, equity, effectiveness, efficiency and relevance) are taken into account. This is increasingly important for programmes tailored to under-served and marginalized populations, particularly youth and adults living in poverty in multilingual and multicultural contexts.

Embedding literacy education and training in people's lifelong learning processes

In addition to using action research to improve the quality of youth and adult literacy programmes, we suggest that literacy education and training be conceived as one element of the services embedded in the learning process of the people they address. Learners know how to shape the course they need so that they can face the problems they encounter. The case studies in this chapter illustrate this point. In recent years, there has been an observable shift in the approaches and methods used to improve adult literacy in Africa. As more countries are embarking on their own democratization processes, adult literacy and non-formal education are viewed as means to empower people who have not attended school or developed basic literacy. Adult literacy and non-formal education programmes are developed to address different types of development challenges: for example health, agriculture, citizenship, sustainable development, and economic development. The role of the adult learner has also shifted from someone who is simply taught how to read and write to someone who should be empowered to make informed decisions about their own lives and those of their family, community and country. To this end, more participatory and reflective approaches to adult literacy and non-formal education are being used in various programmes. Some of them are showcased in this book in order to illustrate what is happening.

To sum up, the action research philosophy promotes professional learning and tailor-made, contextualized solutions that emerge from democratic processes which recognize the contributions and responsibility of all stakeholders and thus promote broad ownership for a change for the better. Action research is linked to the fundamental principles of quality adult education. Through the involvement of stakeholders at the levels of policy, programmes and practice, education and learning can be improved in an integrated way.

Common criteria for good action research

We close the theoretical discussion of action research by addressing the question of whether there are standards or common criteria for good quality action research. As we have seen from the sections above, action research has a philosophical standpoint that is critical and open to diversity. Furthermore, there is general consensus that there are many ways of conducting and using action research because it has to fit the people involved, the question to be addressed, etc. The experienced action researcher Herbert Altrichter reconfirms that: "What we need to look for is NOT whose version of action research is THE correct one, but rather, what it is that needs to be done, and how action research can further those aims" (Noffke in Hollingsworth, 1997, p. 312; quoted in Altrichter, 1999, pp. 1–2).

The question of what makes a particular action research study a good one requires us to consider that study's values and aims and the conditions under which it is implemented. In action research, practices and the people who shape them are the central concern. Synthesizing the explanations of the previous section with a focus on values, purpose and aims, action research is, in a nutshell, "a participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes. . . . It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities" (Reason and Bradbury, 2001a, p. 1; quoted in Reason, 2006, p. 189). This definition encapsulates the key principles for good quality action research. The experienced action researchers Peter Reason (2006) and Herbert Altrichter (1999) point to a feature of action research that we would like to highlight: the fact that action research leaves a lot of room for choices. Action researchers should be aware of choices and their consequences, and make them clear and transparent, orally and in writing, to everybody involved. Good choices are those which are important for the process at a certain moment in time.

Action research is about empowerment, changes in relationships and changes in ways of doing, which constitute a learning process for everybody involved. As such, it brings with it various challenges. Good quality principles allow room for choices and guide the process of finding out what can and needs to be done. The following criteria for good quality action research are distilled from practice and research.

Conducting action research in line with the available resources

Action researchers face all sorts of constraints with regard to available resources, such as time and materials. These constraints cannot be ignored. They may overwhelm people with over-ambitious plans and thus make them feel sceptical about embarking on action research, even though they might otherwise have felt positive about the approach. One crucial criterion for quality is therefore pragmatism. Altrichter calls it 'pragmatic quality', by which he means that the research strategy and instruments need to be compatible with the actors' available resources. He gives the example of teachers involved in action research, who must be able to use the research strategy and instruments 'without too much additional training' and in such a way that they 'fit to the economics of time and resources' (Altrichter, 1999, p. 4).

Adaptation to emergent changes resulting from the process

The value of action research is as much in the process as in the specific new practices that result. The process anchors the new practices in the community of inquiry. Improving practice means learning and changing. It is therefore essential that action research practitioners be open to the changes that emerge from deepened understandings, new skills learnt during the process, and the development of the community of inquiry. Peter Reason opens up a wide range of possible emerging changes when he says that "emergence means that the questions may change, the relationships may change, the purposes may change, and what is important may change. This means action research cannot be programmatic and cannot be defined in terms of hard and fast methods" (Reason, 2006, p. 197).

Building ethical, democratic and participatory communities of inquiry

Action research is a highly collaborative way of conducting research and aims to bring about social change in an emancipatory way. The vision for action research therefore sets a frame for building ethical, democratic and participatory communities of inquiry. Caroline Kerfoot underlines that, in order for participatory approaches to be successful, it is necessary to adopt a power-conscious perspective that does not overestimate the transformative power of the local but that "involves multi-scale strategies that include institutional and structural" issues (Kerfoot, 2009, n. p.). Transformative political agendas constitute an enabling environment for such processes.

Some examples of ethical values of democratic dialogue and participation are:

- an egalitarian approach
- accepting diversity of opinions and ideas
- accepting dissent
- transparency and consensual research (people are not researched against their will)
  (Altrichter, 1999; Reason, 2006).

Building such communities and communicative spaces poses challenges – but worthwhile ones (see for example Gayá Wicks and Reason, 2009). Ethical codes should be established at the beginning of the action research and renegotiated if clarification is needed during the process. These values are the foundation for a safe communication space in which people can be confident that sharing their views will not have negative consequences for them:

In order to facilitate sufficient openness, a 'safe space' is needed in which the participants can be confident that their utterances will not be used against them and that they will not suffer any disadvantages if they express critical or dissenting opinions. It is not a question of creating a conflict-free space, but rather of ensuring that the conflicts that are revealed can be jointly discussed; that they can either be solved or, at least, accepted as different positions; and that a certain level of conflict tolerance is achieved (Bergold and Thomas, 2012, n. p.).

An important argument for building such communities is that creating and maintaining new and better communicative spaces can in some cases be more significant than finding a practical solution (Reason, 2006).

Furthermore, 'ethical quality' includes understanding ethical issues involved in the purpose of the research and making coherent choices during its implementation so that people are not subject to contradictory values. "For example, data collection by performance tests based on individualistic competition will be incompatible with a classroom which aims to develop students' cooperation" (Altrichter, 1999, p. 3).

Developing an understanding of worthwhile purposes and knowledge
Both authors, Reason and Altrichter, emphasize that the process of inquiry in action research needs to take into account that people hold different views of what is real, of what happens, and of what are worthwhile purposes and knowledge. An ethical, democratic and participatory community of inquiry

stimulates open discussion to scrutinize the choices available. This requires each participant to be ready to scrutinize his/her own views. Quality criteria for this process are:

- whether the choices and purposes are interrogated and made transparent
- whether there is a reflection on values
- whether the data is confronted from different perspectives
- whether individual findings form part of critical professional discussion

Valuing and developing 'practical knowing'
Generating know-how and knowledge that is useful to actors in particular situations is one of the key aims of action research. Frank de Jong (2012) explains: "Practice-oriented research is much more about understanding the practice by intervening than by explaining". 'Practical knowing' in action research differs from 'knowing-about-action' in empirical academic research. Valuing practical knowing is therefore a precondition for conducting action research. Practical knowing with regard to the conduct of the action research cycle means deciding how many cycles are needed, balancing reflection and action, deciding whether to reflect longer on one issue or to move on to another question, etc. (Reason, 2006).

The figure below expands on Figure 2.1 and integrates the quality criteria (in the star) in action research that we described above. The criteria relate to the whole action research process. (Nb. it is not realistic to expect that each action research process will fully address all these dimensions.)

Figure 2.2 **Process-oriented quality criteria in action research (based on Altrichter, 1999 and Reason, 2006)**

Quality Criteria:

- Be in line with available resources
- Adapt to emergent changes
- Build an ethical, democratic and participatory community of inquiry
- Develop understanding of worthwhile purposes and knowledge
- Develop 'practical knowing'

Reflection

Planning

Modifying Practice

Testing and Monitoring

Communicating Results

Evaluating
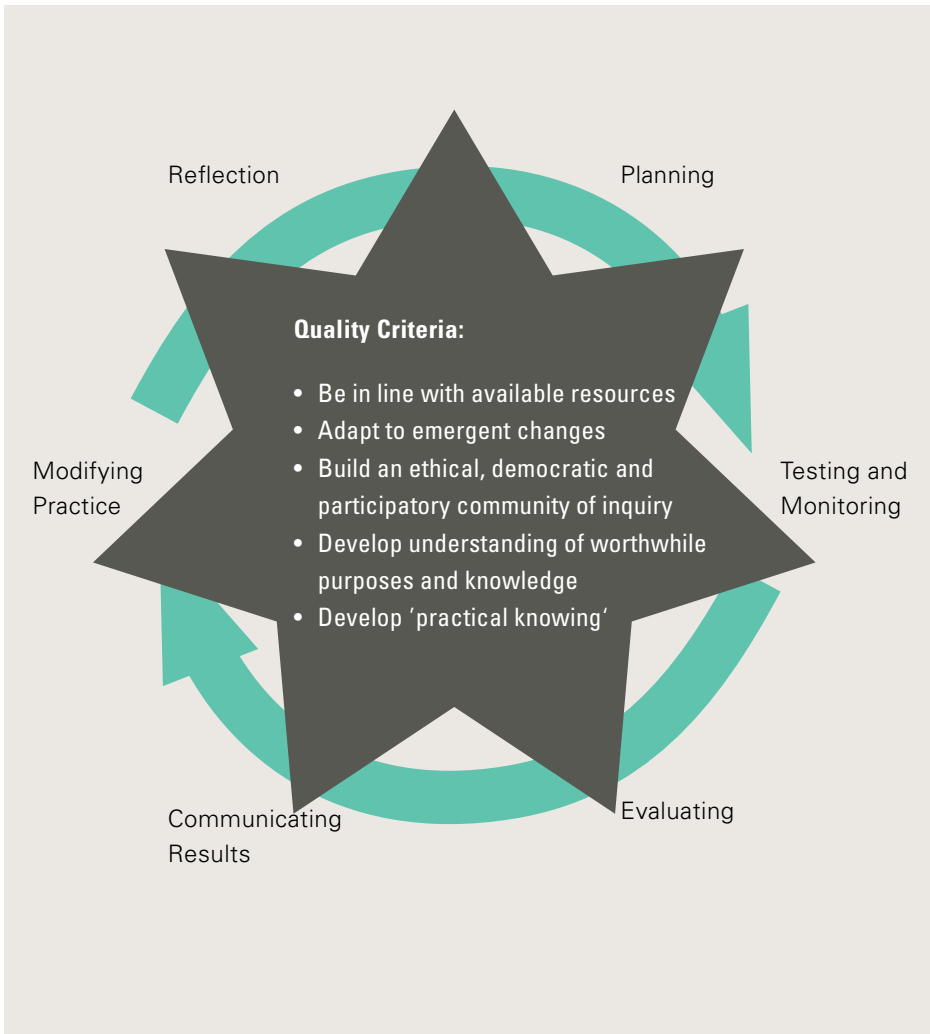
Point for reflection 2

Before you immerse yourself in the action research in Niger, Ethiopia and Senegal described in the next chapter, please prepare yourself by thinking about (or better still, discussing) the following questions and then writing down your answers in your notebook:

1. Have you come across action research as it is introduced here?

a. *If so*, please reflect on the following questions:
    - What are the most important lessons that you have learnt so far about action research?
    - Did you learn something new in this chapter?
    - Did it inspire you to reflect on what you know about action research?
    - What are your open questions about the chapter?

b. - *If not,* please reflect on the following questions:
    - What were your immediate reactions while reading about action research?
    - Are you inspired to conduct action research in your setting?
    - What are your open questions about this chapter?

3

Conducting action research – three examples from practice

By Hassana Alidou, Christine Glanz, Maman Mallam Garba, Alemayehu Hailu Gebre and Mamadou Amadou Ly

The Ethiopic script (Ge'ez) possibly developed from the Sabaean/Minean script. The earliest known inscriptions in the Ge'ez script date to the 5th century BC. It is written from left to right. It is used in Ethiopia and Eritrea to write not only Amharic, the official working language of Ethiopia, but also Gurage, Tigre and Tigrinya.

There is no one standard for doing action research. In order to give you an idea about its use in practice to advance youth and adult literacy services in multilingual and multicultural contexts, we present to you three case studies which illustrate how action research has been used in Ethiopia, Niger and Senegal. Each case is described by a local specialist with many years of practical and theoretical experience in the field of adult literacy in multilingual contexts, and who worked or works in the project or organization concerned. Moreover, each case study has a thematic focus that is crucial for adult literacy. The first case focuses on the creation of a multilingual educational literate environment for non-formal and formal education in Niger. The second case describes how action research has been used to develop a curriculum for people working in a coffee chain in Ethiopia. The third case illustrates how the principles of participatory action research are applied in order to develop modules for the training of trainers in Senegal and neighbouring countries.

Case study 1:
Action research in Niger to promote a multilingual literate environment
By Maman Mallam Garba

Books have always held an essential position in formal education and training systems. To this day, we still find it hard to imagine modern teaching and learning without the use of books, in whatever form they might exist. Consequently, since the first literacy centres opened in Niger in 1963, various publications have been produced to support the efforts of those working in adult education. However, a coherent programme for the development of the literate environment, based on the regular endowment of books to formal and non-formal educational structures, was not implemented until the establishment of a Niger-Germany bilateral cooperation project called Basic Education Project / Promotion of Bilingual Education[19] (2PEB). Running from 1997 to 2003, 2PEB took an *education system-wide approach.* After describing the context in which this initiative came about, we discuss the actions and accomplishments it produced. We then reflect on what lessons can be drawn from this experience.

Niger's sociolinguistic and educational context

Niger is a vast sub-Saharan country of 1,267,000 km². A multitude of ethnic groups and languages co-exist throughout its territory. About twenty languages are spoken, ten of which have the legal status of 'national languages'[20], as conferred by Law 2001-037. These languages are: Arabic, Buduma, Fulfulde, Gulmancema, Hausa, Kanuri, Songai-Zarma, Tamajaq, Tasawaq and Toubou. French, a legacy of colonization, is the only official language[21] of the country. All other languages not mentioned above are considered to be the languages of foreign communities living in Niger and remain without defined legal status.

The most striking feature of Nigerien linguistics is that none of the national languages are spoken in Niger alone, and that inside the national territory, linguistic boundaries are permeable. In general, urban centres are multilingual and rural areas monolingual. Each language possesses one or more strongholds where it is the dominant language, spoken by the majority. Thus, although they are spatially diversified, the linguistic areas all overlap, whether they are compact or discontinuous. The languages used at school and in

10 See the Glossary for a definition of 'national language'.

21 See the Glossary for a definition of 'official language'.

government administration are foreign languages[22], whereas the overwhelming majority of the population only speak the local languages that are dominant in all aspects of national life but remain neglected in written activities.

Despite their ethical and linguistic diversity, local populations share a common Negro-African cultural background, dominated today by Arab-Islamic culture. Thus, over 98% of Nigeriens declare themselves Muslims and more or less regularly practice the Islamic religion, while the other 2% are Christians and animists. Nevertheless, under the provisions of its constitution, Niger is a secular state.

The general census of population and housing (2001) reports the distribution of the total population by ethnic group and first language as follows:

Table 3.1	**Use of national languages according to domain (Mallam Garba and Seydou Hanafiou, 2010)**

Language	Percentage of first language speakers	Vehicular language	Transcribed	Used in writing	School use and type	Available educational material
Hausa	52%	Yes	Yes	Yes	Subject and medium in formal and non-formal schooling.	Manuals and guides for all disciplines from at least 1st to 3rd year.
Zarma	20.7%		Yes			
Fulfulde	10.4%	No	Yes			
Tamajaq	10.6%		Yes			
Kanuri	3.4%		Yes			
Gulmancema	2.9%	No	Yes	Yes	Subject and medium in non-formal schooling.	Training modules are produced for non-formal schooling in these languages except for Arabic and Tasawaq.
Toubou			Yes			
Arabic dialect of Niger			No			
Buduma			No			
Tasawaq			No			

22 See the Glossary for a definition of 'foreign language'.

While this table gives an idea of the demographic weight of languages in Niger, it obscures their sociolinguistic dynamics. For example, Hausa and Songai-Zarma, the two major vehicular languages, are respectively spoken by more than 80% and 30% of the Nigerien population.

Hybridized traditional lifestyles, behaviours and customs are now confronted with Western culture, communicated at school through books and in the media (radio, television, newspapers, internet, etc.). More than ever, African individuals, languages and cultures are in a state of constant change as a result of the shrinking of distances between regions, peoples and civilizations.

Different scripts

The written tradition in non-European languages in sub-Saharan West Africa in general, and in Niger in particular, dates back to the Islamization of this part of the continent around the seventh century AD. It intensified following European colonization and the introduction of the colonizers' languages. External methods have documented writing practices in some localities, whether original or derived from imported alphabets. At present, the attested writing forms in Niger are as follows:

Table 3.2 **Scripts used in writing national languages**

	Script	**Language**	**Sources**
1	Greco-Latin	French	Greco-Latin
2	Arabic	Arabic	Arabic
3	Boko	NL	Greco-Latin
4	Ajami	NL	Arabic
5	Tifinagh	Tamajaq	Original
6	Geomancy	Gulmancema	Original (esoteric)[23]
7	Other	Hausa/ dialectal	Hybrid[25]
8	Other	Arabic of Niger[24]	
		Zarma/dialectal Arabic of Niger	Hybrid

23 Esoteric because it is a sacred script reserved to the initiated.

24 Dialectal Arabic of Niger is considered a national language (NL) by law.

25 These are writings without known names that are hybrids of Latin and Arabic characters.

The two imported languages, the result of Islamization and colonization of the country, each gave rise to a type of alphabet, originally used only by scholars but now in wide use. These are Ajami and Boko (from the English word 'book'), which are adapted to the phonetic characteristics of various African languages.

Overview of the Nigerien education system

The Nigerien education system is divided into four components, whose foci are explicitly defined in Law 98–12 under Title III (Republic of Niger, 1998, articles 16 to 43): formal education, non-formal education, informal learning and specialized education.

Formal education, which encompasses special education, is a mode of acquiring education and vocational training in a school setting. It is broken down into different levels, from preschool to university. Its target group is children from the age of six upwards.

Non-formal education is dispensed in a non-school setting. It is aimed at out-of-school adolescents aged nine to fourteen or teenagers and adults who left school prematurely. Non-formal education encompasses adult literacy and vocational education and training for adolescents.

Informal learning is defined in Niger as "the process whereby persons acquire knowledge, skills and attitudes through everyday experience and interaction with their environment in the course of their life" (Republic of Niger, 1998, article 16). Informal learning falls within the non-conventional sphere, where training and learning occur on the job. It takes on various forms, depending on the ethno-linguistic communities and social groups concerned: learning within the family; learning from peers or on the street; learning from association and union structures, etc.

Finally, special education concerns the education and training of physically or mentally handicapped persons.

The system is disjointed due to the disparities (between regions, social backgrounds and genders) that characterize it. Indicators on access to schooling are steadily progressing, but the quality of teaching and learning is still worrisome. In 2002, more than forty years after independence, the enrolment rate was 41.7 per cent at primary level and 13 per cent at secondary level. The literacy rate was 19.9 per cent.

Practices and uses of written languages

The study of language practices in Niger reveals that the use of written language is conditioned less by the language's legal status than by its sociolinguistic dynamics, determined by the demographic importance of its speakers and the historical prestige associated with it.

In the governance and education system
As the official language, French is the sole language of government, both written and oral. It is thus taught in all formal education and training structures of all types and at all levels, whether alone or in combination with one or two other local or foreign languages. The table below shows the use of French as both a subject and medium of instruction in the Nigerien educational system.

| Table 3.3 | **Written use of languages in formal education** |

Levels	Types	Languages						Duration
		Teaching medium			Subject			
		1	2	3	1	2	3	
Pre-school	Kindergartens	French	NL	-	French	-	-	3 years
	Nursery schools							
Primary	*Traditional*		-	-		-	-	6 years
	Madrasa	French	Arabic	-	French	Arabic	-	
	Bilingual		NL	-		NL	-	
Lower secondary	*Traditional*			-			-	4 years
	Franco-Arabic		English	Arabic		English	-	
Upper secondary	*Traditional*							3 years
	Franco-Arabic			Arabic			Arabic	

In non-formal education, due to the high level of illiteracy in the population, French is of limited importance. In fact, over 99% of literacy centres use local languages. French is only used sporadically or accidentally. Centres which operate exclusively in French are virtually non-existent. They are located only in the capital and in the mining town of Arlit. However, in training centres that accept adolescents, all the innovative approaches that have been developed are bilingual. The learners begin their education in the languages of their own communities. French is then gradually introduced, first as a subject and only later as the medium of instruction. This configuration can be summarized as follows:

Table 3.4	**Written use of languages in non-formal education**

Structures	Programmes	Languages				Duration
		Teaching medium		Subject		
		1	2	1	2	
Literacy	*Literacy*	NL/ French		NL/ French		1 year
	Post-literacy					
Non-formal Education	*Second chance schools*	NL	French	NL	French	4 years
	Centres passerelles (bridging centres)					3 to 9 months
	Alternative Education Centre					4 years

Print media

Works published in national languages in Niger fall into the following categories: teaching and educational materials; monolingual or multilingual newspapers; and supplementary reading books that constitute literary products (DGENF/PRODENF, 2004; Mallam Garba and Malam Abdou, 2004). The dominant languages for the production of texts for supplementary reading are the major languages (Hausa and Zarma). Themes tend to be somewhat predictable, revolving around the lives of rural learners. However, literary production has focused on fiction since 2000 and more nuanced political and social themes have begun to emerge. The minor languages (Arabic, Buduma and Tasawaq), being undeveloped and rarely used in formal or non-formal education, are virtually absent from the table.

The study of language use in print mass media reveals a flagrant imbalance in favour of French. The first newspaper published in Niger, Cahiers du Niger, is an official monthly dating back to 1933. It is the ancestor of the current government newspaper, Le Sahel / Dimanche. The different versions of this official newspaper have been periodically published mostly or exclusively in French. Depending on the political juncture, texts written in Hausa and Zarma do appear in Le Sahel. However, the leading national language newspaper is a Hausa monthly, Sabon ra'ayi, published since 1964 in Madaoua with a run of up to 3,000 copies per issue (Mallam Garba and Malam Abdou, 2004). In general, the Nigerien press in national (African) languages disappear as quickly as they appear, lasting only a few issues and rarely beyond one year. To date,

we can assert that apart from Ganga, the official newspaper published on the occasion of International Literacy Day as photocopied sheets and in several national languages, there is no national language newspaper in Niger.

Publishing for formal and non-formal bilingual education: the 2PEB programme (1997–2003)

Several studies and assessments undertaken by both national and international experts show that the curriculum in *national* (African) languages that was initiated in 1973 liberates students' creative abilities, enables a better development of their intelligence and favours their academic success and social integration. Among these studies, *Niger – Étude sectorielle sur l'éducation de base* (Bergmann and Yahouza, 1992) shows that the use of French as the sole language of instruction[26] leads to countless numbers of school dropouts. Subsequent to this research, in 1997 the government requested and obtained the support of the Federal Republic of Germany to create the *Basic Education Project / Promotion of Bilingual Education (2PEB).* Placed under the direct supervision of the General Secretariat of the Ministry of Education, the mission of the 2PEB project was to support both national structures responsible for the implementation of bilingual education and private entities active in the field.

The project was initially forecast to run for nine years, but ultimately it lasted only six (1997–2003). The main objective was to help improve the internal and external efficiency of the Nigerien education system through the implementation of basic bilingual instruction for formal and non-formal education. The intention was to teach students basic skills (reading, writing and mathematics) in their mother tongue[27], and to introduce French gradually as a foreign language. In order to achieve this goal, the following areas of action were identified:

- Evaluation of 25 years of experimentation with bilingual education.
- Reinforcement of the legal and institutional framework for the implementation of bilingual instruction.
- Development of a bilingual instruction curriculum and production of teaching and educational materials for this curriculum.

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26 See the Glossary for the definition of 'language of instruction'.

27 See the Glossary for a definition of 'mother tongue' or 'first language'.

- Training of educators and partners in charge of the implementation of the bilingual programme.
- Publication of books with supplementary texts by establishing a system to develop a bilingual literate environment using national languages.
- Implementation of a communication scheme to develop bilingual education, taking into account regional and local specificities.

These different areas were designed to overlap harmoniously and bring about a synergy of action in order to implement the educational reform programme effectively and efficiently. The promotion of a literate environment was thus positioned in an overall framework that is favourable and consistent.

New publishing institutions resulting from 2PEB

One of the structures created by 2PEB that unquestionably achieved the goal of promoting a multilingual and multicultural literate environment is the publishing project Albasa. The name means 'onion' in most local national languages and evokes the vegetable's multiple layers. Following the termination of the project, this publishing entity, formerly managed by 2PEB on behalf of the Ministry of Education, was transferred to Soutéba, an education support programme with bilingual components which opened in 2004. After nearly four years of existence, Soutéba symbolically returned the publishing unit to the ministry. In practice and even legally, Albasa no longer exists today. Nonetheless, it helped shape the publishing landscape in national languages through its production, as well as through the private publishing structure that was born from its ashes. Albasa's publishing activities focused on the production of texts and the development of teaching and supplementary materials for the consolidation of learning. In just four years of existence, Albasa yielded impressive results, as outlined below.

Teaching and educational materials:
- Translation of maths and social studies books for 3rd year level into the five national languages used in education.
- Writing of five social studies glossaries.
- Review and reproduction of 2nd year level maths books.
- Reproduction of maths, reading/writing and language manuals for 1st and 2nd year levels in the five national languages used in education.
- Creation of five illustrated bilingual national language/French dictionaries, followed by national language/French glossaries for use in Basic Cycle 1, printed and distributed in 2004.
- Production of five national language/French comparative grammar manuals, designed for teacher trainers and authors of bilingual textbooks, copied and distributed in 2003.

Additional activities:

* Development of a strategic framework for the creation of a bilingual literate environment, particularly through the publication of a reference brochure in July 1999, in partnership with UNICEF.
* Creation of the publishing unit Albasa, organized around twelve collections targeting different categories of readers.
* Establishment of a national reading committee for books in national languages, responsible for evaluating the quality and integrity of literary production intended for primary students and neo-literates (Decrees No. 0105/MEN/SG of 5 April 2001 and No. 0050/MEB/SG of 23 May 2002).
* Publication of 71 bilingual (French and national languages) or monolingual supplementary titles for young learners, literate adults and education researchers, in partnership with UNICEF, CONCERN and AIDE & ACTION.
* Establishment of a national writing competition in national languages in collaboration with UNICEF, open to all persuasions and all literary genres. This competition is in its third edition and has received close to 400 manuscripts.
* Trial-run of three privately-owned newspapers reporting on the issue of bilingual education as well as general news: Sauyi, a monolingual Hausa bi-monthly with a circulation of 3,000 copies; Ingawarai, a Hausa-French bilingual monthly with a circulation of 5,000 copies; and Intérêt public--Amfanin jama'a--Laabiizey nafa, a Hausa-Zarma-French trilingual monthly with a circulation of 3,500 copies.

A publishing structure called Éditions Gashingo

In 2006, people who had contributed to the creation and development of the Albasa publishing unit created Éditions Gashingo, a private company publishing books in African and European languages. Gashingo's products are published in monolingual or multilingual versions, sometimes combining different African languages or African and European languages that have become official languages of African states. It has also branched into selling the books it produces or acquires from its local and foreign partners. The goal of Éditions Gashingo is to provide teachers, their students, and literate children and adults with a range of high quality reading and training materials that are tailored to their respective needs, thus helping to foster the emergence of an educative society in Africa.

The twin foundations of the company's credo are: 1) to uphold quality standards by offering interesting and attractive books; and 2) to keep the books affordable in line with the purchasing power of the readership. Business is now booming for Éditions Gashingo. It has established itself as the heir to Albasa, having completely subsumed the latter's activities, its

partners and even some of its products, to the point where it is difficult for an uninformed person to see the difference between the two structures.

Action research for the development of a multilingual and multicultural literate environment

Learning a language, any language, cannot be an end in itself. Experience has shown that students in bilingual schools and literacy centres often have little to read once they have left the learning environment. In these conditions, the skills acquired fade over time and most of the learners fall back into a second state of illiteracy tinted with frustration and remorse. Knowledge that is not used is lost and languages that are not practised die. Any acquired skill must therefore be oriented to a practical goal and a social purpose. This is the idea behind the measures taken through the 2PEB project by the Ministry of Education in collaboration with other partners, which aim to create a literate environment in national languages. Creating a literate environment means bringing about the emergence of a context in which any educated or literate person possesses something to read and write, not only to fulfil vital needs but also (and especially) for enjoyment.

Many publications for raising awareness existed at the time that 2PEB was started, but readers were easily tired of them, either because they were always the same or because they had to compete with other media such as radio or television. Similarly, knowledge of writing cannot be limited to counting (addition, multiplication, etc.) or to the writing or reading of a hypothetical letter. People need to read or write to share their knowledge and experiences, to relax, and to seek personal pleasure that can be shared with others.

An action research process in five steps (1999–2003)

The action research conducted in the context of 2PEB was performed in order to find solutions to two problems: 1) the production of materials in national languages was not profitable; and 2) the publications were of low quality. Both issues were addressed by working on the quality of publications throughout the book chain. The implementation of this action research took three years (1999–2003) and ranged from an assessment of the country's publishing situation to an evaluation of the publishing process. It was essential that each actor in the publishing chain (see Figure 3.1 below) exchange ideas and results with his/her pairs and actors both up- and downstream of the chain. This way, a knowledge community was created involving the whole publishing chain.

Figure 3.1 The actors and processes of the book chain by Mallam Maman Garba [free translation by the editors]
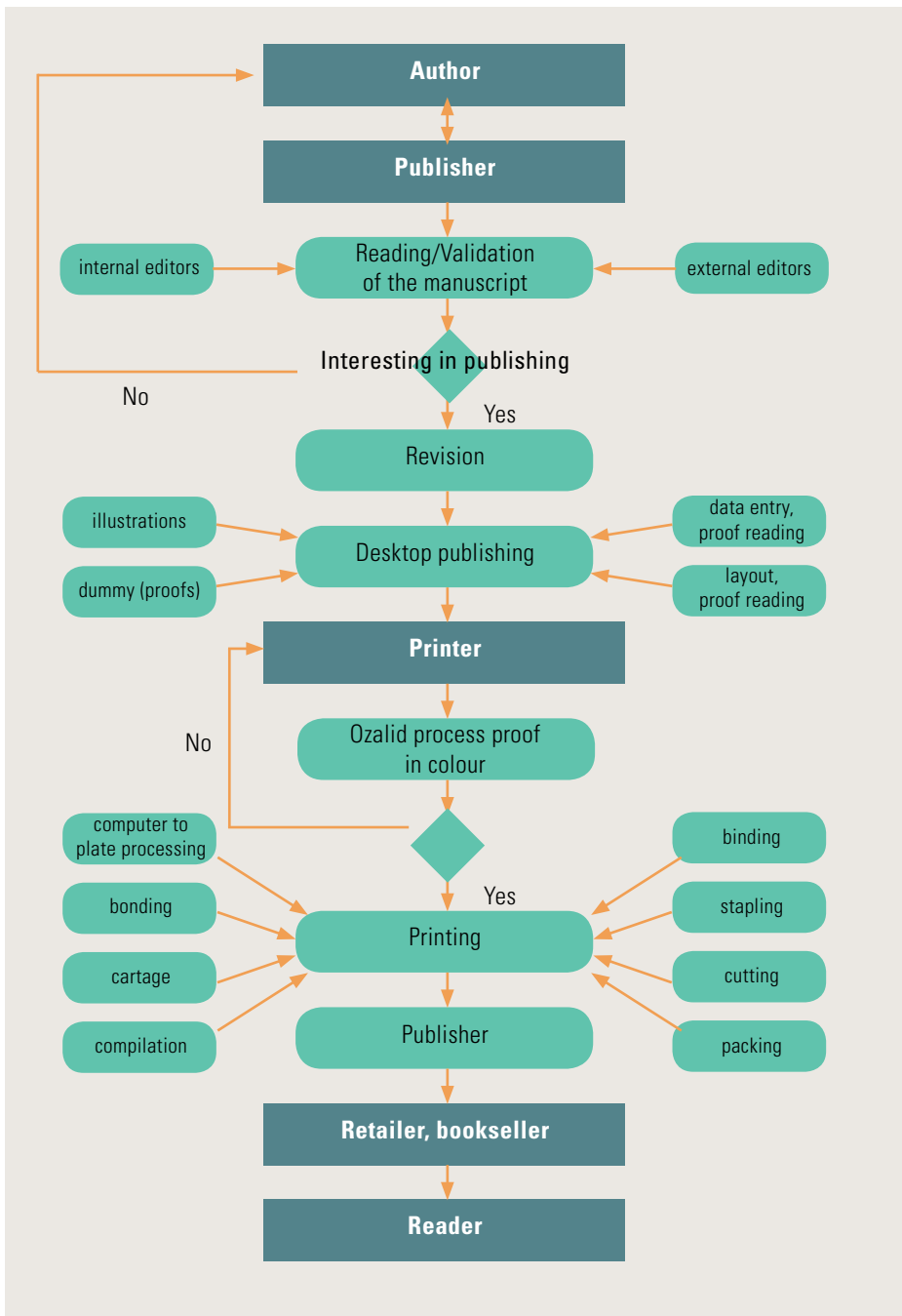
Although the chain looks vertical in the figure, the relationship between the actors is to be perceived as horizontal too: they are all depending on each other. Each actor is considered an expert in his/her own domain. The strengths and weaknesses of each element in the chain and the links between them were analysed and their capacities reinforced. Self-evaluation, pair evaluation and mixed evaluation were part of the action research to enhance learning for high quality services and products. This demonstrates the importance of working with all actors in the book chain. With regard to the six main processes of action research, the following steps were taken:

- Reflection through the organization of workshops and diagnostic studies.
- Planning in order to identify appropriate approaches and training for each actor in the book chain.
- Evaluation through self-evaluation, pair and mixed evaluation and impact assessment.
- Modification of practices by immediate remediation. The qualitative difference of the products before and after the intervention was palpable, in form as well as content.
- Networking among the actors in order to encourage interaction, exchange and defence of their interests.

The first step in the process of developing a literate environment was to carry out studies to assess the circumstances governing the production of texts and to identify their strengths and weaknesses in order to target specific actions. The original idea in the design of the 2PEB project was to support the establishment of a private book production unit, either by creating one from scratch or by revitalizing an existing one. The goal was to supply bilingual schools and centres with teaching and learning materials of good quality, but also in sufficient quantities and on time. Initial queries revealed the existence of private individuals who were motivated and active in the field of bilingual education: authors, researchers, teachers and educational leaders who were ready to invest their time and energy. However, these people did not possess the technical knowledge and fundraising skills to set up a competent and competitive business.

The following figure does not necessarily reproduce the chronology of events. Rather, it is a systematized written description that can serve as a guideline to replicate this action research.

Figure 3.2 **Action research process for the development of a multilingual literate environment**

1. Assessment of publishing sector in context	Who does what in the sector? By what means? Is the institutional, legal, technical and social context favourable to the development of a viable publishing industry? Strengths and weaknesses of the different stakeholders? What role for national languages?
2. Evaluation of readerships' publishing needs	Do the books produced meet readers' expectations? Is the production diversified? What is the quality of the materials used? What types of writing should production be oriented towards? What are the readers' financial capacities?
3. Reinforcement of capacities of stakeholders in the book chain	What support can be provided to the various stakeholders in the book chain to make them more competitive and better able to develop products that meet quality standards?
4. Establishment of a permanent system of processing manuscripts	How to harness existing production and attract people to the publishing profession? How to ensure the production of individual or private publishing projects?
5. Support for the distribution of books	How to improve the accessibility of books in all geographical areas and across social classes?

Periodic evaluations of the process

What are the means of sustaining acquired skills and addressing observed weaknesses? How to ensure the financial autonomy of stakeholders in the book chain?

Step 1: Assessing the state of publishing in national languages

This step is essential in order to understand the situation of publishing in general and of publishing in national languages in particular, in view of the imbalance between the written use of these languages and French. The objective of this step is to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the various stakeholders in the book chain, to identify their respective needs, and to involve them and sector authorities in discussing what actions can be taken to develop bilingual education as adopted under Law 98–12. At this stage, it is therefore important to take into account the implicit or explicit frameworks of the country's educational, cultural and publishing policies. Ad hoc studies should be conducted along the same lines.

In Niger, the areas selected for investigation were the publication of books of all kinds and public and private print media. To that end, one study was commissioned to assess the presence of and the prospects for national languages in the country's written press (Alidou and Mallam Garba, 1997), and another on publishing in African languages and the private sector (Büttner, 1998). The studies yielded edifying results. While there is a relatively good supply of educational and reading materials available in French, production in local languages is stuttering and networks for their written use are limited if not embryonic. Access to books and newspapers is clearly hampered by multiple and varied factors: high rates of illiteracy, absence of a reading culture or national book policy, poor diversity of products, failure to consider readers' wishes, low financial and technical capacity of stakeholders in the book or press chain, widespread poverty, lack of marketing and distribution structures, etc.

The production of books in national languages was carried out mainly by government structures and the lack of any competition led to very poor product quality. In all languages, the books are produced abroad and published at random intervals. Newspapers have experienced phenomenal growth due to their liberalization in the context of a nascent democracy. However, the space reserved for national languages in the press is limited to the occasional stilted proverb or expression to back up a statement, or a one- or half-page comic strip. The few listed newspapers are supported by development projects that fully cover the cost of their purchase and free distribution. At the time of the study, the price of a book or newspaper was prohibitive and the survival of the publishing company could not indefinitely depend on such development projects, which are essentially temporary structures.

Step 2: Evaluation of readers' needs

Independently of the low purchasing power of the national readership, particularly in rural areas, the aim was to identify the factors that impede access to existing books, whether purchased or acquired for free. Why are books not read even when they are distributed free of charge? During two reading workshops held in 1999 to evaluate existing products, one in Tillabéry and the other in Maradi, readers with different skill levels and social backgrounds met to discuss books, brochures and other writings in national languages. The aim was to make recommendations for improving the quality and presentation of subsequent works to be produced. These readers (who were drawn from literacy centres) confirmed the abundance of works produced by government structures, especially the Directorate of Literacy and Adult Education, but also highlighted many sources of dissatisfaction, including lack of thematic diversity, content that was ill-suited to the needs and expectations of the neo-literate, poor quality media, and a bewildering variety of writing systems and dialects. A list of complaints and recommendations was drawn up to guide future production.

Step 3: Training of stakeholders in the book chain

An examination was made of both the training and output of those involved in the book production chain, including publishers, authors and illustrators (whether working alone or together), thus combining theory and practice. The same applied to all stakeholders. Two types of workshops (described below) served as a reference.

Text production workshops
A series of writing workshops was initiated, either in national languages or in a bilingual format, with a view to producing supplementary reading texts. Aimed at already literate people, each workshop brought together twenty-four to thirty participants selected from all regions by the decentralized literacy services. Workshops were organized in each of the five national languages taught in bilingual schools. Participants, who were tasked with a writing project, included neo-literates, civil servants, farmers, activity leaders and homemakers. In principle, no subject was excluded and all genres were welcome.

Each language group met three times a year at three- to four-month intervals for a working period of seven to ten days. For each subsequent session the location was changed, so as to take the participants out of their familiar context. The first session involved starting, presenting and critically analysing the writing projects in a collective and participatory framework under the supervision of experienced authors and researchers in national languages.

The second session was devoted to reviewing the progress of individual work and making various recommendations regarding both the form and the content of the works in progress. The third session focused on the completion of the work and the finishing touches, as well as on publishing and copyright issues prior to publication.

The training format borrows from the study 'De l'idée au texte : guide des auteurs' by Büttner and Frings (2000), whose latest version was tested and enhanced during these workshops. This manual thus serves as a handbook for author trainers, even though the course is always built around the participants' natural inclinations. Only people who want to become a writer do so. Any dropouts from the workshop are a case in point.

Training workshops for authors and illustrators
These are designed according to the same philosophy, but each book project pairs up a writer and an illustrator. Pairs then work together under supervision from experts in the two fields involved. This approach is suitable for the production of short texts for young readers that require a profusion of images. The co-authors work in close harmony and cultural biases are corrected on the spot. The works produced in these workshops, later known as 'children's albums', are always bilingual, apart from exceptional cases. Texts in both languages are laid out side by side.

Step 4: Establishment of a permanent system of processing manuscripts

4a) Acquiring manuscripts

The establishment of a stock of documents for the regular production of reading materials requires encouraging literary creation in national languages and acquiring existing and unpublished texts whenever available. The collected manuscripts are then submitted to accredited experts, proofreaders and specialists in specific areas to correct form and content, rule out plagiarism and ensure the plausibility of the content and its compliance with accepted norms. Publication is always subject to the signing of a contract between the author and the project on behalf of the ministry.

Spontaneous inventory of productions
As soon as the project was inaugurated and its goals were made public, many people spontaneously proposed their manuscripts for publication, some of them very old. These were received with no guarantee of publication and on condition that only copies and not originals were accepted. Manuscripts not approved by the selection committee were returned to their authors; those that were selected remained in the publication circuit.

This influx of submissions yielded some good quality works, many of which had remained at the manuscript stage because of the climate of fear that persisted during the long period of emergency rule (1974–1989). Topics considered taboo at that time could not be brought to public attention, let alone published. The democratization of regimes in Niger created a context that was more favourable to rich, varied and relevant literary production.

Organization of literary competitions

The parallel use of text and images is central to the vision of a dynamic and active learner-centred pedagogy. With this in mind, national competitions were organized to identify and promote new talent in the areas of writing and illustration. The aim was also to identify collaborators for the planned publishing projects with regard to both teaching materials and supplementary reading. A cartoon contest and three literary competitions were held in the period from 1999 to 2002. From the twenty candidates, three illustrators were selected and kept on as strategic collaborators, including one from the country's rural central area. In addition to the prizes they were awarded, their works were also published in several public and private newspapers that helped to establish their reputations.

The literary contest was a wide-reaching national annual event. It received many applications: an average of 120 per edition for all languages. Juries were formed according to language to select the best candidates, based on the contest rules and an accepted rating guide. The first prize was initially set at 300,000 CFA francs and subsequently raised to 1,000,000 CFA francs, which generated stronger interest. Prizes were also awarded for the best work in each language. In a context where the average wage of civil servants hardly exceeded 50,000 CFA francs, the effort of applying was well worth it for many candidates. Winning, or being selected for a contribution of merit, paved the way for publication in one or more languages, based on a publishing contract where the rights of each author were respected. This activity continued to yield important literary works even after the closing date of the competition.

4b) Establishment of a desktop publishing unit

Faced with a lack of credible private publishers, the programme opted to set up a small desktop publishing (DTP) unit on its own premises. In conjunction with private partners and individuals, its mission was to oversee the processing of incoming manuscripts to make them into publication-ready documents (prepress). The unit comprised an experienced DTP officer and typists, who were either full-time employees of the programme or contractual workers. Equipment was kept to a strict minimum but was of good quality: desktop Mac G2, monochrome and colour printers, scanner, specialized

software (Quark Express, PageMaker, Adobe Photoshop, etc.), office supplies and other publishing materials. In countries where credible, professional structures exist, such an initiative would not be necessary: strengthening the country's capacities and generating awareness about the benefits of diversifying high quality production would suffice. In Niger, however, more needed to be done.

Once the publishing unit was set up, anyone with a mono- or bilingual manuscript in or about the national languages could contact the project office or a private publisher to inquire about procedures for submitting the manuscript for publication. Technical committees were set up to select high-quality works, and a network of partnerships was developed around this technical core via contracts with various stakeholders in the book chain, avoiding the necessity of hiring someone specifically assigned to publishing. All the people involved were paid by the job. Once the mock-ups were sent to the printers, the production was monitored by Albasa (in a private publishing house, the process of transforming a manuscript into a book must be supervised).

Step 5: Supporting the dissemination of books – developed strategies

Throughout this process, several initially unforeseen strategies were deployed in reaction to situations or opportunities that arose. We can only mention the most prominent ones here – those considered problematic in debates about the promotion of national languages.

Development of orientation documents
A brochure entitled 'Les stratégies pour la création d'un environnement lettré en langues nationales' ('Strategies for the Creation of a Literate Environment in National Languages') was developed in 1999 in collaboration with UNICEF and with the support of a team of consultants. It was published in French and distributed in thousands of copies in schools and other educational institutions. In the clearest and most objective manner possible, it dealt with all aspects of creating a literate environment in Niger.

To facilitate the convergence of language use, the programme supported the organization of a workshop to harmonize national language spellings, covering seven of the ten recognized national languages. Numerous and significant differences were noted with respect to how the national languages are written. Some occur through ignorance, others through laziness. Many people do not have the notion that spelling mistakes in national languages are possible. Everyone continues to use their own system, even though standardized spellings have been adopted or proposed for each of these

languages. This situation cannot be allowed to continue, since writing and reading a language in a similar fashion and according to the same norms is one of the objectives for the consolidation of written literature.

Publishing of catalogues

Albasa catalogues listing published works and books to be released in each collection were published from 2002 onwards. Covers and summaries of the works were presented in a colourful layout, complete with information on how to publish a text with Albasa. Albasa was particularly known for the diversity of its publications and the quality of its production in terms of choice of format, ink and paper quality, number of illustrations, compliance with spelling norms, etc. In order to make these achievements available to publishers and the general public, collections were created and supervised by literary or artistic publishers.

	Names	Content	Language(s)
Table 3.5	**Monolingual and bilingual publications by Albasa**		
1	Hirondelle	Illustrated children's album	Bilingual
2	Papillon	Short stories for children, age twelve	Bilingual
3	Niger, pays des contes	Modern tales or tales from oral tradition	Bilingual
4	Histoire(s) du Niger	Texts on the history of Niger and its regions	Bilingual and monolingual
5	Duniyar Hausa	Anthology of short texts	Hausa
6	Ay ne ha	Anthology of short texts	Songai-Zarma
7	Références Albasa	Dictionaries, glossaries and grammars	Bilingual
8	Textes touareg	Text in Latin and Ajami alphabet	Tamajaq-French
9	Rikicin soyayya	Love and adventure story	Hausa-French
10	Bine patay	Love and adventure story	Songai-Zarma-French
11	Les paroles qui font Émouvoir	Poetry	Bilingual
12	Bédé Albasa	Children's comic	Bilingual
13	Traditions et sagesses du Sahel	Philosophy, traditional knowledge, customs	Bilingual
14	Nos artistes populaires	Life and works of popular artists	Bilingual
15	Éducation en Afrique	Analysis of educational systems	French
16	La caravane	Biannual journal	Bilingual

Cross-translations of works

The multiplicity of African languages has always been cited as an insurmountable obstacle to their promotion in writing. Apart from issues of dialectal differences, which are usually resolved in daily usage, there is the technical and economic problem. The project was therefore obliged to come up with operational responses to these concerns. Two options were chosen: 1) simultaneous and parallel production of texts in all relevant languages; or 2) translation and adaptation of texts from one language to another, either directly or indirectly by passing through a third language. The former option was consistently applied in the creation of teaching materials; the latter served to harmonize and balance literary production in different languages. This is particularly true of children's albums which are bilingual by design. In many cases it was simply a matter of translating material from one national language to another in order to produce a print-ready version, since the cultural content and graphic design did not change. Training workshops were organized on many occasions for authors of textbooks and illustrators who had to adjust books to cultural differences when going from one language to another (for example in the case of clothing fashions, foods or sedentary vs. nomadic lifestyles).

A method was devised for adapting texts to suit different school levels or age groups. An example is the production of three different versions (comic book, simplified version and full version) of the *Law on the orientation of the Nigerien educational system*, a benchmark document for the promotion of awareness about bilingual education among school stakeholders and partners. The full version has yet to be published because the government organization has been unable to honour its portion of the allocated tasks.

The strategy for making the programme's activities sustainable is based partly on the strong involvement of private publishing entities and civic organizations active in education (cultural associations and national and international NGOs), and partly on diversifying funding sources by lobbying the technical and financial partners of the government. For example, competitions and some publications were financed by organizations such as UNICEF, Aide et Action and Concern. Hence, an all-out communication drive is required.

Resolved and unresolved obstacles to promoting a multilingual literate environment

A number of obstacles to promoting a multilingual literate environment have already been resolved. These include issues relating to the specific characteristics of national languages, which have been resolved by innovations such as the development and dissemination of several Unicode fonts, the development of book chain capacities, and the creation of a directory of available national language books (for the period 1964–2004). Today language diversity is controlled through parallel translation.

As a result of the action research with actors of the whole book chain, the literate environment has become lively and multilingual. Cost-efficiently produced, varied and high quality publications that correspond to the personal and collective wishes of readers have been made available for both educational and recreational purposes. Both the demand for literacy programmes and the rate of success of learners have increased. Bilingual education classes, literacy centres and non-formal education have helped to develop a reading culture. Some graduates of literacy centres have even become acknowledged authors. Publications by graduates of alternative education centres now serve as recommended texts for the training of adolescents.

Several authors have become widely known and popular through their involvement in the action research process. The trained illustrators have established an association in order to make themselves more accessible. The publishers have also established a national association that promotes public publishing and defends their interests. They are now collaborating with other publishers in the sub-region regarding training, co-productions, co-development and distribution of materials in the shared cross-border languages.

Despite these significant positive developments, however, major obstacles to the promotion of a multilingual literate environment remain. The most serious problems concern the distribution and dissemination of books, the non-application of international or regional taxes on cultural products, and the lack of a book policy. The remainder of this chapter will discuss these problems in more detail.

The weakest link in the book chain in Niger is undoubtedly distribution. Access to books, even when supply exists, is hampered by a lack of information and official sales points. This situation is aggravated by the immensity of the national territory, the poor writing culture among the

population, and the existence of a free distribution system set up by NGOs that usually benefits neo-literates, depending on what the NGOs are able to acquire. Attempts to encourage the creation of press distributors have been unsuccessful. This is an unattractive business because books are produced in small quantities and rarely read.

Creating a book policy has proved difficult due to the fragmentation of the sector, despite the fact that issues related to books and reading are of interest to the ministers of culture, commerce and finance, as well as those in charge of education and training. It is necessary to distinguish between a book policy per se and a school policy or even a book policy in national languages. Technical documents have been developed for each of these issues, but the measures they recommend have yet to be implemented. Niger therefore continues to lack a book policy; and its absence causes the array of obstacles already identified. Moreover, creating such a policy would require the harmonization of various national and transnational laws.

The development of a multilingual and multicultural literate environment is a dialectical and dynamic process. Texts are not produced in a vacuum. Rather, their production is influenced by the simultaneous presence of numerous educational, cultural and economic factors. Developing a multilingual and multicultural literate environment therefore requires an explicit political commitment through the adoption of a coherent and consistent book policy.

Point for reflection 3

Think about, if possible discuss, and then write responses to the following questions, which are designed to guide your reflection on your own practice in relation to the case study you have just read:

1. What is the sociolinguistic and educational context that impacts on the literate environment in which you are working?

2. Which languages are important in people's everyday lives but underrepresented in your literate environment? Why do you think this is the case?

3. In what ways has action research been useful for advancing the creation of a multilingual literate environment in the case presented by Maman Mallam Garba?

Case study 2:
Action research for curriculum development: an example from Ethiopia
By Alemayehu Hailu Gebre

Figure 3.3 **Picture from a literacy manual developed by ANFEAE**

This case study shares practical experience on how action research can be used to develop a literacy curriculum to improve existing adult literacy programmes in multilingual and multicultural societies. The case concerns the Adult and Non-formal Education Association in Ethiopia (ANFEAE), a legally registered NGO working exclusively on education. ANFEAE operates under the conviction that education opens doors of opportunity for all people in all societies, enabling them to develop livelihoods and to realize their full potential. ANFEAE therefore puts education at the centre of development activities in order to bring sustained change to the lives of people and communities. ANFEAE implements activities in the following areas:

• development of training guides, manuals, instructional materials and reading materials suitable for primary school children as well as neo-literate adults;

- provision of education and training opportunities for children and adults, particularly those from marginalized and under-served social groups;
- training of government personnel and literacy facilitators on the purpose and provision of basic education programmes and post-literacy activities.

ANFEAE won the World Bank's Development Market Place competition in 2003 and the UNESCO Confucius Prize for Literacy in 2008. ANFEAE has also been awarded a certificate of appreciation in 2009 by the Federal Ministry of Education (MoE) in recognition of its contributions.

This case study begins by introducing Ethiopia's educational and cultural policies, and to the literacy and language issues that shape the development of adult literacy curricula in the country. This is followed by a discussion of the processes involved in the development of a literacy curriculum using action research. The chapter concludes by analysing the quality criteria and lessons that emerged as a result of the implementation of these processes in Ethiopia.

Country profile with a focus on literacy and language

The second most populous nation in Africa, Ethiopia, is a federal state with a federal government, nine regional states, two city administrations and over 800 districts. The central statistics authority of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) reported that the population of Ethiopia in 2011 was 84,320,987 (FDRE CSA, 2011).

Ethiopian society is multilingual and ethnically and culturally diverse. Different sources show that the country comprises over 80 ethnic groups with distinct languages and/or dialects and cultural features. A wide variety of languages are therefore used in a wide range of contexts. Multilingualism is promoted by the state and has constitutional support. Article five of the constitution (FDRE, 1995) reads:

1. All Ethiopian languages shall enjoy equal recognition.
2. Amharic shall be the working language of the Federal Government.
3. Members of the Federation are entitled by law to determine their respective working languages.

On the basis of these decrees, the Ethiopian government is encouraging the use of local languages for administrative, judiciary and educational purposes. This is demonstrated by the fact that the regional states have chosen local languages as their official languages for various purposes. As well as being

the working language of the federal government, Amharic is the official language of four regional states (the South Nations, Nationalities and People's Region (SNNPR), Gambella, Benishangul Gumuz and Afar) and two city administrations (Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa). Other regions have also made their own decisions as to which languages to adopt as their official language. Examples include Oromia (official language: Afan Oromo), Tigray (official language: Tigrigna), Harari (official languages: Harari (Aderi) and Afan Oromo) and the Somali Region (official language: Somali). English is a foreign language for most Ethiopians and is used only by the educated elite. Nevertheless, its use is widespread in secondary and higher education and in international communication.

The education sector is one of the areas in which Ethiopia's sociolinguistic dynamism is most apparent. Section 3.5.1 of the 1994 Education and Training Policy (ETP) (Transitional Government of Ethiopia, 1994) states:

In recognition of the pedagogical advantages of learning in one's mother tongue, and of the rights of nationalities to promote the use of their languages, primary education will be given in nationality languages.

In accordance with this policy framework, strong emphasis is placed on the use of the mother tongue as a medium of instruction in primary schools. Although the ETP states that English is taught as a subject starting from grade one (ETP, 3.5.7), in practice it is not introduced until grades five, seven or nine, at the discretion of the regional states. Amharic is taught as a subject to non-Amharic speakers in some regions. The ETP clearly states that Amharic shall be taught as a language of countrywide communication (Transitional Government of Ethiopia, 1994). This means that most students are encouraged to be trilingual (or multilingual): beginning to learn in their mother tongue but also learning Amharic as a federal government language and English as a foreign/international language. Twenty-one languages are currently used as media of instruction at primary school level (Heugh et al., 2007), all of which are also taught as subjects. Some of these languages, such as Amharic, Afan Oromo and Tigrigna, are studied in higher education institutions up to postgraduate level. Afan Oromo, Tigrigna, Wolayita, Gamo, Sidama and Kafa are used in teacher training colleges to train primary school teachers (FDRE, MoE, ESDP IV, 2009).

As well as its educational policy, Ethiopia's cultural policy (FDRE, MoYSC, 2003) also encourages linguistic diversity and growth. The cultural policy of Ethiopia states the following aims:

1. to give [all] the languages [and] … literature … of the nations, nationalities, and peoples of Ethiopia equal recognition, respect and opportunities for development.
2. to create a favourable situation for scientific research and an inventory of the languages [and] oral literature. …of the nations, nationalities, and peoples of Ethiopia for the promotion of sustainable development.
3. to provide the necessary professional assistance to help the various nations, nationalities and peoples choose their official language.

The aforementioned facts demonstrate the significance of language issues in education at all levels, from primary through to tertiary and adult education. It goes without saying that the promotion of local languages as the media of instruction in literacy programmes carries great socio-cultural significance. Research indicates that, although multilingual adults are able to express their views in any language, they are most confident when using their mother tongue.

Language choice often has significant political implications. After the current government took power in 1991, Ethiopia's regional states were entrusted with the task of deciding on their official languages and the languages of instruction at primary level. Following these decisions, some regions decided to change the script they use for writing their local languages. The Amharic script that people were used to was replaced by the Latin alphabet. This meant that adults residing in Amharic-speaking regions who had writing and reading skills in the Amharic script were suddenly labelled functionally illiterate because they could not read and write in the Latin script. This example shows that, in a context where several scripts are in use, classifying people as 'literate' or 'illiterate' is often difficult and controversial.

Overview of adult literacy education in Ethiopia

Like many countries in Africa, Ethiopia has a low literacy rate. The national adult literacy rate is 39 per cent (49 per cent for males and 29 per cent for females), which means that there are about 26,847,000 illiterate adults (15,839,730 males and 11,007,270 females) (UNESCO, 2012). The Federal Government of Ethiopia has started taking action to tackle this by promoting adult education, particularly functional adult literacy (FAL). Under the Education Sector Development Program (ESDP) IV, the government has pledged to put more efforts into mobilizing resources and developing the necessary partnerships for a sustained adult literacy campaign (FDRE, MoE, ESDP IV, 2009). The programme will focus on tapping the potential of adult education and adult literacy to boost social and economic development, with particular emphasis on women.

The Ministry of Education issued and officially launched the National Adult Education Strategy in February 2008. Since then, a series of other essential documents have been produced, including the Curriculum Framework for Integrated Functional Adult Literacy (IFAL) (FDRE, MoE, 2010c), an IFAL Implementation Guideline (FDRE, MoE, 2010b), Minimum Learning Competencies (MLC) for the IFAL programme (FDRE, MoE, 2012) and FAL Benchmarks (FDRE, MoE, 2010d).

The largest literacy provider in Ethiopia is the government. Other institutions, including NGOs and faith-based organizations, are also engaged in adult literacy education and are designing and implementing their own programmes based on these national frameworks. Literacy programmes are provided in the shade of trees, in primary school classrooms and in other community settings, including purpose-built non-formal education centres.

According to the National IFAL Implementation Guideline, the main categories of participants of the IFAL programme are:

- people over 15 years old who have never been enrolled in formal schools
- drop-outs from first cycle primary schools
- prisoners
- marginalized and under-served women
- pastoralists and semi-pastoralists
- fishermen
- people with disabilities
- people from low-income households in both urban and rural areas

The guideline explains to literacy facilitators how to pre-assess applicants' literacy in order to assign them to the appropriate course level. IFAL programme facilitators include formal school teachers, agriculture development agents, health extension workers, alternative basic education facilitators and community volunteers. However, where the necessary resources are available, literacy facilitators are recruited exclusively for the task. According to the guideline, those interested in working as literacy facilitators should be educated to at least grade 10 level and must complete a two-month initial training programme. The duration of the IFAL programme is officially set at two years, although the frequency and number of actual contact hours is left to the discretion of learners and facilitators, since it depends on various contextual factors.

Developing and distributing literacy primers is the mandate of the regional states. Regional states prepare literacy texts based on the national curriculum framework which was developed and printed in September 2010. The

framework clearly states the principles that regional states should adhere to when preparing literacy primers. It covers:

- what constitutes IFAL
- programme content
- programme duration
- the roles of different stakeholders
- expected results
- how to teach literacy and numeracy

The framework also explains the general approaches to be taken to teaching literacy. It favours the 'whole language' approach over the phonetic approach, and the 'integrated literacy' approach over the 'stand-alone' approach. In other words, literacy should not start with letter recognition and progress to word and sentence construction. Instead, adults should be encouraged to read words and sentences which give meaning to their daily life and allow them to discuss and internalize concepts. Moreover, literacy and numeracy skills should be integrated and treated as one rather than two subjects.

Another essential document is the national IFAL Minimum Learning Competencies (MLC), which was prepared and put into use in February 2012. The MLC presents the expected profile of an adult learner after completing the IFAL programme. In doing so, it identifies the ways in which improved literacy skills can help learners overcome problems related to livelihood and life in general. Expected competencies are divided into seven broad categories: farming, health, income generation, civics and ethics, environment protection, gender and social life. These categories are the foundations of all literacy-related programmes in Ethiopia.

Literacy programmes in Ethiopia are beset by a number of challenges. Low levels of human, financial and material resources constitute the greatest challenge at present. Although the budget allocated for adult education under ESDP IV is significantly higher than under ESDP III[28] (FDRE MoE, 2005), there remains a significant budget gap that needs to be filled through aid. If aid is not available, the resources for adult education are often the first to be cut off. Moreover, human resources and structure at both federal and regional levels are currently insufficient to realise the government's ambitious plan to enrol over 17 million adults within the planning period. At district and *kebele* (locality) levels, the situation is graver still.

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28 According to the ESDP III document, the allocated budget share for the whole period of ESDP III was only 0.5% of the total education budget, whereas the planned budget share for ESDP IV is 8.8%.

In spite of the very well-designed and articulated policy framework at federal level, existing experience and expertise at regional level is insufficient for the development of learning materials in accordance with the basic principles articulated in the national framework. Another challenge that should not be overlooked is the lack of appropriate training programmes for IFAL facilitators. It is clear that well-organized, relevant and regular training programmes must be put in place if primary school teachers (whose experience is more concerned with formal child teaching and learning) are to be engaged in literacy facilitation. Formal school teachers will tend to lack the knowledge and skills necessary to make literacy lessons relevant to students' daily lives; development agents and health extension workers may lack the skills to incorporate literacy into the work that they are already doing.

In a nutshell, although Ethiopia is on the right track, it needs to address the outstanding challenges in a timely manner if it is to achieve its objective of improving adult literacy levels.

Panorama of the different scripts used in Ethiopia

Many of Ethiopia's languages have no script, whilst others have several. The extensively used Amharic script, sometimes called the Saba script, claims its origin from the ancient language Ge'ez. The Amharic script has 245 characters with 35 root letters, each with seven forms. In addition to these 245 characters or letters, the Amharic script has its own distinct way of notating numbers which differs from the widely used Arabic and Roman numerals. As well as the Amharic script, the Latin and Arabic scripts are also used in written communication in Ethiopia. More than half a dozen different languages in Ethiopia use the Latin script. A hybrid script which merges Amharic with Latin and others is also used for various purposes.

The most important questions to be posed here are:

- What are the implications of this multitude of scripts as regards literacy programmes?
- Why and when do people prefer to use one script rather than another?
- Which of these scripts are used for formal and which for informal purposes?
- Which texts exclude what sort of people and why?

Those who want to promote literacy should seek answers to these and other relevant questions in order better to understand the situation of the local people at whom literacy programmes are aimed. These people are already

confronted with a great variety of scripts and many different types of written and oral communication.

As well as scripts and text, symbols and signs also play an important role in conveying messages. Symbols and signs augment text communication in most rural and urban areas in Ethiopia. During ethnographic field observation, we noticed that many advertisements, messages and notices were multimodal, combining signs, symbols, pictures and text (often in more than one language and more than one script). Road signs often featured both words and symbols and advertisements almost always had pictures. Messages were repeated on several occasions by combining words from Amharic, English and other languages to make a hybrid language (Gebre et al., 2009).

Having a good knowledge of the scripts that are used for written communication in Ethiopia would help literacy programme implementers design relevant and useful curricula. It is also worth noting that new technologies are giving rise to new types of scripts which we cannot afford to ignore, such as scripts for text messaging on mobile phones.

Action research in order to embed literacy and numeracy in the coffee value chain in the Oromiya Region

In the sections that follow, we share with you how ANFEAE used action research for the development of relevant FAL curriculum materials in the Limu Seka, Limmu Kossa and Chora Boter districts, all of which are within the Jimma zone of the Oromiya Region. The project is operational in eight kebeles (lower administrative units). In Ethiopia, both NGOs and government education offices may develop FAL curricular materials, as long as they are in line with the national FAL curriculum framework developed by the Ministry of Education. Practitioners, including government education offices and NGOs like ANFEAE, develop context-based FAL learning materials which they then test, enrich and print, either for their own use or for sharing with other implementers working in the area.

If you visit rural districts of Ethiopia where the livelihood of the overwhelming majority of the population relies on coffee production, you will learn that one of the most widely known international organizations, Oxfam GB, together with the Regional Agriculture Output Marketing Agency, is putting a lot of effort into improving the quality of the coffee value chain, with the aim of benefiting rural coffee growers and their households.

> Coffee is a very important cash crop in Ethiopia. It provides livelihood to more than 10 million people and contributes sustainably to the country's annual revenue. Coffee is a crop that requires intensive labour with the involvement of all family members. Women participate in virtually all of the activities of the coffee value chain, although they are denied equal access to and control over the benefits. Women are often the ones who suffer the most when there is a bad harvest and/or price failure.
> (Source: FDRE, MoARD, 2010)

The ANFEAE three-year pilot project was entitled 'Empowering Smallholder Coffee Producers through an Alternative Coffee Marketing Initiative in Limmu Kossa District'. Its aims were:

- to develop the value chain of organic coffee
- to develop community organizations and enterprises
- to promote women's leadership
- to establish and develop private sector linkages
- to promote product improvement, diversification, adaptation and value addition
- to enable service provision

At the outset of the project, poor literacy skills were preventing smallholders from reaping the benefits of the coffee market. Literacy programme facilitators wondered how to integrate relevant literacy and numeracy lessons into the coffee value chain, from coffee seedling production to coffee marketing. It was at this point that ANFEAE's intervention was found to be essential.

There was no ready-made curriculum suitable for this specific context. Besides, ANFEAE's experience has shown that one-size-fits-all teaching and learning materials do not benefit adult learners. ANFEAE therefore decided to learn more about the coffee growers' situation before attempting to resolve their problems. Action research was found to be the best way of doing this. Action research is about learning from practice while practising. It is therefore a deep learning experience which combines cognitive, affective and psychomotor aspects.

The action research started in September 2010 and ended in December 2012. It was characterized by the following stages:

1. Posing initial questions
2. Understanding the context (1 month)
3. Proposing and agreeing on the content of learning materials (1 month)
4. Elaborating the teaching and learning materials (1.5 months)
5. Testing (phase 1) in practice (6 months)
6. Analysing feedback from practice; enriching teaching and learning materials, environment and approaches (0.5 months)
7. Testing (phase 2) in practice (6 months)
8. Analysing feedback; enriching teaching and learning materials, environment and approaches (3 months)
9. Implementing the modified learning programme widely (a new cycle of action research can then follow)

Figure 3.4 **The cycle and nine stages of our action research**
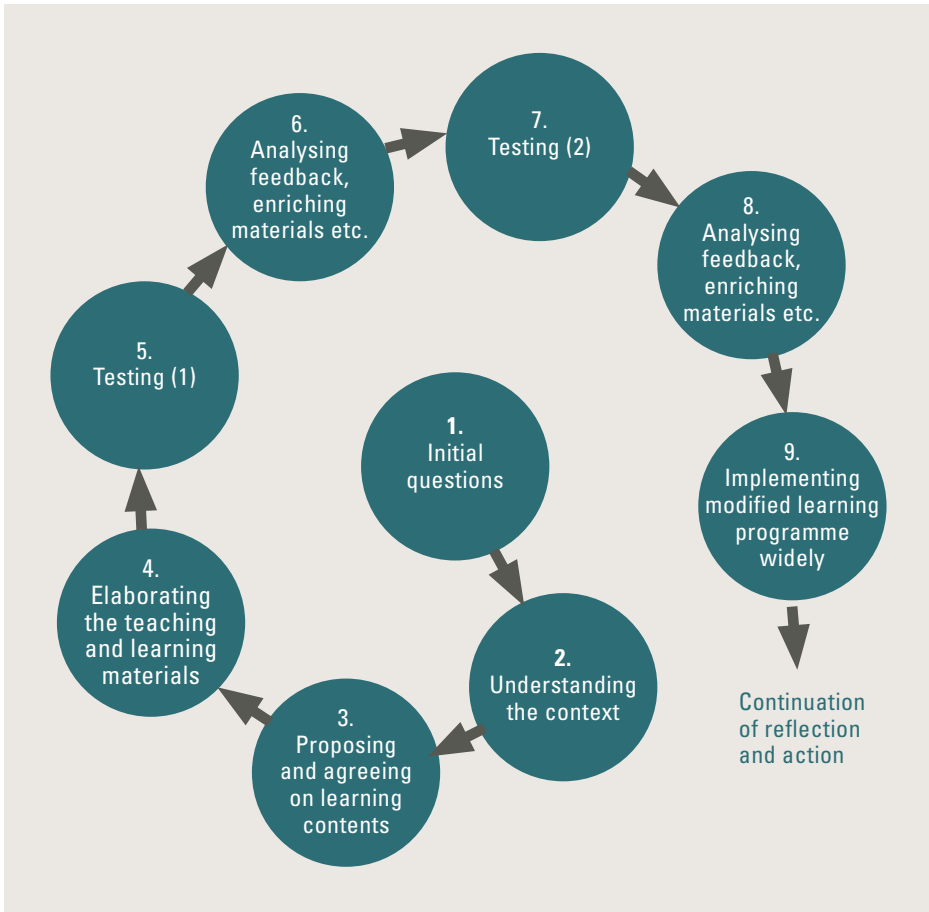
Stage 1: Posing initial questions

The initial questions that called for action research were:
- Is it possible to design relevant learning content based on an analysis of the tasks and livelihoods of the target community?
- What linguistic and cultural issues impact on adults' motivation to learn to read and write in the target community?
- What testing and enriching processes would help to develop quality materials for a literacy curriculum?

During this first stage, we reflect on our initial reasons for carrying out action research and identify the issues or puzzles that we wanted to use action research to solve. Without asking these questions, we could not begin to conduct action research.

Stage 2: Understanding the context

Understanding the context means identifying what knowledge exists and pinpointing its limitations. This step also involves asking key questions. Our approach differs from so-called 'needs assessment' because traditional needs assessment is a deficit-based approach which asks what is lacking. We start from what is already there.

Relevant questions at this stage include:
- What are the specific strengths and limitations of the current situation?
- What solutions can be proposed?
- How might the proposed solutions be tested and evaluated?
- How can the proposed solutions be implemented? What roles should the government and the community play in their implementation?
- What steps should be taken to involve and respect the language and culture of the community?

The following pages address these practical questions in greater detail.

What are the specific strengths and limitations of the current situation?
Understanding the context can be summarized by a single word: learning. The specific objectives of ANFEAE's assessment were:

- to learn about the major life activities linked to the coffee value chain;
- to identify what farmers already know and practise regarding coffee production, processing and marketing;
- to identify gaps in the farmers' knowledge and ways they could improve their practice;

- to identify the felt and unfelt needs directly related to the coffee value chain; and
- to understand the sociolinguistic and cultural context of the local people.

The approach adopted was to start from the strengths and then progress to the limitations in order to avoid a deficit-based approach.

The methodology adopted was a combination of ethnographic study and Participatory Rapid Appraisal (PRA) (Bauer and Hoffman, 1995), which includes field observation, thorough discussion, semi-structured interviews, and checklist and focus group discussions. Cooperative leaders, women's saving and credit group members, and male members of cooperatives were consulted separately. Prior to the field visits, key technical terms like 'value chain' and 'female-owned enterprise' were contextualized by finding equivalent terms in local languages. Based on this framework, field observation and discussions were conducted by repeatedly posing the exploratory question 'Why?' to the local people.

ANFEAE chose to adopt this hybrid method of PRA and ethnography because ethnographic research is a powerful tool for recognizing diversity and for learning what is already there through the eyes of the local community. For example, one exercise merged the 'transect walk' of PRA with ethnographic participant observation by asking a group of local people (women and men) to walk across the village with ANFEAE specialists who made thorough observations of what was going on in the area, who was doing what, who had what sort of skills, etc. – all the while continuing to pose questions and challenge assumptions. Through this process ANFEAE was able to identify both the villagers' existing skills and the additional skills they required to improve their coffee production and marketing. It was not an expert's view; rather, it was a joint analysis by the specialist and the local community. ANFEAE started from where the farmers were and designed learning materials on that basis (see 3rd column of table 3.7) whilst also introducing new knowledge that would be useful for them (see 4th column of the same table).

The groups in the community that were involved in the study
There are two main types of finance groups in the project district: multipurpose cooperatives and saving and credit groups. Most women are involved in saving and credit groups, while most men are members of multipurpose cooperatives. The need for basic literacy skills seemed less pressing when the groups were first formed, but this changed in due course when their capital increased and additional requirements appeared. When a saving and credit group matures, the money must be deposited in the bank. This requires the executive members who run the group to be able to read and write.

Focusing on the women's groups, the study found out that there are three learner profiles within each group: (i) those who are unable to read and write Afan Oromo using either the Amharic or the Latin script (often elderly women); (ii) those who can partially read and write Afan Oromo in the Amharic script but not in the Latin script (they were participants in the famous Ethiopian National Literacy Campaign that took place during the military regime); and (iii) those who are able to read and write Afan Oromo using only the Latin script (these are young women who have recently been enrolled in and dropped out of formal schools).

The majority of the members of the saving and credit groups required literacy to carry out their daily tasks, including:

- recording the dates of credit and repayment
- reading land certificates
- reading scales in shops
- reading tax receipts
- reading books
- reading saving and credit records
- reading labels on packages
- writing letters
- signing their name

Apart from these skills, many of the women expressed a strong desire to be able to operate mobile phones and rent them out for the purpose of income generation. They identified the ability to calculate incomings and outgoings from mobile phone rental as a skill that they would like to learn.

Development agents from the Ministry of Agriculture told the assessment team that the women's lack of reading and writing skills affected their training and the use of technology in agriculture. Many client farmers were unable to take notes during training in Farmers' Training Centres (FTCs). Health Extension Workers also said that lack of reading and writing skills impedes the efficient communication of health messages and thus adversely affects community health.

Although the study resulted in a number of helpful findings, there were also some challenges. One of the main difficulties that ANFEAE faced was that the context assessment had to take place during the peak farm season, which meant that the farmers (especially the women) had very little patience for long discussions. This difficulty was overcome by focusing only on core points and by complementing the discussion with observation.

Some of the findings regarding the context:

- Almost all the respondents are able to communicate in two languages: Amharic and Afan Oromo. Many of them can read and write the Amharic script, but still call themselves 'illiterate' as a result of the way others perceive them.
- The farmers' homes and villages contain several types of reading materials. However, there are insufficient links between agricultural and literacy skills. Agricultural skills are passed on without the integration of literacy skills, and there is little creativity as regards the use of the available literacy materials at home. Literacy materials do not feature enough agricultural content.
- Because they lack the ability to perform written calculations, women group leaders are obliged to pay external people to help them with bookkeeping.
- Government-assigned agricultural development agents confirmed that most farmers in the area cannot use the planning format provided to each farmer by the Ministry of Agriculture because they lack the ability to read and write in the region's official language (Afan Oromo written in Latin script).
- Respondent farmers believe that their inability to read and write jeopardizes mutual trust among the saving and credit groups. They fear that mistrust could increase as savings grow and business streams expand further.

Stage 3: Proposing and agreeing on the content of learning materials

One might ask what processes were involved in developing a quality curriculum, who the main actors were, how these actors collaborated and what mechanisms they adopted to implement and evaluate the action research. The following few pages will describe the kind of collaboration that was created between the NGO and the government, the process undergone and the results obtained.

Collaboration between ANFEAE, community organizations and other relevant actors, including government offices
At the outset of the project, ANFEAE organized a consultative workshop involving relevant government organizations such as the district education, agriculture and health offices, as well as community organizations such as coffee growers' cooperatives, saving and credit associations, and coffee market cooperatives. In that workshop, the findings of the context assessment (stage

1) were presented for enrichment and validation. Experts representing the three district government offices were entrusted with the task of identifying the main problems and appropriate learning contents for their sector. Afterwards, a small group established with the consensus of all stakeholders consolidated the contributions.

It was agreed that each organization should play a role in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the action research as follows:

- The *agriculture office* agreed to assign its development agents to take part in curriculum development; the *health office* followed suit.
- As a centre of excellence in adult learning and literacy curriculum development, ANFEAE took responsibility for coordinating the entire effort.
- The *local community* was involved in all the stages of the process, from context assessment to evaluation of the results. Language and culture issues were handled mainly by the local community.

What processes were followed in developing the curriculum materials?

Step 1: Define the specific learning themes and objectives
The first step was to determine learning objectives with the active involvement of all stakeholders. ANFEAE found that improving the livelihood of the rural community was the primary and common concern of both learners and providers. There was unanimous agreement that the main aim of integrating functional literacy into the coffee value chain was not to teach literacy as an autonomous skill, but rather to enable farmers to use literacy skills in their day-to-day activities. Based on this, the following overall and specific objectives were identified:

Overall Objective: Improving the livelihoods of the farmers and their families by integrating functional adult literacy into the coffee value chain.

Specific Objectives:
- To enable members of market groups to read, write and understand words of generic relevance to their lives.
- To enable learners to record and communicate information in writing.
- To enable farmers to build practical knowledge and skills related to the coffee value chain, thereby boosting their income.

Stages of the coffee value chain:

The coffee value chain involves several stages from planting to marketing. We identified four main stages of the chain, namely:

1. coffee planting
2. coffee production
3. coffee processing
4. coffee marketing

Any attempt to improve the skills of the farmers, who are the main actors in the value chain, should place equal emphasis on each of these stages. The starting point is to understand each stage and to be able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the farmers dealing with them.

Step 2: Determining learning content

The content of learning was devised based on the lives and livelihoods of the learners. ANFEAE took lists of tasks within the coffee value chain and decided to develop the contents of the literacy curriculum around them. A number of community members were consulted on the proposed learning contents. ANFEAE also made a critical exploration of existing literacy practices and priority learning needs in the community, using the combination of participatory and ethnographic methodology described above. The advantage of ethnographic research is that the researcher does not depend exclusively on the farmers' (possibly selective or flawed) memory of their experiences. ANFEAE conducted ethnographic-style research in the farmers' everyday environments – watching and recording while they cultivate and take care of their coffee farm, sell their products and buy the agricultural inputs they need. In other words, the researchers went about observing how the farmers conduct their everyday lives, seeing and hearing who they are and what they value. Nothing was missed – neither the special ways agricultural input is used and the mistakes farmers make with it, nor the way a product or service impacts on their lives. The ANFEAE team wrote detailed accounts and vignettes of the actual processes, incorporating the voices of participants themselves. The following methods and tools were adopted:

Table 3.6 **Research methods and tools used by ANFEAE**

Methods	Tools
Observation (ongoing)	of general environment, of materials, of ways of communication (transect walk, mapping, etc.)
Participant observation	Informal discussion
Interview	Interview guide, probing
Focus group discussions (eight participants in each group)	Checklist of semi-structured questions
Audio-visual documentation	Photography, videotaping, audio documentation

The following table depicts both the available skills identified and the new skills that needed to be acquired.

Table 3.7 **Existing skills and learning needs of women in the coffee agronomic activity chain: FAL – Coffee Value Chain**

Major tasks	Specific tasks in coffee value development	Existing skills	Skills lacking for value adding FAL
Backyard coffee nursery	Site selection	Knowledge of proper soil type; Use of small farm tools	-
	Clearing	Selective clearing (saving shades)	Energy saving techniques; Use of modern tools
	Layout preparation	Seed bed preparation; Estimating seed-bed area	Calculating the precise seedbed size vis-à-vis the required seedlings
	Sewing the seed/planting	Selecting viable seed; Preparing seed bed and shade	Determining the precise depth for sowing; Recording planting data

Major tasks	Specific tasks in coffee value development	Existing skills	Skills lacking for value adding FAL
Backyard coffee nursery	Watering	Watering skills	Timing of watering (setting watering calendar); Water saving and watering technologies; Calculating the amount and cost of water
	Weeding	Selective weeding skills; Knowledge of local weeds	Knowledge of new harmful weeds; Cost/benefit analysis of using or not using herbicide
Planting	Permanent field preparation; Clearing, digging, planting pits	Use of small farm tools; Digging planting pits using household labour	Measuring the correct space between pits; Determining/measuring correct pit size (30x50cm) Layout and preparation of coffee seeding pit Recording of dates
	Shading	Preliminary shading skills	Shade management and timing (coffee should be shaded only 25%); Permanent and temporary shading; identification of shade tree variety
	Coffee tree/bush management	Removal of dry branches; Traditional pruning	Timing of branch removal; Pruning techniques and timing
	Coffee protection	Identification of affected tree	Disease types and symptoms; Procedures and measures to be taken in removing affected tree; Field sanitation skills
Harvesting	Picking the coffee and transporting it home	Identification of matured coffee bean to be picked	Proper handling of coffee cherries; Sanitation and uniformity; Avoiding production wastage; Avoiding abortion/ deflowering

Major Tasks	Specific tasks in coffee value development	Existing skills	Skills lacking for value adding FAL
Processing	Drying	Drying skills	Sanitation; Appropriate drying bed preparation skills
	Pulping	Manual skills	Proper pulping technology selection; Economic analysis of pulping
	Hulling	Manual hulling (removal of the hull)	Simple hulling machine operation and maintenance
	Packing	Basic skills of packing	Proper material identification; Weighing packages and labelling techniques.
Marketing	Transporting	Local means of transport (women carry to market while husbands wait at home)	Decision making power; Access to and control over income
	Selling	Market days, market collectors and bad prices	Market information gathering and analysing techniques; Market assessment, chain and cost analysis, and profit making
	Income management	Handling and use of small income	Saving and credit skills; Budgeting, budget recording; Bargaining power, leadership skills; Business planning, diversifying income stream; Knowledge of legal rights; Assertiveness

In addition to the aforementioned felt needs, ANFEAE also identified other lessons that might benefit the learners. In some cases, learners did not immediately recognize the relevance of certain actions to their day-to-day lives, and therefore did not spontaneously identify them as needs. However, researchers endeavoured to engage them with these issues and to explain how they could be meaningful and relevant to the learners' lives. Among the content areas added were:

- family and the roles of family members
- resource distribution
- the coffee ceremony
- the importance and functioning of cooperatives and unions
- micro-finance and banking
- coffee branding

Stage 4: Elaborating the learning and teaching materials

Having identified the content of the curriculum, the next step was to structure it in such a way as to imply a logical flow from the familiar to the unfamiliar (not necessarily from simple to more complex material). The best principle ANFEAE employed in this regard was to start with what the farmers know already and slowly progress to what they need to know. Existing literacy materials were identified and used as supplementary reading materials where and when necessary. Efforts were made to include in the learning materials the various types of texts which are to be found in the learners' literate environment, such as election posters, health/family planning posters, posters on coffee quality keeping and processing, posters on women's rights, tagged coffee and fertilizer sacks, village office notice boards and sign posts, and advertisement billboards. Other important documents that could be found in the farmers' homes, such as land certificates, personal savings and credit books, health/vaccination certificates, religious books, etc. were also considered in the preparation of learning materials. The writing of the learning materials started by developing a flow chart based on the findings of the context assessment. Then, based on the flow chart, a syllabus was developed outlining key learning topics, generic words and learning objectives. Key questions for discussion, approach/method and materials to be used were also prepared.

A notable feature of the learning material is that each subject integrates literacy and numeracy skills. Participants' photos were included in the printed learning material, as this was found to have a strong motivating effect.

Another important feature of the learning material is that it is prepared in two languages (Amharic and Afan Oromo) using two different scripts (Amharic and Latin). Virtually all of the participants in the programme are members of the Oromo ethnic group whose first language[29] is Afan Oromo. There are also a few Amharas whose first language is Amharic. The majority of the participants are bilingual in Amharic and Afan Oromo. All learning materials are therefore prepared in both languages and each learner has the chance to compare and contrast concepts introduced in both. It was found that learners prefer to have materials presented in both languages, as opposed to only in their first language. In addition to the learning materials, a facilitators' guide (also prepared in both languages) gives detailed information on principles of learning, facilitation techniques, and assessment. This guide is a crucial tool for newly-assigned agriculture development agents who have never facilitated literacy lessons before.

Lessons learnt from testing phases (1) and (2) and analysis of the respective feedback (stages 5 to 8)

The pilot programme lasted 15.5 months overall, including two testing phases lasting six months each. It took this long because adult education involves far fewer contact hours than formal education, and because the project involved addressing the problems of coffee growers. In each of the piloting phases, wide ranges of experience were captured via pre-designed data collection formats. Different aspects of the implementation were regularly assessed through these data collection formats as well as quarterly stakeholders' review meetings. Factors that were assessed include:

- the relevance and appropriateness of the contents of learning materials and the facilitators' guide
- the appropriateness of the learning timetable
- the effectiveness of the learning process
- the contribution of newly acquired literacy skills to livelihood improvement

ANFEAE envisaged scaling up the literacy programme using the enriched literacy materials from the two pilot stages in collaboration with Oxfam GB. Action research influenced the testing not only of the draft learning materials, but also of appropriate grouping of learners (mixed sex or same sex), as well as the choice of facilitators for integrated FAL programmes (agriculture workers, school teachers or health workers).

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29 See the Glossary for a definition of 'mother tongue' and 'first language'.

Choice of appropriate facilitators

Deciding on appropriate facilitators was a serious issue in the action research. Conditions for the commencement of a FAL programme appear favourable since there are agriculture development agents, health extension workers, formal school teachers, cooperative promoters, and educated youth all living in the rural villages. The major question to be answered was which group would make the best facilitators of the envisaged FAL within the coffee value chain. Some people believe that adult education is solely the duty of the Ministry of Education. Others believe that education should not be confined to classrooms and is thus the duty of other ministries as well, such as the Ministry of Agriculture. Most stakeholders believe that agriculture development agents are the people best suited to the task of facilitating literacy learning among coffee producers, given their closeness to and knowledge of the occupation that the farmers are engaged in. It was therefore agreed to try the agriculture development agents as facilitators of the FAL programme on top of their routine agricultural extension activities. Nonetheless, stakeholders also expressed a strong conviction that the facilitators should be equipped with knowledge and skills resulting from experience of good facilitation, in order to attract different learner groups within a specific learning time.

Day-to-day teaching and learning is carried out by the development agents (DAs) of the Ministry of Agriculture, who receive a top-up payment. The DAs have received and are still receiving regular training on how to facilitate literacy classes. Topics covered include how to handle adults, learning and teaching methods, facilitation skills, and lesson planning. Training is delivered in places like Farmers' Training Centres, Health Posts and public and individually owned shelters, depending on the decision of the learners' groups.

Mixed or single sex literacy circles?

There is one literacy circle in each of the eight *kebele*. A circle is a group of adult learners consisting of 20 to 28 members. Members of all circles except one are farmers. However, during the course of the action research, ANFEAE learnt that a cultural barrier prevents the participation of women. To remedy this problem, ANFEAE initiated three more literacy circles exclusively for women. The previous eight circles, which promote literacy in and for the coffee value chain, are mixed sex groups despite the cultural barrier, although the proportion of women is very low. The three women-only circles, which did much to increase women's participation, were engaged in literacy-integrated activities regarding saving and credit. The total number of beneficiaries of the literacy circles therefore stands at 412 (143 women).

Brief summary: lessons learned from the two pilot phases
What follows is a brief summary of the lessons documented during the piloting (testing and analysis) phases of the educational programme.

First pilot phase:
* At the outset, there were mixed sex groups. The assumption was that illiterate adults are homogenous in terms of learning needs and should begin with reading and writing skills (literacy first, then application). In the course of action, however, it was realized that this assumption was wrong and that adults' learning needs differ based on age, social roles/responsibilities and livelihood patterns. While the majority of the adults involved in the project needed literacy skills for immediate income generation, others needed them for written communication or other reasons.

* Women need to have their own land in order to participate in the coffee value chain learning. Unfortunately, however, most of the women in this project had no land of their own, despite the fact that Ethiopia's constitution and family laws grant women and men equal rights regarding ownership of resources. Lack of land ownership by women reflects traditional religious and cultural practices. The learning modules that focus on coffee production and processing were irrelevant for women who had no land. This, coupled with cultural and religious pressure, resulted in a decline in the number of women participating in the programme. It was understood that this challenge could only be addressed by customizing the learning materials to the women's needs, for example by including off-farm learning activities, and by establishing separate literacy circles exclusively for women.

* Another serious pitfall was the problem of dialect, which we learned to take seriously. In the first round, the original learning material was developed in Amharic and then translated into Afan Oromo. During the process of translation, some important concepts were missed out or rendered meaningless. Moreover, some of the words used in the translation were in different dialects from those that the learners use. For instance dimshaashatti means 'generally' in the south-eastern parts of the country, but is meaningless to people in the south-west (including the Limu region). The equivalent term in these areas is hundumatti. The existence of one meaningless word in a sentence makes it very difficult for the learner to comprehend the sentence as a whole.

* The assumption that adults lack awareness of the value of literacy is simply wrong. The adults who were involved in the pilot programme were well aware of the value of literacy in general. However, the legitimate question they were raising is how literacy might fit into and serve their value systems.

Here it is worth noting that it is the learners themselves who should decide what to learn and not the providers, as their value system may differ from that of outsiders. Almost all of the adults consulted had a strong interest in learning provided that the content was practically relevant and immediately applicable to solve their life problems. Adults are not interested in learning that is simply labelled 'good' by outsiders in an abstract manner. The findings of the study indicate that the rigid approaches and techniques employed in teaching FAL classes contributed to an increasing lack of interest.

- Another difficulty observed was the limited involvement of the facilitators in improving the learning materials. Facilitators were not sufficiently aware of the importance of collecting feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the learning materials and facilitation guide. Although they did collect some useful feedback, it was not done regularly or systematically. Several studies have shown that literacy facilitators are most effective as researchers if they are encouraged to capture the day-to-day successes and challenges that they encounter.

Before the commencement of the second phase, all of these lessons and others were taken into consideration and corrective measures devised. Both the learning materials and the facilitators' guide were revised by ANFEAE's and subsequently redeveloped through a consultative workshop specially organized for the purpose.

Second pilot phase:
- The second pilot phase revealed a few shortcomings that need to be addressed before scaling up the usage of the curriculum. During the implementation of the second test, the programme started to focus more on quality issues and relevant life skills, as well as on identifying workable lessons and documenting them for further upscaling. The importance of including more skills for people who lack important assets like land, particularly women, was duly recognized. Researchers learned that it is important to teach skills for generating income from diversified streams when there are no start-up assets.

- The significance of linking the literacy circles with important institutions (government institutions, financial institutions, etc.) was recognized during the second phase. Farmers often seek the support of both governmental and non-governmental agencies in order to secure credit, legal status and other technical support. It is therefore useful to link the literacy circles, which after all are composed of groups of farmers, with such institutions.

- The second phase also drew attention to the need for the facilitators to be role models with regard to saving, doing business, learning, etc. Although FAL facilitators advise learners on such matters as the importance of saving, how to establish and run a business, and the importance of continuing to learn, they do not always do the same themselves. A good facilitator should do more than just 'talk the talk'; yet it was found that almost none of the facilitators are involved in either saving or business, nor do they participate in any kind of further learning activities.

- It is crucial to recognize that adults have already acquired high levels of computing skills and lack only the skill to represent numbers symbolically. Ignoring this fact and starting numeracy lessons from scratch with basic counting, as one would when educating children, is naïve and betrays an ignorance of the needs of adult learners. Strong emphasis should be placed on identifying the appropriate starting level for teaching numeracy and mathematics to adults, and on devising lessons that are sufficiently challenging. By obliging learners to dwell on lessons they have already mastered, we risk making them lose interest.

- Another lesson learned during the two pilot stages is that the commitment levels of development agents (FAL facilitators) vary. It appears that female facilitators are much more committed and efficient than their male counterparts. The reasons behind this require further investigation before any conclusions can be drawn.

Emerging quality criteria and lessons learned regarding the development of literacy curriculum materials

The quality criteria and lessons learned listed below shaped the next round of curriculum and material development.

- ***The use of multimodal literacies in learning texts.*** Day-to-day communication and interaction uses not only text but also numbers, symbols and signs of various kinds. In most parts of Africa, including Ethiopia, people use a variety of symbols to represent many things. Even people who cannot read formal literacy texts can easily understand the messages conveyed via symbols and signs. In the third phase of the action research carried out by ANFEAE, it was realized that it is essential to include widely known symbols and signs in literacy curriculum materials alongside the corresponding texts. The most important symbols and signs and their meanings can be explored through ethnographic research (see e.g. Gebre et al., 2009) which takes a thorough look into the everyday life of a community.

- ***The importance of integrating literacy and numeracy lessons.*** In this particular endeavour as well as in its previous experiences, ANFEAE has learnt that literacy learning materials should integrate literacy with numeracy. In real life, literacy is often integrated with numeracy in order to convey a particular meaning. Merely counting, adding or subtracting numbers has no meaning for an adult unless it involves something real, such as monthly income and expenses, or the number of quintals of coffee produced and the amount of money that can be earned from their sale. Literacy learning materials should therefore reflect real life situations and should integrate texts, numbers and symbols.

- ***The importance of including in literacy learning materials every kind of written material that adults are confronted with in their day-to-day lives***, for example savings or credit pass books, credit agreement forms, government office formats, marriage certificates, tax receipts, children's vaccination cards, etc. Like numeracy, literacy is not learned for its own sake; it is learned to be used. One of the most significant lessons drawn from this project was the importance of identifying the prevailing literacy-related tasks and practices in learners' lives before developing learning materials. Adults are more than happy to learn literacy that would help them to discharge their multiple responsibilities as parents, as farmers (or key agents of the coffee value chain), as members of the community, as leaders of community organizations, etc.

- ***The principle 'first learn then apply' does not work in the case of functional literacy programmes***. Adults learn while they are doing something important for their daily life, such as reading savings books, writing or reading credit contracts, identifying expired medicine or food products, etc. Including such lessons in literacy learning materials motivates adults and gives them tangible reasons why they should learn to read and write.

- ***The importance of developing learning materials in local languages rather than translating them from other languages***. During the pilot stage, we learned that there are several dialects within a single language. The way we express ideas reflects our culture, our context and the dialect we are using. Materials prepared in one language and translated into another inevitably lose something in the process. It is therefore advisable to prepare learning materials in local languages, rather than preparing them in other languages and then translating them into local languages.

- ***The importance of widening the lessons beyond the immediate surroundings and needs of the learners***, for example by addressing diverse issues like technology (mobile phones, calculators, the internet), banking, civic and ethical values, branding and cross-border trading, and methods of diversifying businesses. It should be noted that the current generation of adult learners is very much influenced by and dependent on technologies. Information technology now plays a crucial role in almost every development sector. It is impossible to ignore this important issue in designing learning materials, whether for adults, youth or children.

- ***The importance of developing bilingual/multilingual learning materials***. During this pilot project, we witnessed how adults learn to sort expired from non-expired products even though the captions are often written in English, not in local languages. It does not matter which language we are using and how complex it is; what matters is whether the issue is relevant to the adult or not. Adults are capable of learning highly complex things as long as they perceive them as relevant to their lives.

- ***The importance of starting from what the learners already know and do***. This is perhaps the most stated but least practised principle in adult learning. The difficulty that many adult educators point out in this regard is how to find out what the learners know. It is clear that we cannot do this by conducting a so-called 'needs assessment', since a needs assessment focuses on what is not there. Should we focus on identifying what adults lack before trying to find out what they know and what they can do? The lessons learned in this pilot project indicate that adults are more motivated to learn when we start from their strengths and build on them to fill any skills gaps, rather than focusing first on what they lack.

- ***The importance of taking literacy out of the classroom***. Confining learning to classrooms is the prevailing model for children's schooling, and even that is contested in the present era. If adult literacy is to be used to improve the livelihood of learners, it must be liberated from the four walls of the classroom. Adult learning should be carried out in learners' workplaces and lessons should reflect and contribute to their current and future occupations.

Based on the lessons learned during the two pilot implementation phases, ANFEAE was able to develop and enrich appropriate learning materials. The materials developed through the action research process are used not only by ANFEAE but also by other organizations, such as local NGOs, Oxfam, and the ministries of education and health in other coffee growing areas of Ethiopia. The

teaching and learning materials discussed here were used for over two years until 2014. Additional modules on the benefits and organization of cooperatives were then introduced by ANFEAE and Oxfam.

How the key actors were empowered with new skills and competences through their experience with action research

Who learns from an action research project depends on the purpose of the research. In the action research described here, which had the intention of developing appropriate learning materials for a particular group of adults, the main learners were the education providers themselves. However, this does not mean that the intended beneficiaries of the educational programme have not benefited or been empowered. On the contrary, they were empowered in a number of ways: by being involved in the process, by making their choices heard, by influencing learning programmes, and by determining what to learn and what not to learn. The fact that ANFEAE adopted an ethnographic style of research complemented by participatory data collection methods meant that learners were able to define their own problems, find their own solutions, and make their own voices heard.

Point for reflection 4

Please think about and if possible discuss the following questions, then make notes in your notebook:

1. "'Illiterate' adults usually have knowledge about literacy and are not homogenous." What have you learnt from the case presented by Alemayehu Hailu Gebre about the diversity of learners' profiles with regard to:
    *   prior knowledge
    *   learning needs
    *   requirements for learning environment (learning place and time, learning materials, composition of group, etc.)?

2. In what regards has action research been useful for advancing curriculum development in the case presented by Alemayehu Hailu Gebre?

3. Do you have any practical ideas about how the capacity of the facilitators in this case study as 'reflective practitioners'/researchers could be further developed?

Case study 3:
Action research for the training of trainers: an example from Senegal
By Mamadou Amadou Ly

Associates in Research and Education for Development (ARED), an NGO based in Senegal, was established in 1990 to develop programmes for (i) the production, publication and distribution of books in national languages and (ii) training in the field of non-formal adult education, such as literacy. Since its foundation, ARED has specialized in the basic and continuing training of potential facilitators of non-formal education, particularly in the Pulaar language. From the beginning, literacy training has been considered as a measure for Senegalese people to work on endogenous development issues in a self-directed manner. This vision of non-formal education can only be realised if it is grounded in a literate environment in harmony with the interests of the target population. Providing quality publications in national languages is an essential prerequisite for this. ARED is one of the few publishers in West Africa that publishes books that encourage reading for pleasure, so that new readers can identify with a story and its characters, rather than just seeing reading as a way of learning something new.

ARED has the good fortune to work in contexts where the community sees and appreciates the value of being taught in its own language. Moreover, we bring people something new by demonstrating how far a new literate can go after only a few hundred hours of training and by finding ways for communities to be actively involved in shaping their own learning. We take a holistic and integrated approach to community education, forging a link between education and cultural identity which we believe is the key to our success. We therefore emphasize the importance of culturally appropriate (not just 'functional') learning materials.

Dozens of people trained by ARED have subsequently been able to find paid employment with local organizations, thanks to recognition of their skills which we also certify. Some are directly recruited as agents; others are awarded well-paid service contracts. ARED works with local organizations and recommends them to partners when the opportunity arises. At the local level, a number of partner associations have human resources fully capable of conducting training courses featuring some of our modules without supervision from ARED. Indeed, ARED no longer needs to train literacy trainers; for more than seven years now, literacy courses have been run by resource persons from partner associations.

Sociolinguistic context of ARED's work

Senegal is a country of about 13,508,715 inhabitants (ANSD et ICF, 2012) from more than 20 ethnic groups. Over 90 per cent of the population belong to the following five dominant ethnic groups: Wolof (43 per cent), Pulaar (24 per cent), Serer (15 per cent), Diola (5 per cent) and Mandingo (4 per cent). The remaining 9 per cent is made up of other ethnic groups and foreigners. Senegal's population is predominantly Muslim (94 per cent). There are also Christians (4 per cent); animists and others account for the remaining 2 per cent (ibid.). The literacy rate is 45.4 per cent: 53.7 per cent for men and 37.7 per cent for women (ANSD et ICF International, 2012; République du Sénégal, 2013).

Senegal has applied a careful policy of gradual language legislation since 1963, but nevertheless continues to lack a clear and coherent language policy. As Fary Silate Ka puts it[30], six national languages have already been identified in addition to the official language of French, but their adoption as formal languages in education has never been effective or successful. However, the six languages in question, particularly Pulaar, have been systematically used in literacy training since the early years of independence.

The official writing system of all Senegalese languages is based on the Latin alphabet (Decree 71–566 of 21 May 1971). This is the spelling system used for national languages in both non-formal and formal education. Although residual use of Arabic transliteration persists (the Ajami system in Pulaar or Wolofal in Wolof), official spelling and book publishing remain predominately in the Latin script. This greatly facilitates the correlation between national languages and French.

From 1963 onwards Senegal undertook a massive literacy programme, focusing particularly on rural populations. Until then, literacy-related activities were mainly conducted by the non-formal sector: NGOs, cultural associations, village development associations, religious organizations, and large development projects or companies such as SODEFITEX and SAED. The state has always acted in the capacity of institutional partner to literacy-related projects, either through framework agreements supporting 'functional literacy' or through the 'faire-faire' strategy (see below), with most funding provided by external donors such as the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), the World Bank, the German development agency GIZ, and UNESCO.

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30 Paper given at Festival des Langues d'Afrique (FESTILA) (3rd edition, Kinshasa, R.D.C., 14–16 June 2010). Symposium on the theme of 'Linguistic policies in French-speaking Africa from independence to the present: assessment and perspectives'.

Thanks to continued efforts over two decades (1993–2012), important advances have been made. Twenty-one of the twenty-seven listed languages have, for example, been codified and elevated to the rank of national languages.

However, three major challenges have always plagued the development of literacy: a) poor funding and dependence on external donors; b) the variety of training methods (each structure generally trains its own trainers, designs and develops its own tools, etc.); and c) lack of certification of the skills and capacities of the people running the training (facilitators, trainers of trainers, etc.).

ARED draws on the achievements of a major cultural association, the Association for the Renaissance of Pulaar (ARP), backed by the strong commitment of the Pulaar-speaking community. In all regions of Senegal, Pulaar coexists closely with the country's other languages, giving rise to many intercultural inferences. Of these other languages, only Wolof (a vehicular language nationally which is also found in Fouta, our zone of intervention) and Mandinka can truly be described as cross-border languages. As a cross-border, vehicular language, Pulaar (called Fulfulde in other African countries) has a wide sub-regional reach as it is spoken in twenty Western and Central African countries. It is currently estimated to have more than 60 million speakers, stretching from the banks of the Senegal River to those of the Nile. Furthermore, Pulaar allows for continuous comprehension between its various speakers despite its vast geographic spread and wide variety of dialects. It has a unified spelling, which the Fulfulde Vehicular Cross-Border Language Commission of the African Academy of Languages (ACALAN) proposes to standardize so that Pulaar can be used as a language of integration and eventually a working language in the countries of the African Union (AU).

ARED primarily uses Pulaar as its language of study and training. Our work in Senegal is concentrated in the north, due to the many initiatives developed to promote teaching through Pulaar. ARED designed all of its tools in Pulaar from the outset, to better evaluate the suitability of these tools for the needs and levels of new literates. Once the material is developed in Pulaar, ARED often adapts it to other Fulani dialects and other African languages. Occasionally the tools may be translated and adapted into French. This work generally requires a process of action research. Below, we describe such a process.

Enriching the multilingual and multicultural environment by training resource persons

ARED acts as a support structure for other organizations such as NGOs and local associations, providing them with educational materials and training modules. This partnership between NGOs who share the same goals and ambitions is known as the 'faire-faire' strategy. We respond to requests for assistance from local associations, NGOs and bilateral projects in Senegal, Mali, Benin, Burkina Faso and Niger. In these multilingual and multicultural environments, it is possible to promote each language and mutual enrichment through research, education and learning. We have noticed the importance of encouraging applied linguistic research so that each local language can fulfil its potential to convey both local and new knowledge, all the while fostering mutual enrichment between the various languages and cultures of a given environment.

The training modules we design take an active, participatory and learner-centred approach, interweaving the known with the new in a spiral of knowledge acquisition. In order to achieve this we go beyond the idea of basic education and concentrate on the competences and information that people already have and those they need to learn. Our courses focus on the development of basic educational skills and leadership and organizational abilities, whilst also providing information on citizenship and civil society so that people can make informed choices which enable them to achieve their own goals. In order to promote literacy and create a multilingual literate environment in a predominantly oral civilization where there is a scarcity of reading materials in local languages, it is necessary to provide culturally appropriate books that people will read for pleasure. Figure 3.5 depicts the four key content areas mentioned above.

Serving communities by training resource persons

Our training modules aim to empower learners to become certified trainers or facilitators who in turn empower the communities they train. As the learners are employees of NGOs and bilateral projects and members of local associations, they are already in a good position to do this. Employees of NGOs and bilateral projects are recruited on the basis of their academic level, field experience and ability to speak the local language fluently. They are generally not literate in local languages. The organizations they work for are involved in several development areas, usually covering vast geographical zones and several local languages. They are responsible for carrying out planned activities relating to literacy, leadership and training, monitoring on-site progress and reporting back.

Figure 3.5 **Broadening the scope of adult basic education**
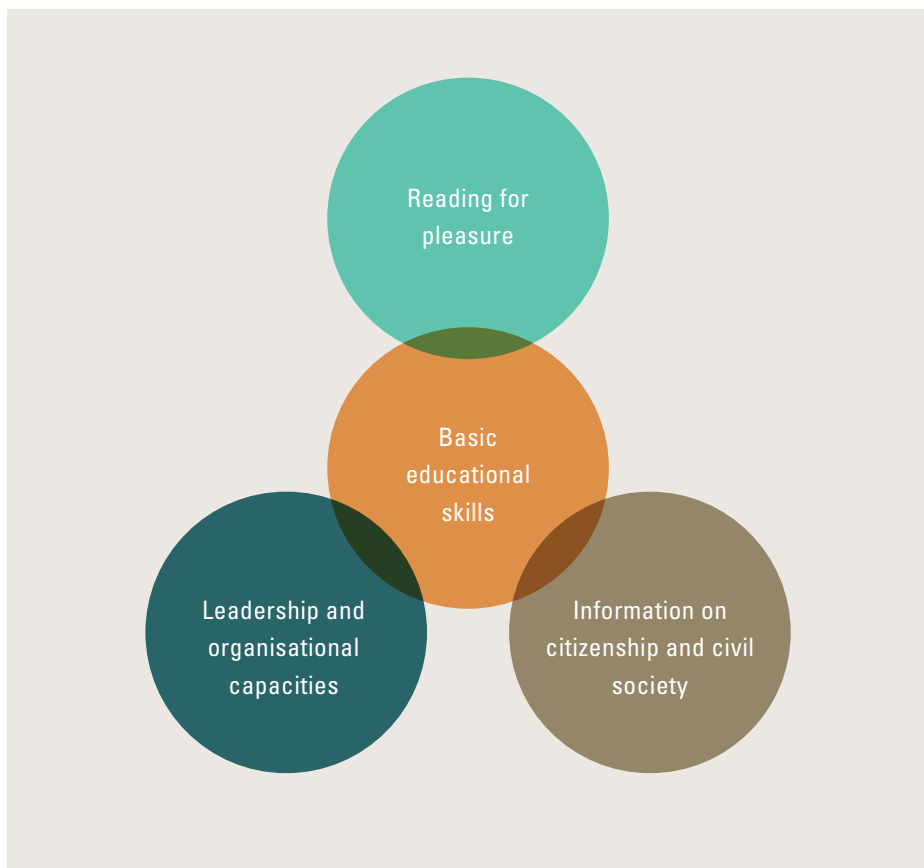
Members of local associations are usually community resource persons who are selected on a voluntary basis. The majority are literate only in local languages and have at least two years' experience of literacy classes. Some aspire to a career working on projects for NGOs and want to become trainers of trainers with this purpose in mind.

Women are often very poorly represented or not represented at all in the context of ARED's operations, especially in rural areas and where the work involves themes such as pastoralism, livestock trade and conflict management. Even when they are present, women's skill levels tend to be lower and their educational and career plans less certain. In the past, girls received little or no schooling because their training to lead a household started at around the age of seven. Girls as young as 12 could be forced

to marry in order to avoid the shame and insecurity of a pregnancy outside wedlock. Today, the government promotes the education of girls and women through various programmes and the creation of an appropriate infrastructure. When groups are being formed, parity (50 per cent women) is therefore encouraged and often required.

Certification for recognition and empowerment of professionals in the field of training adults

Certification is an important means of empowerment as it expresses recognition and validation of competences acquired. In addition to certificates of attendance, ARED issues certificates to approve the qualification of trainers. ARED is continuously working to build its network of certified external trainers who are capable of co-running sessions with ARED's trainers and even replacing them for certain programmes. During the courses it runs for NGOs and local associations, ARED identifies participants who have the potential to become effective trainers and steers them into a process of continuing education. These 'resource persons' then undergo 'upgrading training' to build their reading, writing and numeracy capacities in national languages, as well as a course and various training modules on adult education. Every time a new module is created, ARED organizes training for its resource persons. Resource persons from the same area are linked during the training courses for associations, so they can learn by co-teaching the module. Following an observation checklist, ARED trainers review the resource person's performance and abilities relative to the module.

In collaboration with the Saint-Louis-based Association for the Renaissance of Pulaar (ARP) and the School Inspectorate (IA), ARED has supported the development of a certified five-level training programme that responds to the staffing needs of organizations providing literacy training. To become a literacy teacher one must complete the first two steps (upgrading training and educational training). To become a community facilitator, it is necessary to complete step four (consisting of Accelerated Method of Participative Research / MARP) modular training courses on topics such as organizational and financial management, conflict management, literacy methods for specific groups, pastoralism, climate change adaptation, etc. To become a trainer or supervisor one must also complete step five (training of trainers). In order to certify these professional qualifications, the ARP conducts field visits with the IA to observe facilitators in the field. The certificates issued are recognized regionally and often enable the holders to exercise their training professionally.

A certificate of proficiency in teaching a module on pastoralism was issued by ARED and the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) in the context of a training programme for three pastoral associations. Twenty-four instructors were trained over a three-year period for the communities of these associations. Below we describe how action research was used to develop the modules for training on pastoralism together with the IIED and communities.

A systematized progressive approach to training trainers
Based on ARED's experience in the fields of basic literacy and modular training in Senegal and the sub-region, we progressively systematized a three-step approach for all training modules. Each module comprises pre-service training, training in teaching and learning methodologies, and in-service support training.

Figure 3.6 **The three-level training process of ARED's 'training the trainers' modules**

Level 3: In-service support training

Level 2: Pre-service teaching and learning methodologies training

Level 1: Pre-service content-oriented training
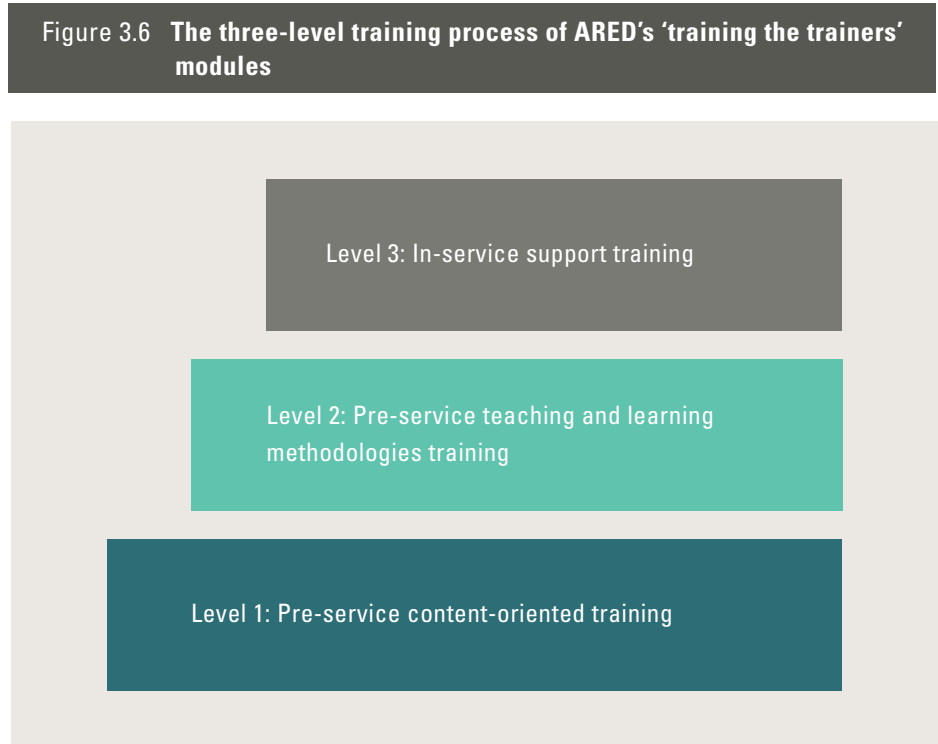
Level 1: Pre-service content-oriented training

Pre-service training can last thirty to ninety hours and is designed to ground the future trainer's basic skills. To be able to teach someone to read, one must be able to read fluently oneself and understand the underlying mechanisms of reading. Similarly, to make people see the merits of pastoral mobility, one must understand oneself how it works and be convinced of its importance. For this kind of training, it is not necessary for all participants to have received formal education. We try to group together future facilitators (in general, literate and relatively young men and women) and adults aged between thirty and seventy who generally cannot read or write but have extensive experience in the targeted field. Since the training is learner-centred, it depends on the participants' knowledge and exchanges. The mix of participants is crucial for the sharing of experiences and pooling of information.

Pre-service training is delivered in a language understood by all participants (either a local language or French), allowing for moments of exchange concerning key concepts between the different languages involved, particularly those which will subsequently be used to replicate the training. For example, the concept of mobility is defined differently depending on whether one is in a nomadic Fulani area or a sedentary Hausa agro-pastoral area; the terms used and their meanings and nuances vary from one group to another. Ideally, each future facilitator has the opportunity to think in his/her working language and culture, but also to share with others.

Level 2: Pre-service training in teaching and learning methodologies

One can understand something well without being able to make others understand it easily. This training focuses on the techniques required to carry out teaching and learning activities, reviewing methodologies and building participants' capacities. It ranges in length from thirty to forty-two hours, during which participants are familiarized with specialized educational materials. Group activities and classroom simulations are used throughout the training course as opportunities to exchange approaches, plan sessions and gather feedback from trainees on the basis of an observation checklist. A field test (i.e. outside the classroom) is generally carried out during the course so that participants can appreciate the initial difficulties of putting the training into practice and think about possible solutions.

At this stage, it is important that the participants use their own working languages. Where educational tools (e.g. guides) exist only in a common language (French or a local language), it is important to discuss the common aspects during classroom plenary sessions. However, it is even more important to highlight the specific issues that arise for each linguistic group and to allow each group to work on them at length.

Level 3: In-service support training

This phase of the training is carried out on an individual basis, while the programme for which the learner has been trained is being implemented. It requires close coordination between the tutor, the trainee and the beneficiary population. The primary purpose of this training is to empower the trainee. The duration depends on the trainee's level of proficiency and on how much support s/he needs. The tutor assists in planning the sessions and observes the trainee in practice. After having reviewed the trainee's strengths, weaknesses and progress with him/her, the tutor then helps the trainee to apply the required remedial measures.

Figure 3.7 **Teacher trainee in the process of applying his training while being supervised by his trainers, Diffa, Niger, 2005.**

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Peer groups of trained individuals: a measure that can accompany every type of training

To ensure that initiatives are followed up, trained individuals generally form a 'network of ARED trainers' or a peer group. Meetings are held on weekends to perform training simulations, initially just between trained individuals and subsequently with people they know. At the end of each meeting, participants identify points of progress and difficulties encountered. These difficulties are brought to the attention of other trained individuals who did not take part in the meeting.

Action research applied to develop training modules for trainers

ARED applies the principles of action research to develop modules for training trainers. We subscribe to Michel Liu's definition of action research as "a fundamental research method in the human sciences that arises from the meeting between a desire for change and a research intention. It pursues a sustainable goal that consists in establishing a project designed to bring about change and thereby contributes to the advancement of knowledge in the human sciences. It is based on the joint effort of all the people involved. It is developed within an ethical framework that is negotiated and accepted by all" (Liu, 1997, p. 87, free translation by the editors).

In a multilingual and multicultural environment, educational work always benefits from being carried out in the language of the learners themselves and within their cultural, historical and sociological environment. This safeguards against cultural alienation and ensures the motivation of the participants. Such contexts favour the development of innovations in the training of trainers, because the learners are predisposed to accept and to get involved in the learning process, whose results are not guaranteed in advance. The ethical framework, the transparency of the actions and the recognition of the value added by each participant creates a climate of trust. It also provides the opportunity to re-test new solutions in order to draw lessons from them and jointly take on other 'adventures'. Education and learning through action and in action is a powerful factor in capacity building. This is what our experience of using action research as a learning tool has proven to us.

In responding to requests from partners, ARED often deals with two types of situation that prompt action research for the training of trainers: (1) the training module does not exist and must be created; (2) the module exists but must be adapted to the needs of the request.

An example of an action research process to develop a new training module

In the following example, a training module about managing natural resources did not yet exist and the needs and profile of the learners had to be established. ARED therefore conducted a study in 1994 on land use practices in northern Senegal with the Université Gaston Berger in Saint-Louis and partners in the field. Two preliminary phases were implemented. First, ARED trained teachers and some students in the MARP method. The trained teams were then sent to rural villages to study the local land use practices. Thanks to the positive reaction of the community concerned, several cycles of action research evolved from this project.

First attempt to respond and difficulties encountered
The first cycle of action research, which took place from June 1994 to March 1995, was initiated by a challenge launched to ARED by a rural community. At the end of the 1994 study on land use practices, the local resource persons mentoring the teams, who were members of the Dental Bamtaare Tooro association, appreciated the results but were unhappy about the way they had been treated. They felt that they had been 'taken for a ride'. They made their dissatisfaction known to ARED in the most virulent manner. A stream of questions was unleashed, eventually leading to this crucial question: *What can you do to give meaning to the skills you helped us acquire? In other words, how can you help us to take charge of our studies by ourselves and for ourselves?* These questions highlight the importance of involving stakeholders at all levels, from design to evaluation, and making use of the benefits. After all, what value is there in pre-service training that does not raise questions and challenges?

As these criticisms were impossible to ignore, we decided to make the MARP available to grassroots communities. The process began with translating the main MARP tools into Pulaar, which took us two months. We then spent fifteen days training sixteen community resource persons from the Dental Bamtaare Tooro association to use the tools, which they immediately began to put to use in their village. The initial applications of this training in the field quickly generated a lot of enthusiasm in the community. For many community members it was their first experience of having their own children help them define and discuss their problems without the mandatory presence of an 'outsider' (an external facilitator).

Despite the initial enthusiasm, however, the shortcomings of this approach were quickly exposed. As soon as we checked in during a monitoring mission, we found facilitators overcome by panic. Community members were coming to them every day with very serious problems that they were unable to cope with. They explained their difficulty to our team as follows: *As soon as we started putting the first tools into practice, many problems that had been latent or unknown to the majority of the community came out into the open, and others continued to emerge: for example, disputes with our neighbours over land boundaries, and within our own community over who will be the next chief. We don't know what to do and we are worried.* It was then that we appreciated the complexity of knowledge transmission and realised that it requires a methodological approach. We turned to a partner NGO that knew more than we did about dealing with these kinds of issues: the International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED).

Response to challenges: contextualized, emancipatory and participatory action research

It was immediately clear that all stakeholders must be involved in the process. However, the related question of who is to be involved – and how – immediately arose. Many criteria must be taken into account when making this decision: gender, age, social role, literacy level, priority concerns, etc. Participatory research methods have proven very useful in this regard.

From the initial interactions with IIED and the various participants, we realised that merely translating the MARP tools is not enough. They must be adapted to suit the community concerned, whilst also paying particular attention to the key points that are important for action research:

1. The stakeholders' problem, needs and capacities
2. Working hypotheses
3. The system used to involve local resource persons
4. The process and its various stages
5. Evaluation and making use of the benefits

Each of these points is explained in more detail below.

1. Articulating a problem; needs and capacity analysis

IIED, which has proven expertise in the use of participatory approaches and natural resource management, assisted in defining the community's needs. The Dental Bamtaare Tooro association wanted to be able to conduct diagnostic analyses and endogenous participatory planning independently. The village resource persons to be trained for this association had relatively good knowledge of their environment compared to the external researchers. They were literate in their own language and had solid experience of working with associations. However, for the most part, they had little or no formal education. They therefore had very limited knowledge of the approaches and tools they could use to implement a research process in their communities while maintaining a critical distance. They asked the following question:

What skills should be passed on to literate resource persons in their own language so that they are able to operate independently of the participatory research and planning processes in their communities?

2. Development of working hypotheses

We always start from a contextualized working hypothesis that considers the need(s) for change and the processes involved. Brainstorming sessions with community leaders highlight the importance of linking training to an objective for change. The idea of experimenting with a training process came about whilst developing a plan for natural resource management (PGRN). In practical terms, the main purpose of the brainstorming is to jointly identify the steps to be followed and, for each step, the knowledge, know-how and life skills to be integrated by the resource persons. These steps usually include diagnosis (let's get better acquainted with our environment), analysis (let's analyse the problems and choose adapted solutions), and planning (let's get organized and plan our actions) (Gueye and Ly, 1996). It is important to start from the stakeholders' real needs, motivation and literacy level.

3. Resource mobilization

Resource mobilization is a key factor in these preliminary steps. In order to run the action research process effectively, it is necessary to reflect on the purpose of the action to be taken and the learning group that is to be created to achieve the desired changes. The following system was put in place with roles and responsibilities clearly defined:

* IIED carried out scientific validation of the process.
* ARED was responsible for andragogy and development of tools in the national language.
* The village communities, through the Dental Bamtaare Tooro association, worked on social mobilization.
* The Village Management of Podor Natural Areas project (GVEP), set up by the NGO Union pour la Solidarité et l'Entraide (USE/PIP) and funded by the Austrian Development Cooperation Agency, acted as a partner for the management of the process and the implementation of the plans.

In our case, this group of partners worked in a perfect triangular relationship (see figure 3.8) where each entity held one of the key roles: IIED (expert), ARED (teachers and specialists in national languages), GVEP and the communities (beneficiaries, users). It is helpful if the community participants are literate (so that they can take notes, read instructions, etc.), but illiterate people can also participate.

Figure 3.8 **The triangular relationship of the key actors**

Expert(s)

Teacher(s)

User(s)
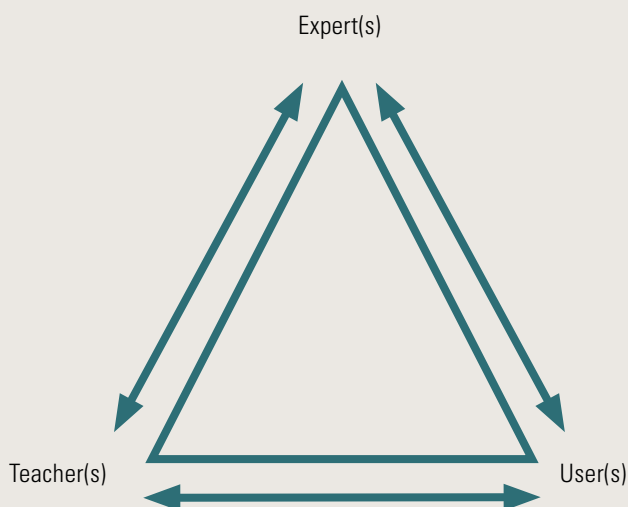
4. Implementation of each step in the process

The process took place over several months. For each step, the following
activities were implemented:

- Design and adaptation of an approach and tools (IIED, ARED in
  consultation with the communities)
- Training of community resource persons in the use of these tools (ARED)
- Application of training in the village with the support of community
  leaders
- Mentoring by local NGO (GVEP)
- Supervision by the management structures (IIED, ARED)

The timing of these actions was as follows. Preparations of the new action
research approach with IIED and the communities took three months. A
document detailing the financing of the project was then developed and
negotiated with IIED and its partners. This took another seven months. In
January 1996, ARED and IIED started to work out the methodology and

tools. The first 15-day training of resource persons took place in March 1996 and involved training community resource persons to conduct a diagnostic study of their situation. In the second training, which took place four months later, resource persons were trained to use the analysis tools and to choose appropriate actions. A third training focusing on the planning tools took place four months later. In between the trainings, the communities worked at their own rhythm. Two GVEP resource persons assisted the village resource persons throughout in applying the tools and ensuring constant close monitoring. Every two months, ARED and IIED met with the respective communities in order to discuss progress, offer assistance, and hold meetings with the resource persons. The final products (see below) were available in 1997.

5. Integrated evaluation and applying lessons learnt
At the end of each step, all members of the learning group gathered for evaluation sessions to report what worked well, express concerns and draw lessons from their experience. In our case, we identified a need to develop the resource persons' ability to use the training tools. The exchanges among all stakeholders steered the planning of the process and the development of training tools.

The outputs of the action research in 1997
* A management plan for the natural resources available was developed by the communities themselves with the assistance of ARED and IIED. This plan was put into practice under the framework of the GVEP project.
* A training module for resource persons was developed using an adapted version of MARP in Pulaar. The module is composed of three manuals with the following goals:
  1. Let's get to know our environment in greater depth.
  2. Let's analyse the problems and choose solutions.
  3. Let's plan our activities.

Criteria for quality action research that emerge from our experience

Facilitation and supervision skills, field experience, and a good level of formal and/or non-formal education are major assets in the action research process. However, commitment, enthusiasm, oral and written knowledge of local languages and an ability to adapt projects to suit the local culture and community are no less important. Three key criteria for high quality action research emerged from our case study. These are:

- training participants in the use of literacy in the action research process
- contextualization of the methodology used
- community ownership of the action research process

The following section describes these criteria in more detail.

Integration of literacy training in the action research process

When running the village sessions with the twofold purpose of training people to use tools and performing a diagnostic analysis of the situation, we distributed different roles to the members of the community group as follows: a team of two people to chair the discussions, a subgroup to take notes and another to observe the dynamics and to give feedback. This operational triptych is often necessary for the process to run smoothly. After a few sessions, we realised that a lot of interesting information was getting lost simply because the resource persons were struggling to take notes quickly enough.

We responded to this problem by providing already literate people with a training module to build their instrumental capacities. This 'upgrade' module was specially designed for future literacy trainers. In fact, it is often necessary to train the learners before starting the process of action research itself. The goal is that after 90 hours of training they should be able to read any text in Pulaar fluently and write legibly with correct spelling. In the 'upgrade' training provided to village facilitators, we focused on the legibility, accuracy and conciseness of their writing and the speed of their note-taking. We also devoted time to discussions so as to enable participants to appropriate certain concepts in the national language. We reinforced participants' ability to formulate open and closed questions, to visualize, and to organize work in a team. These skills enhance communicative competence and are applicable in other aspects of work.

In order to awaken a general interest in reading among all the participants in our training courses, we chose extracts from books (novels, translations, research studies, etc.) that corresponded to their interests. We read aloud to them in order to encourage their curiosity and love of reading. The fact that many people subsequently bought or ordered the books demonstrates that these techniques were effective.

Ownership and contextualization

Ultimately, the participants took full ownership of the action research process. They named it LOHU (*Laawol Oorgirgol Humpito*) in Pulaar, meaning 'method of exploiting and optimizing local knowledge and experience'. They felt

valued due to their new position as researchers in their own communities and in their own language. The result of this process was a contextualized training module in MARP that empowers resource persons and communities. The positive reaction of the local community in this case shows that the contextualization and appropriation of the action research method was successful, which in turn confirms the importance of grounding learning in the local language and culture.

Building on lessons learned

The lessons learned from the LOHU process fed into the development of another training module on pastoralism in the Sahel, conducted by IIED and ARED in collaboration with pastoral and agro-pastoral communities in Mali and Senegal. The development of this training module involved several action research cycles over three years. The main challenge was to make the contents of the module available to groups who were mostly illiterate.

The fundamental principles for teaching the module were participation, self-discovery and visualization. The participatory and inclusive teaching and learning approach awakened participants' desire to become literate in their own language. A French version of the module was introduced to the public via various education and research institutions in Senegal and NGOs and associations in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger (Niger Association for the Revitalisation of Livestock / AREN and CARE International). Again, cross-institutional cooperation played a major role in unifying and energizing the project. Institutions such as CARE Denmark and CARE International in Niger, pastoral associations and NGOs and government officials in Senegal, Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso, Benin and Chad expressed interest in appropriating the module. The good quality and cross-country relevance of the training module fully justifies the time invested in developing it.

How the key actors were empowered in terms of new skills and competences through their experience with action research

The participants in the action research processes described above learnt how to reflect and work together on complex and conflictual issues that are important for people's lives. They acquired new attitudes and capacities by working in a collaborative way. The resource persons who steered this process learnt how to mobilize and involve people from the local community with different profiles and abilities. These new capacities were subsequently used in the communities to work on other issues such as climate change.

Point for reflection 5

Please think about and give your opinion in writing on the following questions:

1. How do you think action research has been useful for training trainers in the case presented by Mamadou Amadou Ly?

2. Why does it matter which language or languages are chosen in action research?

3. In what ways has the action research presented by Ly been empowering for the people affected?

Conclusion from the three case studies

Unlike formal education where courses are predefined, high quality non-formal education based on action research involves constructing both the questions and the curricula to bring about the professionalization of stakeholders in the areas of their choice. Action research can be used to enhance learners' learning skills and to ensure their ownership of the process. Action research can also be used in a participatory way by literacy providers and learners to improve the quality of training programmes. In these ways and others, action research can support the development of a multilingual and multicultural literate environment.

In each of the case studies presented above, the action research drew on the contributions of literate stakeholders who were capable not only of fluently reading any text in the working language, but also of taking notes, summarizing, doing reports, creating graphic charts, and reading maps, plans, diagrams, etc. The use of written language as a tool in practical activities, as well as in the design and application of the training by stakeholders, reinforced the latter's confidence in themselves and their self-teaching abilities and opened the way to empowerment, the ultimate goal of any learning process. Moreover, participants who did not yet have these skills were motivated to learn them in the language of their own social context.

The cultural and linguistic grounding of projects is a foundational factor in any teaching-learning process. Education and training in local languages should, as far as possible, be introduced into a community in such a way that the community actively defines the form, role and value of the education. The key factor in the processes we have presented is that the education was delivered in Pulaar and Afan Oromo, and was thus met with a favourable cultural reaction. This way, pursuing an education does not result in cultural alienation (as is often the case with formal education in French in Western Africa). Instead, education becomes something that can contribute to local development initiatives while preserving culture and language and integrating new ideas into existing social and intellectual systems as a result.

We would like to share one more observation, which is that ARED's training system highlights the importance of certifying the skills acquired during training so that they can be validated. This not only motivates and empowers stakeholders, but also offers them employment opportunities, thus helping to fight poverty.

From each case study a few themes emerge that are crucial for implementing good quality adult literacy programmes in multilingual contexts. We can work on these themes using action research as a methodology for understanding, defining and problem solving in order to advance in our quest for quality. The themes that emerge from the case studies in this chapter apply to the specific situations encountered during those studies. In other contexts similar or new themes may arise and need to be dealt with by the stakeholders concerned.

In the first case study, the critical prerequisite for the creation of a multilingual literate environment in Niger was the implementation of efficient bilingual formal and non-formal basic education. This, in turn, required consistent and good quality local publishing in the national languages that responds to people's desire to read and write for both educational and recreational purposes. In the second case study on curriculum development in Ethiopia, the central theme was improving smallholder coffee producers' literacy and numeracy skills in the Afan Oromo language (written in the Latin script), in order to promote their professional development and the expansion of their businesses. In support of this, the second theme was the development of a context-specific, gender-responsive curriculum which is relevant for smallholder coffee producers, i.e. based on their prior knowledge, local practices and sociolinguistic and cultural context. The third case study on training for community development in Senegal addressed the theme of adapting research and training tools to the socio-cultural and linguistic context at hand, so that the local community has ownership of the action research process.

Point for reflection 6

In order to deepen and apply your understanding of the material discussed so far, we would like you to reflect now on your own practice and context. The following questions will guide your reflection:
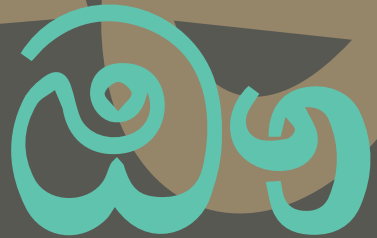
1. What themes are applicable in your own context?

2. Have you worked on a case related to these themes before? If yes, please describe it in one to two paragraphs.

3. If you have worked on such a case, did you do so with colleagues and/or learners?

    a. If so, what were the main steps involved in the process? Can you see any similarities with the main principles of action research?

    b. If not, what kinds of problems do you think could emerge in your context?

4

A frame of reference for good quality youth and adult literacy provision in multilingual contexts

By Hassana Alidou and Christine Glanz

Sinhala is used to write Sinhala or Sinhalese, a language that belongs to the Indo-Aryan subgroup of the Indo-European languages. There are about 16 million native speakers, most of them in Sri Lanka. Sinhaha, alongside Tamil, is an official language of Sri Lanka.

Focus of the chapter

- to understand and reflect on the proposed guiding principles that shape the quality of youth and adult literacy education and learning in multilingual and multicultural contexts
- to understand and reflect on the overall context-led frame of reference

In this chapter, we propose a frame of reference in order to share a vision based on practice and theory about quality education in multilingual and multicultural contexts, with a particular focus on youth and adult literacy education. Our intention in doing this is to inspire you to improve the quality of your own practice.

A frame of reference or framework is not a finished, static tool. In general, a framework consists of a set of beliefs, ideas or rules that are used as the basis for making judgments and decisions. As we evolve in our understanding and make use of action research, we identify further principles and quality criteria. Building a frame of reference is a dialogical process to which adult learners can contribute.

The frame of reference we propose builds on the foundational statements of UNESCO's mandate and on basic principles emerging from research on education and literacy. It elaborates on these values and their implementation. Firstly, we introduce you to the broader cross-cutting principles and foundational statements. We then outline central fields of quality analysis which are based on these transversal principles.

UNESCO's vision and mission is to promote justice and peace in a culturally and linguistically diverse world. All modern concepts of justice share a common norm, which is that all human beings are equal and should therefore be treated with the same respect and regard. UNESCO's work with regard to justice (Ouane and Glanz, 2006) has two dimensions that correspond to the definition of social justice given by Nancy Fraser (2000):

1. Recognition of diversity and non-discrimination, a "difference-friendly world, where assimilation to majority or dominant cultural norms is no longer the price of equal respect" (Fraser, 2000, p. 48).
2. Egalitarian redistribution of resources and goods.

The core principles of social justice are parity of participation and equality. Participation in this context means social freedom as an aspect of human development. It refers to "the capability to participate in the life of the community, to join in public discussion, to participate in political decision-making and even the elementary ability to appear in public without shame" (UNDP, 2000, p. 19–20). Leon Tikly and Angeline Barrett underline the importance of this kind of participation in view of social justice that is related to quality education. They state that "education quality is a political issue and as such participation in deciding about what are the valued outcomes of education and valued processes to support these should be a matter of debate" (Tikly and Barrett, 2011, p. 6). This takes us to the democratic dimension of participatory social justice and the question of whether people's voices are heard from local to transnational levels; whether they feel themselves to be responsible agents, 'makers and shapers' as Caroline Kerfoot puts it (2009, n. p.), instead of mere 'users and choosers'.

Education enhances participation in a democratic way
Democracy[31] is a never-ending negotiation process which involves not only fair policies, but also community building and healthy relationships with other human beings and with nature (Schugurensky, 2013, p. xi). Democratic actions entail sharing power and resources based on a critical discussion of differences in power and voice, and legitimate patterns of resistance on the part of marginalized people, as George Sefa Dei underlines (Dei, 2013, p. 53). Democratic participation should lead to practices and spaces for education and learning that differ from the old practices which created the problem under scrutiny in the first place. There is no 'one-size-fits-all', quick fix single model of democracy that suits all societies and cultures. Paul Carr emphasizes that:

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31 See the Glossary for a definition of 'democracy'.

there is no one thing, proposal, reform or issue that can democratize society in and through education. However, a number of small and large, nuanced and straight-forward, complex and simple, costly and budget-neutral, and other diverse measures can be imagined to democratize education. Reconsidering what democracy is outside of the normative hegemonic interpretation would be fundamental to this process… (Carr, 2013, p. 40).

According to Daniel Schugurensky (2013), we need to look at education for democracy and democracy in education. He perceives the following five implications:

1. Education should support the development of democratic consciousness, which requires that people have experience of democratic practices in a variety of social institutions.
2. Education and learning need to be thought of in terms of how they can contribute positively to gender equality, peace, intercultural understanding, environmental friendliness, and citizenship.
3. Educational institutions should be understood as places that support people to change society for the better.
4. Democracy needs to be taught, discussed and practised in teacher training.
5. Educational institutions need to be democratized.

There is no way around working with cultural diversity

The World Commission on Culture and Development mandated by UNESCO published its landmark report Our Creative Diversity in 1995 (Pérez de Cuéllar et al., 1995). The report highlights the importance of culture and explores why and how cultural pluralism could become an integral part of policymaking to achieve social and economic development and well-being. The authors argue that this is possible because culture shapes our thinking, imagination and behaviour (p. 7ff.). The Commission sees a liberal, tolerant attitude and pleasure in a multiplicity of points of view as preconditions for living together in a multicultural world. Ethnic identification is considered a 'normal and healthy response to the pressures of globalization' (p. 73). Dialogue and negotiation therefore have an important bridging role to play in understanding and discovering the shared values of all ethnic groups when nations build a civic community. The President of the Commission encourages innovation:

The challenge of humanity is to adopt new ways of thinking, new ways of acting, new ways of organizing itself in society, in short, new ways of living. The challenge is also to promote different paths of development, informed by a recognition of how cultural factors shape the way in which societies conceive their own futures and choose the means to attain these futures (Pérez de Cuéllar et al., 1995, p. 11).

This kind of tolerant, liberal thinking could give rise to new intercultural educational practices that are in tune with the diverse cultural contexts that they serve. Konai Helu Thaman proposes such a concept of education for the Pacific Island nations (Thaman, 2008). She would like to see one particular core value of Pacific Island culture integrated into the education systems of other cultures. This core value is acting well and responsibly in interpersonal and inter-group relationships. A highly important component of education and learning in the Pacific Island Nations, this principle is also applicable in other contexts, particularly Africa, Asia and Latin America where the boundaries between personal and communal life are blurred.

The findings of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century (Delors et al., 1996) mandated by UNESCO correspond to those of the World Commission on Culture. They suggest that education policies and programmes take a constructive and curious attitude towards multilingualism and cultural diversity because they are a *normality* which should be treated as a *resource* for enhancing learning and social cohesion (Carneiro, 1996; Geremek, 1996; Stavenhagen, 1996).

It is important to acknowledge that all youth and adults have the right to learning opportunities which recognize the diversity of their interests, needs and possibilities. In this context, we might well ask to what extent the rights of women, linguistic and cultural minorities, school dropouts, and people with disabilities are recognized by current legislation from central to local government. It is also important to acknowledge that youth and adult learners have the right to decide what is pertinent for them, and to note that learning can take place anywhere and at any time: space and time should not be a limitation.

Where there is a national curriculum framework, it has to take into account the sociolinguistic and cultural profile of learners in all segments of society and cover all forms of education (formal, non-formal and informal) from bottom-up to top-down and from central to local level. The concept of cross-fertilization is useful in this regard. The curriculum framework, as an instrument to organize learning, has to be flexible so that it meets youth and adult learners' interests and needs. The adult is not a passive learner but a knower with her/his own history and aspirations, who is capable of knowing and reflecting on what is important in her/his learning. A transformative and emancipatory approach to education (what Paulo Freire called 'education for freedom', Freire, 1973), is the preferred choice. Action research is a tool that can help integrate all stakeholders, from policymakers to programme managers, trainers of trainers, facilitators and learners, and encourage them to think in a complex way about how to improve the learning environment.

Five basic guiding principles

In this section, we introduce you to five basic guiding principles or values which emerge from theory and practice. We consider them crucial, but they are not exhaustive; there could be other important principles in your context. The basic guiding principles of good quality youth and adult literacy education in multilingual and multicultural contexts that we suggest are:

1. Inclusion, with a special focus on gender equality as one of the current global priorities of UNESCO;
2. Lifelong learning;
3. Literacy in a multilingual and multicultural perspective as an essential aspect of the human right to education;
4. Multilingual ethos[33] ;
5. Sustainability.

Principle: Inclusion

Who attends adult literacy programmes?
In most contexts, whether in developed or developing countries, the youth and adults who attend literacy programmes are members of linguistic or cultural minorities, people with disabilities, people with low social-economic backgrounds, and women. In other words, they tend to be the most vulnerable, underprivileged and marginalized members of society. Contextually rooted adult literacy programmes can offer these people an opportunity to develop new attitudes, skills and competences that enable them to overcome some of their challenges. It is therefore important to regard quality adult and youth programmes as learning opportunities which integrate strategies related to learners' motivation, engagement and persistence (Lesgold and Welch-Ross, 2012, pp. 130–132). Persistence is built by taking into account learners' motivation, interests and needs.

Three factors are crucial for the creation of an enabling learning environment that motivates, engages and allows for persistence:

1. Motivation, which is enhanced by engaging learners through responsive learning programmes based on their interests and needs.
2. An engaging context of learning which uses texts and tasks relevant to the youth and adult learners.
3. Systems and structures that support persistence and resilience. This means, for example, institutional and organizational arrangements that allow learners to attend educational programmes while they are carrying out other productive activities. In addition, the system and structures need to support learners in applying and developing their newly acquired skills.

These three factors are best achieved through action research, which allows learners to build their own capacities and make decisions related to their lives and environment. Cultivating persistence and self-efficacy among youth and adult learners leads to their own emancipation and transformation.

Gender equality, a UNESCO priority

One prominent example of efforts towards inclusion is the work on gender equality, which aims to create an enabling environment for all women and men. Gender equality is one of UNESCO's two current global priorities. The principle states that women and men shall have equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and for contributing to, and benefiting from, economic, social, cultural and political development.

The term 'gender' refers to the culturally defined social roles that are considered appropriate for men and women in a particular culture, and which shape their behaviours, activities, and attributes (UNESCO Bureau of Strategic Planning, 2003, p. 17). These arrangements can be modified because they are the result of social negotiation, perception, knowledge and possibilities. This flexibility is illustrated by the fact that women and men live differently in different cultural settings, and by the changes we see when we take a historical perspective. UNESCO was created "to further universal respect for justice, for the rule of law and for the human rights and fundamental freedoms which are affirmed for the peoples of the world, without distinction of race, sex, language or religion" (UNESCO, 2012, p. 6). For UNESCO, gender equality therefore means respecting the human rights of both women and men regardless of their ethnicity, sexual orientation and gender identity.[32] It means creating equal opportunities for the self-realization and well-being of all people.

Gender inequality is addressed by *gender equity measures* that react to and compensate for social and historical disadvantages and unequal opportunities, and guarantee fairness. Often the compensatory measures are geared towards women because in patriarchal societies their access to resources is more

32 The respect of human rights includes homosexual, bisexual and transgender people. The United Nations Secretary-General and UNESCO condemn homophobia, as is shown for example in the following speech by the United Nations Secretary-General: www.unmultimedia.org/radio/english/2013/05/fight-against-homophobia-is-fight-for-human-rights-ban-ki-moon/ (accessed 19 November 2014.). Ms Irina Bokova, Director-General of UNESCO, announced on the International Day Against Homophobia and Transphobia (IDAHO), 17 May 2013, that "UNESCO launched a global initiative in 2011 to prevent and combat homophobic and transphobic bullying in education – to ensure that educational settings are safe places, free of discrimination and violence against LGBT students and educators, where all students have internalized the principle that all human beings, regardless of sexual orientation and gender identity, are equal in dignity and rights".

limited (for case studies in relation to women and literacy see Eldred, 2013 and UIL, 2013b). However, the group or groups that suffer from gender inequality differ in each context.

Principle: Lifelong Learning

Reading and writing competences in one or in several languages and scripts are acquired through a lifelong learning process in the domains of life where literacy matters. Good quality literacy education therefore teaches literacy so that it relates to the ways reading and writing are used in everyday life outside the educational realm.

Two core principles for an education that unfolds the treasure within people

The influential report 'Learning: the Treasure Within' by the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century (Delors et al., 1996) sets out two principles for an education that supports the unfolding of the treasure within each person:

(i)   assisting people in learning throughout life
(ii) offering education which is composed of four foundational pillars:
      "*learning to know*, that is acquiring the instruments of understanding; *learning to do*, so as to be able to act creatively on one's environment; *learning to live together*, so as to participate and co-operate with other people in all human activities; and *learning to be*, so as to develop one's personality and be able to act with ever greater autonomy, judgement and personal responsibility" (ibid., p. 86 and 97, italics added by the authors).

These pillars intersect, influence each other and form a whole. Each educational programme therefore needs to deal with all of them. The two principles of the Commission on Education are also acknowledged in adult education. They are central aspects of the international Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning (UIE, 1997) adopted in 1997 at the end of the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA V). At the international level, the Declaration made a major shift in the understanding of quality visible. This broadened the scope from basic eduction to lifelong learning:

Though the content of adult learning and of education for children and adolescents will vary according to the economic, social, environmental and cultural context, and the needs of the people in the societies in which they take place, both are necessary elements of a new vision of education in which learning becomes truly lifelong. The perspective of learning throughout

life commands such complementarity and continuity (UNESCO Institute for Education, 1997, §4).

The term *lifelong learning* (rather than *education*) indicates that the learners and their demands are moved to centre stage and the educational institution is at their service. Their learning, concerns and what they consider relevant and satisfying are the yardstick by which the quality of educational provision is judged (Torres, 2002). The Declaration also promotes inclusion and diversity as important principles because learners are not autonomous units but social beings whose societies shape their lives considerably. This vision of adult learning goes beyond a human rights approach that promotes universal, individual human rights only: it is sensitive to the diversity of contexts that shape the environments in which adults live.

Principle: Literacy from a multilingual and multicultural perspective as an essential aspect of the human right to education

Literacy education is inherent in the human right to education for two reasons. Firstly, the acquisition of literacy (and numeracy) skills and competences[33] is a key learning objective in formal and non-formal education in all subjects and at all levels. Secondly, literacy is itself a primary teaching and learning tool. Literacy is also essential for lifelong learning from childhood to old age because people can benefit from their reading and writing skills in their informal learning and knowledge sharing activities as well as in formal and non-formal educational settings.

Written language carries meaning and speaks for its authors
Like any other medium of communication, written language is not a neutral tool but a carrier of symbolic meaning in graphic form (Street, 1995). Each language that we use in writing has its own literacy history that has been influenced by contact with other literate cultures. Written language also carries the social value that is attached to the language concerned and the people who use it. People use reading and writing in order to communicate. This means that the written language represents the author, his/her social position and habitus[34]. Written language carries both the meaning that the author wants to express, and the meaning that those who read it attach to it.

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33 See the Glossary for a definition of literacy skills, competences, capabilities and practices.

34 See the Glossary for a definition of 'habitus'.

In a multilingual and multicultural world, the way we use literacy is influenced by more than one culture. For example, if an Amharic woman from Ethiopia writes in Japanese, her writing carries both of these cultures, and maybe even other cultures as well, depending on the circumstances. She may be aware of this, but probably is not. Literacy can thus only be fully understood from the perspective of its users, taking into account the particular socio-cultural and historical context in which it evolved.

A critical view of literacy with a focus on cultural fluency

The use of literacy can have both positive and negative effects on people depending on the purpose it is used for, how well its meaning is understood, and many other factors. Ingrid Jung and Adama Ouane advocate a critical view of literacy because:

the analysis of the history of literacy as a socio-historical tool reveals it to be often a tool of control and oppression [rather than] a means of democratizing knowledge and power. Consequently, we can no longer simply treat literacy as an input into the development process, producing as an output an increase in production, equality, democracy, and justice. […] we must see literacy from the perspective of the user, how literacy enables persons and groups to achieve their own rights and goals. […] Literacy is also part of cultural development. In every case we should analyse the role literacy may play in reflection on and the development of the indigenous cultural resources of a given community (Ouane and Jung, 2001, pp. 333–334).

This perspective is reflected in the work of the New Literacy Studies movement, which help us demystify literacy by looking at "how literacy is embedded in other human activity, its embeddedness in social life and in thought, and its position in history, language, and learning […] in a way which allows change. […] studying literacy as a set of social practices associated with particular symbol systems and their related technologies" (Barton, 2007, p. 32). When we talk about literacy as a widely used symbolic carrier of social meanings from a multilingual and multicultural perspective, we are talking about it as a resource for communication, for exercising power, for participation and building identity. Therefore, instead of looking primarily at language fluency in youth and adult literacy, we need to focus on 'cultural fluency' [35], of which written language fluency is a component, as we try to show in this book.

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35 We thank Alison Lazarus from South Africa for highlighting this issue. For a definition of 'cultural fluency' see the Glossary.

A human right has to be contextualized

Literacy education as a human right "is concerned with the development of individuals to fulfil their potential and be involved in all levels of society as equal human beings" (Eldred, 2013, p. 11). As everybody has the right to learning opportunities, the diversity of people's interests, needs and possibilities are a central concern for good quality education. National curriculum frameworks for youth and adult literacy, for example, have to integrate all segments of the population and all forms of education, taking into account that adult learners have the right to decide what is pertinent to them. Literacy education cannot be the same everywhere in the world, because we live in different societies, have different potentials, and use different languages at different levels of society. Good quality literacy education is rooted in the particular socio-cultural and linguistic context of the society it serves. Such cultural grounding cannot happen without valorizing the local communication culture that may include reading and writing in local languages (as described for example by Fagerberg-Diallo, 2001 and Gebre et al., 2009). Research and practice show that adult literacy education that alienates people and is detached from their lives meets at best with healthy resistance. In places where education is developed from the bottom-up and where people valorize their language and culture, youth and adult literacy education can make a positive contribution to society, provided that it widens the capabilities of individuals while respecting their dignity (Olson and Torrance, 2001; Ouane and Glanz, 2011; Skutnabb-Kangas and Heugh, 2012).

Principle: Multilingual ethos (as part of a multicultural ethos)

In all countries of the world, we find ourselves today in an era of multilingual and multimedia communication where written language is widely used. Literacy, its uses and its social meanings depend on a number of contextual factors, including culture, language, and technological means, as the three case studies in the previous chapter illustrate.

Despite this, too often only literacy in the dominant language receives attention. Either, it is perceived as the key to upward social mobility, or provision is only made for basic literacy in the mother tongue/local language. This neglects more advanced uses of literacy in that language and of literacy in other languages that could act as a gateway to participation in society and access to resources. Caroline Kerfoot (2009) summarizes what is at stake regarding adult education and training beyond the basics in multilingual and multicultural contexts:

The challenge for those concerned with conceptualizing ABET [adult basic education and training] provision for development is to investigate which kind

of semiotic resources[36] might be important for whom, in what contexts, and in which languages or combinations of languages, and to use these findings to reshape policy and pedagogical practices. If the goal of adult basic education is to expand capabilities and enable increased citizenship agency, then really useful knowledge will include language, literacies and other semiotic resources that allow learners to traverse multiple spaces and to engage with the discourses and processes engendered by new forms of governance and state/society/economy relations (Kerfoot, 2009, p. 40).

Ignoring linguistic diversity and discriminating on the grounds of language can be considered a form of violence, because it violates a person's integrity and identity and contravenes Article 2[39] of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The spectrum of violence is very broad and the resulting anxiety and loss of self-worth has a profoundly negative effect on learning (for resources and exchange see www.learningandviolence.net). Within the context of learning, for example in schools and learning centres, it is increasingly recognized that language is often used to inflict psychological violence on the learner. "To create a climate for learning it is important to create a space that is free of judgement of the self and the other" (Strategic Support, SAQA, p. 18).

Resistance to linguistic assimilation
Adopting a multilingual ethos, instead of the assimilationist nation-building 'one-language-one-culture-one-nation' principle that has influenced education systems everywhere in the world, will help us reposition ourselves, ask new questions and find new strategies for many of the problems that we face. We know now that the solution proposed by the liberal-assimilationist

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36 The term 'semiotic resource' refers to a tool that we can use in our communication to convey what we mean. A semiotic resource can make use of oral language, written language, and all other kinds of signs. The researcher Van Leeuwen defines the term as follows: 'Semiotic resources are the actions, materials and artifacts we use for communicative purposes, whether produced physiologically – for example, with our vocal apparatus, the muscles we use to make facial expressions and gestures – or technologically – for example, with pen and ink, or computer hardware and software – together with the ways in which these resources can be organized. Semiotic resources have a meaning potential, based on their past uses, and a set of affordances based on their possible uses, and these will be actualized in concrete social contexts where their use is subject to some form of semiotic regime' (van Leeuwen, 2004, p. 285) http://multimodalityglossary.word-press.com/semiotic-resources/, (Accessed on 23 May 2013). Reference: Van Leeuwen, T. 2004. Introducing Social Semiotics: An Introductory Textbook. London, Routledge.

37 Article 2: 'Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.' Universal Declaration of Human Rights proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948.

ideology, to build nations with culturally diverse populations by asking people to "surrender their ethnic and cultural attachment" (Banks, 2009, p. 11), is not socially just. The groups who have to surrender are the groups whose cultures are different from the dominant one. The assimilationist ideology inflicts psychological and spiritual violence and forces the structural exclusion of everything and everybody that differs from what is considered the mainstream language and culture. Already in the 1960s and 1970s, ethnic groups around the world, such as the African Americans in the United States and the Canadian First Nations, contested this ideology.

Accepting multilingualism as normality

Our understanding of a multilingual ethos is that it accepts complexity and is open to learning:

The multilingual ethos advocates for the acceptance and recognition of linguistic diversity in order to ensure social cohesion and avoid the disintegration of societies (Ouane, 2009, p. 168). It takes into account the intermeshing of languages within multilingual individuals and in communities, across social domains and communicative practices. The multilingual ethos stresses the commonalities and the complementariness of languages, and heteroglossia[38] across but also within communities and in a given situation. From this perspective, language ownership or fixed language boundaries cannot be claimed by any social group (Ouane and Glanz, 2010, p. 65).

A multilingual ethos in education means:

[not to] separate languages from each other but [to] support learners in developing language awareness, learning several languages and about the respective cultures simultaneously, understanding the complementarities which exist among languages in contact (Alidou, Glanz and Nikièma, 2011, pp. 530–531).

Adopting a multilingual ethos challenges today's prevailing social systems and pedagogical approaches. Nevertheless, there is an exciting recent trend towards it in policy, practice and research. The good results of those who have so far dared to put a multilingual ethos into practice are encouraging, and recent research on multilingualism, education and learning lend them further support (Shoba and Chimbutane, 2013; Martin-Jones, Blackledge and Creese, 2012; Alidou, Glanz and Nikièma, 2011; Cenoz and Gorter, 2011; Stroud and Heugh, 2011; Agnihotry, 2007).

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38 See the Glossary for a definition of 'heteroglossia'.

The multilingual ethos as part of a multicultural ethos

We foreground language and the multilingual ethos here because literacy is a particular form of linguistic expression. Nevertheless, a multilingual ethos forms part of a deeper appreciation of cultural difference[39] because language is a vehicle of culture and one of its means of expression. For this reason, we cannot speak about linguistic diversity without speaking about cultural diversity and we cannot speak about language fluency without speaking about cultural fluency. In short, the multilingual ethos is part of a 'multicultural ethos'. Deeply appreciating cultural difference means searching for additive approaches which do not view one culture and language as naturally superior to others, but which ask instead what might constitute helpful new ideas for people in a specific context. For example, "multicultural education tries to provide students with educational experiences that enable them to maintain commitments to their community cultures as well as acquire the knowledge, skills, and cultural capital needed to function in the national civic culture and community" (Banks, 2009, p. 14).

Cultures are heterogeneous and flexible

We underline that a *culture* is not static and homogenous but *flexible and heterogeneous*. It is not a realm where people just coexist peacefully. It is a space of agreement and disagreement within and between generations, and where people form sub-cultures. The interplay of autonomy and closeness is normal in all human relationships and every individual and group needs both. People can identify with ideas or memes from different cultures simultaneously, belong to several subgroups, and agree with certain elements of a culture and reject others.

The concept of culture is today understood as something that is complex, not closed, and that reflects both its own historical development and the influences of other cultures. It describes a group's beliefs, values and practices that shape all relationships and areas of life (economic, spiritual, educational, etc.), but also accommodates the diversity of identities and practices of its individual members (May, 2009).

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39 The term 'cultural difference' has a different focus than the term 'cultural diversity'. It expresses the idea that we should look at a gathering of cultures not as a group of distinct objects (which is the connotation of cultural diversity), but rather as a group of different ways of knowing and living (May, 2009, p. 44).

Looking at multiculturalism from a critical perspective

We concur with Stephen May when he says that we need to understand multiculturalism from a critical perspective. The critical perspective acknowledges that people are subject to unequal power relations, advantages and options, and varying degrees of stigma. People cannot choose their identities freely because external social reality channels identity choices, for example through "class, ethnic, and gender stratification, objective constraints, and historical determination" (May, 2009, p. 43). Yet these social pressures can be and are contested. On the subject of ethnicity and group identity, for example, May states that: "a positive conception of ethnicity must begin with a recognition that all speak from a particular place, out of a particular history, out of a particular experience, a particular culture, without being contained by that position" (May, 2009, p. 44; quoting Hall, 1992, p. 258). If we apply this critical, appreciative and reflective perspective on our own culture and identity and those of others, then withdrawal into fundamentalism, essentialism[40] or traditionalism becomes unnecessary.

Principle: sustainability

Sustainability is a multidimensional value. In the context of evaluating the quality of education, sustainability concerns whether what learners have learned is quickly forgotten or put to use and retained. The notion of sustainable learning is therefore tightly linked to the principle of lifelong learning. Where there is no institutional structure or social space to apply what has been learned and to continue learning, lifelong learning is obstructed and sustainability is not possible. The second meaning of sustainability in the context of education has to do with whether educational programmes are seen as a collective social investment and are managed and financed in a sustainable, long-term manner. Thirdly, sustainability refers to the broad philosophy of sustainable development, in which education should enhance an ethical understanding of life that respects the limits of our ecosystem and fosters the well-being of all people. Adult learning must be closely tied to the preservation and enhancement of the community and environment in order to ensure the livelihood of present and future generations. Quality adult literacy programmes integrate local indigenous knowledge with new technologies in ways that foster sustainable development and inclusive growth. Their mission is not just to alleviate poverty. It is also to encourage the revalorization of indigenous cultures, languages and people, and to open them up to technology and modernity in a way that is additive and sustainable.

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40 See the Glossary for a definition of 'essentialism'.

Conclusion

In this section, we have outlined the broader philosophical foundation of a frame of reference for youth and adult literacy in multilingual and multicultural contexts. Our frame of reference rests on the global commitment to social justice and peace of all UNESCO Member States and the five guiding principles emerging from theory and practice that respond to this commitment.

The frame of reference should inspire reflection on practices and solutions. Quality as individual, collective and systemic improvement entails the involvement of all stakeholders in collective and individual learning processes. The improvement of the quality of education systems (policies, learning environments and programmes) should be a shared and democratic process linking both bottom-up and top-down approaches.

In the next section, we extend the frame of reference further, relating the guiding principles to central fields of quality analysis of youth and adult literacy education and learning in multilingual and multicultural contexts.

Point for reflection 7

Please write your reflections in your notebook after considering
the following questions:

1. In your opinion, which of the five guiding principles should
    be prioritized in order to improve the quality of the youth and
    adult literacy work that you are involved in?

2. What are the reasons for your selection with regard to current
    literacy education and learning?

3. What are the reasons for your selection with regard to the
    way people use or do not use literacy in their everyday lives?

Central fields of quality analysis

The five principles that guide our framework underline the importance of contextual factors. In 2010, Leon Tikly of the Research Programme on Implementing Education Quality in Low Income Countries proposed a practical context-led model for the analysis of the quality of school education. Tikly's model has social justice as a central concern and looks at how well education lifts "institutional and wider structural barriers that can stand in the way of realizing human capabilities in the context of globalization" (Tikly, 2010, p. 12). The main principles for evaluation in this model are the inclusiveness of education, its relevance for learners' livelihoods and well-being, and a democratic approach to determining learning outcomes via public debate and process accountability. As the model's guiding principles correspond to essential ones in our own frame of reference and we do not believe in reinventing the wheel, we build our approach on Tikly's, adapting it to non-formal education for youth and adults in multilingual and multicultural contexts. We view our frame of reference as an approach rather than a model because a model is a closed concept, whereas an approach leaves room for adaptation to changing realities and contextual differences.

Striving to create enabling environments for education and learning
Tikly (2010) identifies three social environments as crucial for good quality school education: the policy, school and home/community environments. For the purposes of our framework we need to adapt this to reflect the environments of youth and adult education in multilingual and multicultural contexts:

- First of all, the multilingual and multicultural context is present in all social fields or environments at all levels. Therefore, no environment can be considered without analysing and working with the multilingual and multicultural social context and its specifics.
- The educational and policy environment of adults cuts across social sectors. Education and training is offered to adults in many sectors such as the education sector, the economic sector, the health sector, the cultural sector, and the religious sector. We therefore adopt a multi-sectoral[41] perspective on the educational and policy environment.
- An environment that is crucial in adulthood in addition to the home and the community is the work environment. This cannot be left out of a framework that concerns youth and adult education. The work, home and community environments overlap in many instances and reinforce each other. It is therefore useful to consider them together.

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41 See the Glossary for a definition of 'multi-sectoral'.

From local to international level

For many people in today's globalized world these environments encompass a large geographical space, with family, friends and colleagues scattered in different parts of the world. The scope of the home and community environments can therefore reach from the local to the international level. The same holds true for the educational and policy environments when we consider distance education, relocation for educational purposes, and the interlinked nature of educational policy, research and practice across the globe. All of these merge in the environment that surrounds us.

The literate environment, an integral part

The literate environment is an integral part of the multilingual and multicultural social context, and is visible in each social environment where literacy is used. It is not isolated and separated; rather, it is the material reflection of the reading and writing culture in society at large. The integration of literacy in a society's communicative practices is something that evolves and changes over time and does not follow a predetermined path. Sonja Fagerberg-Diallo (2001) describes how the Pulaar people in Senegal created their own dynamic literacy movement in response to both external factors (such as increased responsibilities due to decentralization which required complex literacy skills) and internal ones (such as wanting to make use of education for their own collective cultural and psychological advancement and integration). Although literacy in Pulaar in the Ajami script has a more than 200-year-old tradition, literacy classes and publishing for a broad public only started at the end of the 20th century. The striking thing about the Pulaar literacy movement is that it demonstrates "the ability to integrate new skills and information into a culturally grounded worldview, both contributing to a dynamic and creative process marked by dialogue" (Fagerberg-Diallo, 2001, p. 155). The term 'constructive interdependence' describes this attitude to creating collective ownership of literacy (Fagerberg-Diallo, 2001).

Without a motivation to make use of literacy at the societal level, literacy training is confined to the educational environment and lacks relevance to everyday life. In her review of good practices in non-formal literacy education, Fagerberg-Diallo states that "education should grow out of the culture and values of the community". Educational programmes should therefore "seek to create a literate environment based on the principle of lifelong learning and the creation of learning societies" (Fagerberg-Diallo, 2007, pp. 32–33).

When is an environment enabling?

Each environment becomes an enabling environment when appropriate inputs are used in appropriate processes, policy formulation, governance and programme implementation. Appropriate inputs and processes result in lifting

barriers and creating a flow in individual and collective learning processes within and across environments. In order to achieve this, the interplay between the environments and the multilingual and multicultural context has an important role to play. Synergy and coherence increase the flow between them because their contributions do not hinder but strengthen each other. How well the interplay works can be analysed by asking questions such as the following:
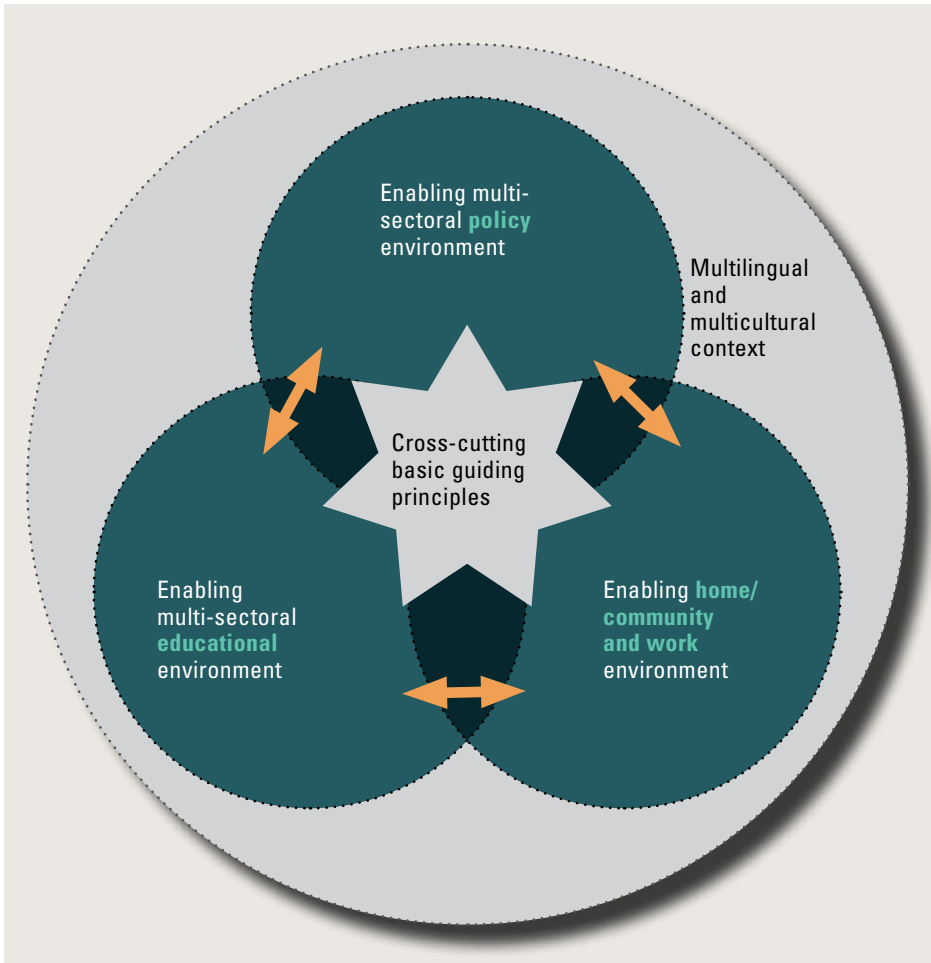
- In what regard and how well does each environment and their interplay address the basic guiding principles (inclusion, lifelong learning, literacy from a multilingual and multicultural perspective as part of the human right to education, multilingual ethos and sustainability)? (Nb. the prioritization of the five guiding principles depends on the context. The principles propose values for working constructively and productively with multilingual and multicultural societies. They thus connect the multicultural and multilingual context and all environments.)
- How well are the typical barriers for participation in adult education addressed? These barriers are: situational barriers that arise from an individual's situation in life; institutional barriers that arise from institutional procedures and practices; informational barriers that arise from lack of information on learning opportunities and benefits; and dispositional barriers that arise from people's attitudes towards and readiness for learning (UIL, 2013a).
- Is the learning that takes place in the educational environment appreciated and applied in the home/community/work environment?
- Is there an implementation gap between environments, for example between educational policies and practices, or the educational environment and the work and home/community environment? Do the different environments reinforce each other because they are conceived in a multi-sectoral way?
- Is there an innovation gap between practice, research and policies?

The search for quality is a process in which many factors contribute to turning an environment into an enabling one. These factors feed into each other. We assume that we do not live in an ideal world where all environments are fully enabling at the same time. Giving our best in striving to make each environment more enabling is the way that offers the best education and learning opportunities. Transformative political agendas create an enabling environment for action research processes.

Figure 4.1 draws on the context-led model by Tikly and includes our adaptations in order to visualize the approach we suggest. The star around the basic guiding principles in the middle and the surrounding multilingual

and multicultural context have the same colour in order to illustrate their connection. The frames in dashes around the environments symbolize that the environments are not separate, but are parts of the multilingual and multicultural context in which people live. Even the border of the outer circle of the multilingual and multicultural context is not fixed but permeable, because all societies influence each other from the local to the international level. The shadow represents the connection of the present to the past. Every human being and society *embodies* its past and present.

Figure 4.1 **Context-led approach to the analysis of the quality of adult and youth literacy provision in multilingual and multicultural contexts (adapted from Tikly, 2010)**

Enabling multi-sectoral **policy** environment

Multilingual and multicultural context

Cross-cutting basic guiding principles

Enabling multi-sectoral **educational** environment

Enabling **home/ community and work** environment

A frame of reference for good quality youth and adult literacy provision in multilingual contexts

Dimensions of international analysis frameworks of educational quality
A literature review of internationally used analytical frameworks of educational quality revealed five prominent dimensions of inquiry, namely: effectiveness, efficiency, equality, relevance, and sustainability (Barrett et al., 2006). These are compared with actual inputs, processes, outputs, and results of education at the levels of policy, governance and programmes. When we look at how we can relate these dimensions to the approach illustrated above, we find that they all apply to each environment individually and to the interplay of the environments:

- **Effectiveness** concerns whether the objectives set for the education system (policies) or particular educational programmes are met. There is a difference between internal and external effectiveness. External effectiveness is concerned with the question of whether the needs of learners and society, for example in the home/community/work environment, are met by educational services. External effectiveness relates to relevance, equality and sustainability. Internal effectiveness focuses on the objectives internal to the education system or particular educational programme. Internal effectiveness therefore concerns the interplay of policy and educational environments.

The following is an example of an innovative research method to investigate the effectiveness of the human right to education:

The Systemic Ethical Method for the Evaluation of a Human Right, developed by the Interdisciplinary Institute for Ethics and Human Rights (IIEHD) / Association for the Promotion of Non-formal Education (APENF)

In order to know to what extent the population benefits from the right to education, it is essential that the people concerned are able to express themselves with respect to the quality of education (Friboulet et al., 2006, p. 17).

The guiding questions of this method are related to the two dimensions of social justice: respecting diversity and egalitarian redistribution of resources. They look at the relations between all relevant actors in formal and non-formal education (sectoral perspective) and four key capacities which enable the system to fulfil its functions.

(i)   Two systemic capacities related to rights:

-   *Is the educational system accepted by the populations concerned: are they in agreement with the form of education?* This question is about

the acceptability/relevance of people's rights in relation to the goals of education.
- *Is education accessible to all?* This question is concerned with the accessibility/ coherence of people's rights in relation to the means of providing for them.

(ii) Two systemic capacities related to resources:

- *Is education adaptable to the different needs and circumstances of students and learners?* This question addresses the adaptability/ effectiveness of the goals of education in relation to its results.
- *Is education available – in terms of human resources and equipment – in a way that corresponds to real needs?* This question looks at the availability/efficiency of the means used for education in relation to its results.
(Friboulet et al., 2006, pp. 29–30 and 33)

The so-called four As (acceptable, available, accessible, adaptable) were developed in 2001 by the first UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Katarina Tomaševski, and adopted by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in its General Comment 13 on the right to education (§ 6) (see www.right-to-education.org/page/understanding-education-right).

- **Efficiency** concerns the relationship of the amount and availability of monetary and non-monetary resources (inputs) from both inside and outside the education system that were required to obtain the output. It assesses, for example, whether a reasonable number of resources have been used to obtain the output, or how much quality is achievable with the resources available.

- The **equality** dimension is a guiding principle that is concerned with education as a human right. It asks why disadvantaged groups and individuals are disadvantaged, whether equality measures were or are being taken, and how successful they are. The questions of the Systemic Ethical Method for the Evaluation of a Human Right are all concerned with equality.

- **Relevance** in adult education concerns whether education responds to the prior knowledge, concerns, needs and motivations of learners in their particular context.

- The dimension of **sustainability** concerns whether what learners have learned is quickly forgotten or put to use and retained, and whether the

educational programme is managed in a sustainable way in terms of available resources etc. Sustainability refers also to the broad philosophy of sustainable development, according to which education should enhance an ethical understanding of life that respects the limits of our ecosystem and aims at the well-being of all people.

These five dimensions are often in tension with each other "so that actions to improve one may have negative effects on another. In particular, attempts to increase the equity of a system may be in tension with concerns over efficiency" (Barrett et al., 2006, p. 13).

In the process of developing enabling environments and their interplay, policymakers, practitioners, the community and learners can make use of action research. Action research is a tool to integrate all stakeholders in a complex way to improve the learning environment, from policy to programme management and the training of trainers, facilitators, and learners.

Point for reflection 8

The following questions build on your answers to Point for reflection 7. Think about these questions and write your responses in your notebook:

What barriers could be lifted, in your view, by observing the basic guiding principle that you identified as a lever for improving the quality of youth and adult literacy in your multilingual and multicultural context? Consider this question with regard to:

a.   The home/community/work environment;
b.   The multisectoral educational environment;
c.   The multisectoral policy environment and
d.   The synergies between the environments.

5

From theory to practice: an application of quality principles and criteria

By Hassana Alidou and Christine Glanz[42]

Cherokee is a Native
American Iroquoian
language. It is a
polysynthetic language
and uses a unique
syllabary writing
system.

This chapter illustrates how the basic guiding principles introduced in the previous chapter are reflected in practice and lead to innovation and good results in the different environments. The chapter is opened by a reflection on the benefits of action research for quality assurance by Bernard Hagnonnou, a specialist in adult education, literacy and action research from Benin. Based on experiences in Benin, he outlines how action research promotes quality in youth and adult literacy provision at the macro (policy) and the micro (programme) level. In the sections that follow, we go into more detail with nine case studies of good practice. These examples were chosen because they made significant contributions to good quality youth and adult literacy in multilingual contexts. The frame of reference that we proposed in the previous chapter stems largely from the analysis of similar good practices. All of them make use of the principles of action research in order to find ways to improve the quality of their services.

The nine case studies below are from 2009. In the context of UNESCO's Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE), guiding principles and quality criteria for quality youth and adult literacy in multilingual contexts were identified by specialists in educational practice and research. The specialists

came from fourteen countries in Africa and Asia: Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Chad, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gambia, India, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Senegal and South Africa. The discussion focused on three spheres of action which are crucial for high quality youth and adult literacy education: the creation or reinforcement of a *multilingual literate environment; curriculum development;* and the *training of trainers.*

The examples of educational programmes and other initiatives which we showcase illustrate the interdependence of the basic guiding principles and the kind of quality criteria they can relate to in practice. The quality criteria refer to concrete elements of the interventions which are crucial for judging whether an intervention leads to advancing youth and adult literacy in a way that is meaningful, socially just and empowering in the specific context.

We underline that the examples in the following sections are not idealized, perfect models that we ask you to imitate. They are innovative examples in their context which had some good results and became a source of encouragement and inspiration for others.

Participatory action research: a quality criterion[43]

By Bernard Hagnonnou, adult education expert and director of the Institute Alphadev (Benin)

Quality assurance applies to all dimensions of education and learning, from policy framework definition to assessment of learning needs, definition of learning content, design of literacy programmes and projects, implementation of these, and impact evaluation. In this section, we look at quality from a macro and a micro perspective and identify participatory action research as a key to it.

Quality from a macro perspective

The macro level refers here to the strategic and long-term policy framework that provides the national vision and orientation to the education sector (more precisely, the non-formal education sub-sector).

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43 Based on Bernard Hagnonnou. 2014. Quality youth and adult literacy provision in multilingual contexts: quality criteria. Unpublished paper presented at 'Preparing for testing an action research guidebook for youth and adult literacy in multilingual contexts', workshop 16–18 April 2014, Abuja, Nigeria, organized by UNESCO Abuja and UIL.

Quality criteria at this level concern the process and modalities that preside over a policy definition. We would want to know, for example, whether the policy was defined by a group of experts behind closed doors or devised through an inclusive process; whether it captures the national aspirations of all stakeholders; and whether the latter were properly interacted with.

Example: Preparing national education policies in Benin

During the preparations for a national forum on education in March 2013, Benin's four education ministries were tasked with preparing guidelines and a draft diagnosis of the education sector. Task groups were set up to prepare and submit a draft analysis. When government summoned them to present the draft, it became clear that many stakeholders had not been consulted. The task group was therefore requested to go back to all six provinces of the country and collect feedback from representatives of all categories of stakeholders involved in the provision and use of education, in order to ensure that the national vision for Benin's education sector was shaped by an inclusive and representative input. The forum was initially scheduled for September 2013 but has not yet taken place as the report was not written until July 2014.

The same approach was applied when defining the national policy for youth and adult literacy in Benin. At the outset, a single resource person was asked to submit a policy draft, which he duly did; but unsurprisingly, little could be retrieved from that single input. Another similar attempt was made to no avail. In February 1999, a policy task group (including representatives of state agencies, NGOs and development partners) was set up to conduct a participatory process. We travelled across all six provinces, meeting all categories of stakeholders, collecting their views and aspirations, and capturing a vision as large and inclusive as possible. A first draft was then prepared and presented back to the same stakeholders in all six provinces in order to collect their feedback, on whose basis the draft was modified and submitted to a national workshop for validation. Each stage was therefore shaped by collective diagnosis and reflection in order to arrive at a truly national policy vision. At the final stage, the government provided its own feedback before signing the policy into a national framework and reference document in March 2001. We can see that action research, meaning collective reflection, ownership and inclusiveness, was a crucial methodology for quality assurance during this process.

Guiding principle at macro level: inclusion of the social groups concerned

From the example above, we can extract some criteria for quality assurance at the macro level regarding the shaping of a national vision and policy framework for youth and adult literacy. At this level, quality requires an

inclusive process which captures the aspirations and needs of all categories of stakeholders. No groups in the target population should be left out, especially women, who represent more than 50 per cent of the population in most African countries. The resulting policy framework document should be a true reflection of the aspirations of all stakeholders.

Guiding principle at micro level: respecting learners as knowers

The provision of good quality youth and adult literacy education and learning services at the field level requires input in terms of human resources, curriculum and learning material development, and teaching and learning processes. Key quality criteria for each area, according to our experience, are as follows:

a) Training and capacity building of human resources

Quality assurance for human resources requires the following:
- A participatory assessment of training needs for all facilitators and programme staff
- Training content which is relevant to each category of human resources
- Initial and continuous training of facilitators
- A balance between theoretical knowledge and practical teaching/facilitation skills

b) Development of a curriculum and learning materials

Quality criteria for these activities include:
- Participatory needs assessment and understanding of the context prior to the definition of curriculum and learning content
- Customization of learning content to the needs of the target group (the content and end products should be usable in their socioeconomic activities)
- At the end of the educational process, the beneficiaries should possess the basic and/or professional skills they need to attend to their daily activities.

c) Teaching and learning processes

Quality criteria for andragogy are for example:
- an interactive methodology
- a facilitation process that starts with what learners know
- a constructive approach to the knowledge acquisition process which assumes that facilitators and participants are all knowers and learners

How does action research fit into these sketched requirements for quality assurance, both at the macro level of policy framework definition and at the micro level of the actual facilitation and learning processes?

Participatory action research for quality assurance

All of the examples above point to a need for action research at various stages. Action research is relevant to all processes where people are the target and the end users of a project, a programme, or an education scheme. Given the conventional and elitist approaches that have been applied in so many developmental endeavours with mixed fortunes, would it be excessive to claim that action research is a more effective, efficient and impact-oriented development tool? Experience in Benin strongly suggests that it would not.

The preparation process for the national education forum in Benin is an excellent example of a case where action research was needed at the macro level. The project aimed at nothing less than the definition of a national vision and orientation for Benin's education sector. It was therefore imperative that the process was inclusive and involve all stakeholders from around the country. Without action research, the national policy would not have been inclusive and would not have captured the aspirations of all categories of stakeholders. It is not possible for a group of experts to express the aspirations of all stakeholders without interacting with them.

At the micro level, learning content can only be relevant where it is context-sensitive, needs-oriented and customized to beneficiaries' actual professional profiles. This can only be achieved through a participatory process in which stakeholders are involved at each stage, from assessment of needs through definition of content to evaluation of the outcome and impact assessment. To do otherwise is to be like a medical doctor who thinks himself so expert that he does not need to ask a patient how he feels or where he feels pain. Even clinical and laboratory tests can only provide data that must still be analysed by a human being.

A call to use action research
The case study from Benin establishes beyond doubt that action research is a crucial tool for quality assurance at both macro and micro level. In the past, vast amounts of effort, energy and investment have been devoted to implementing literacy projects and campaigns that have brought forth only a limited yield because they failed to take this into account. We therefore believe that there is a need for advocacy to promote action research as a major approach to quality assurance. An advocacy action plan might include provision for a campaign or forum to promote action research as part of existing youth and adult literacy projects.

Creating and reinforcing a multilingual literate environment

In the following three sections of this chapter, we focus on three areas of action that are crucial for good quality youth and adult literacy. These are: (i) the creation of a literate environment; (ii) curriculum development; and (iii) the training of trainers. Each topic is presented in a distinct section which begins by clarifying our understanding of each field. We then describe concrete examples of effective and innovative practices, and conclude with an overview of the guiding principles and quality criteria.

In this section, we look at the creation of a multilingual and multicultural literate environment. Our understanding of a multilingual and multicultural literate environment includes a number of different aspects which we will explain. The literate environment[44] is a reflection of the reading and writing cultures in all social domains. It therefore encompasses all the environments in the frame of reference we described above.

What is a multilingual literate environment and why is it important?
A multilingual literate environment is characterized by the use of written texts as a means of expression, exchange and learning in at least two languages. Different scripts may be used to represent one or several languages (Alidou-Ngame, 2000). Many written texts are visible in our environment. They are used, for example:

- to share a message widely independent of place and time via signposts, certificates, SMS, cards, contracts, product labels, etc.
- to communicate to oneself, for example by writing a memory aid or diary
- in face-to-face communication, for example during a training session, in a meeting when issues in a document are discussed, when friends read a newspaper together, etc.

We know that a literate environment is very important for the motivation to become and remain literate. It offers newly literate people multiple opportunities for using and enhancing their recently acquired knowledge. Experience with literacy campaigns, programmes and projects over the last few decades have demonstrated that the quality of the literate environment is a major determinant of knowledge and skill retention among literacy or non-formal education students, as well as of the ultimate impact of the training (Easton, 2006, p. 7). In a multilingual context, the motivation to read and write in different languages varies, depending on the possibilities, opportunities, and

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44 See also Peter Easton (2014).

constraints that come with literacy in each language. In multilingual contexts, it usually makes sense to become literate in more than one language.

As a result of the analysis of good practice and research carried out in 2009, several quality criteria were identified with regard to literacy programmes promoting the creation of an inclusive multilingual and multicultural literate environment. These criteria are illustrated by three concrete examples from Asia and Africa and summarized in the table that follows them.

Example 1: Nirantar, India[45]

The first example is from the non-governmental organization Nirantar in India, which received the King Sejong Literacy Prize in 2009 for its project 'Khabar Lahariya' – 'news waves' – that started in the Bundeli language in 2002.[46] Nirantar is located in New Delhi and in three districts of Uttar Pradesh, Northern India. Its goal is to empower women from poor, rural and marginalized communities through education and access to information. The socio-linguistic and cultural context in which Nirantar works is diverse. In Northern India, where Nirantar carries out some of its projects, Hindi is the dominant language of wider communication[47]. Most women, however, are native speakers of local languages and do not master Hindi. In India, local languages are considered of lower value than the official languages such as Hindi. While Nirantar responds to the desire of local language speakers to learn the official language, it also helps women understand that the appropriate response to the multilingual context is not to devalue local languages but to make good use of them. Otherwise, the speakers of these languages devalue their own knowledge and possibilities.

Literacy for empowerment
We seek to promote transformatory (sic) formal and non-formal learning processes which enable the marginalised to better understand and address their realities. Our focus on gender interlinks strongly with other social dimensions, in particular those of caste, sexuality and religion. (www.nirantar.net)

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45 The following explanations are based on: Shalini Joshi. 2009. Creating a Literate Environment in a Multilingual Context: Nirantar, Centre for Gender and Education, New Delhi. Presentation. Cross-regional Workshop on Capacity-building for LIFE in Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Arab States: Adult (15+) Literacy in Multilingual Contexts, 29 September–2 October 2009, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. And: www.nirantar.net/, (Accessed on 27.1.2015).

46 See the website www.khabarlahariya.org (accessed 14 January 2015). A programme description is also at www.unesco.org/uil/litbase/ (Accessed 19 November 2014).

47 See the Glossary for a definition of 'language of wider communication'.

In the literacy classes that Nirantar facilitates, women share their life stories. They write their own narratives and learn from each other by sharing their perspectives on different aspects of their personal and community lives. Through reading and discussions they are also informed about the world beyond their community.

Poor women see literacy as being very important to them, that literacy enables access to information and power (sic). Nirantar believes that literacy is critical for autonomy, self-expression, accessing entitlements and challenging exploitation. (www.nirantar.net/index.php/page/view/8)

Figure 5.1 **Suneeta, a reporter from Banda district, getting news from a group of rural women**

© Yashas Chandra

Poor women contributing to the creation of a multilingual literate environment

One of Nirantar's strategies has been to help poor and marginalized women in Uttar Pradesh to set up and produce a newspaper in local languages. Nirantar has trained the women to become journalists and to record stories of interest to their lives and contexts, with the aim of helping them to maintain their literacy skills. The women, some of whom were neo-literates when they started to work for the newspaper, received extensive training in literacy, reporting, writing and editing. In 2014, the eight-page newspaper

had five editions in five local languages. In 2015, the print run is 6,000 copies with a readership of 80,000 across 600 villages of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar per week. In most of these places, it is the only newspaper available and thus constitutes local people's only source of information on local, regional, national and international issues. It is also a source of information about government schemes, laws and rights. The women themselves distribute and sell the newspaper which has content on local development, women's issues, local self-governance, local history and culture, stories and editorials and letters to the editor. The newspaper thus enables the women to participate directly in creating and maintaining a multilingual literate environment.

The impact of a newspaper produced by women in a local language
The newspaper has had a diverse and powerful impact. The marginalized women now feel empowered to address their own concerns and have become confident in expressing them and demanding attention. Moreover, the newspaper has created a platform for women to express their (gender) issues in a language they understand. It thus brings gender concerns into the news, whilst at the same time opening up a space for rural women in journalism, an area that has traditionally been dominated by men. It has generated awareness of rights and entitlements, and functions as a source of income for the women.

The content of the newspaper covers not only issues that are important to the women, but issues that are important to the community at large. This is reflected in the fact that demand has been consistently high since the newspaper's inception. It has successfully linked the literacy class to real life issues, as well as developing a sense of ownership and identity among readers with regard to the local language. It has thus become a mass medium for engaging community members in reading and writing and helping them to maintain their literacy skills in the local language, as well as being a useful source of information for their daily lives.

Example 2: The Zia Community Learning Centre, Papua New Guinea[48]

Our second example of an innovative project to create a multilingual literate environment comes from Papua New Guinea in Asia. Papua New Guinea is a multilingual and multicultural country with more than 850 languages, each

48 The following explanations are based on: Sakarepe Keosai Kamene. 2009. Adult Literacy in a Multilingual Context: De-contextualizing literacy experience: The Case of Papua New Guinea. Presentation. Cross-regional Workshop on Capacity-building for LIFE in Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Arab States: Adult (15+) Literacy in Multilingual Contexts, 29 September–2 October 2009, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

of which has an average of only 2,000 speakers. About 420 of the languages have a writing system. The official languages are English, Tokpisin, and Hiri Motu. The majority of the people live in rural areas. Literacy practices began in Papua New Guinea about 130 years ago, led mainly by churches and missions. They produced literature primarily on the subject of religion, which meant that a large part of people's lives, cultures and interests were not represented in writing. The literate environment for communities like the Zia has been limited as they did not create ownership of a reading culture. Instead, literacy was used to oppress local values and structures.

In 1997, the Zia community established the *Zia Community Learning Centre* as a non-governmental organization, with the support and assistance of the University of Papua New Guinea language and literature department. The main objective of the Zia Community Learning Centre is to undertake and encourage village-based research on the traditional knowledge and skills of the elderly members of the community, so that their cultural heritage is revalued and passed on to the younger generation. Another objective is to help rural communities learn new skills which allow them to participate in socio-economic activities. The Zia Community Learning Centre provides a link between the local heritage and culture of the community and the rapidly changing environment in which the Zia find themselves.

The multilingual writers' workshop

Soon after its inception, the Zia Community Learning Centre organized a conference on the Zia language, culture and knowledge systems. A couple of years later, they organized the Zia writers' workshop. The writers' workshop aimed to motivate people in the community to write stories about themselves so that local knowledge and skills would be set down in print. The workshop also wanted to help the Zia people to appreciate and treasure their own values and principles. In their changing environment, there was a tendency to appreciate 'modern' knowledge, values and principles and to disregard local indigenous ones. The week-long writers' workshop was facilitated by Sakarepe Kamene, a Zia language speaker and lecturer at the University of Papua New Guinea. He advocates conducting a critical assessment of the use of literacy in Papua New Guinea and making it a cultural resource.

Zia people of all different ages and levels of schooling participated in the workshop. This intergenerational participation fostered a culture of sharing and listening to each other. The participants started by writing stories about their own local cultural heritage. They wrote autobiographies, biographies, histories, and stories about the Zia culture. Multilingual participants were encouraged to write in any language of their choice. As the writers had different levels of literacy skills, the strategy was to prioritize creativity over accuracy and

correctness, in order to keep the focus on the joy of writing and the pride of sharing one's story through it. The editors of the stories dealt carefully with the texts to ensure that basic rules were followed. The end product of this workshop was an 80-page book of Zia stories in the Zia language, Tokpisin and English. The book was entitled Raitim Stori Bilong Laip (Writing Stories about Life): Zia Writers of Waria, and was first published in 2004 by UPNG's Melanesian and Pacific Studies (MAPS) Centre.

The impact of the writers' workshop

The Zia writers' workshop provided the Zia people with a learning environment where they could apply and expand their literacy skills in meaningful and enjoyable ways. The resulting Zia story book enriched the literate environment and made Zia stories visible as texts that could be read for different purposes by both Zia and non-Zia people. The book is therefore a symbol of the enduring value of Zia culture. The collaboration between the university and the Zia writers was instrumental, since there is no publishing house or literary tradition for Zia fiction productions.

Example 3: Gidan Dabino Publishers, Nigeria[49]

Our third example concerns the creation of a multimedia literate environment in Nigeria, West Africa, by Gidan Dabino Publishers International, a multimedia and marketing company in Kano, Northern Nigeria. The linguistic landscape in Nigeria is highly diverse, with several languages of wider communication and cross-border languages as well as many local languages. In Northern Nigeria where Gidan Dabino is based, Arabic, Hausa and English are important languages of wider communication. After independence in the early 1960s, the publishing industry was dominated by foreign publishers, but in 1978 the government instigated a policy stating that at least 60 per cent of books must be published by Nigerian nationals. This policy accelerated the production of locally produced reading materials.

Different languages and different scripts

When Gidan Dabino started his publishing enterprise in 1990, he decided to publish using Hausa, Fulfulde, Kanuri and English. Dabino's multilingual ethos pertains not only to languages but also to scripts. The house has published materials in both the Latin and the Ajami scripts (the latter is based on the

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49 The following explanations are based on: Ado Ahmad Gidan Dabino. 2009. Languages and Literary Development in Multilingual Publishing in Northern Nigeria. Presentation. Cross-regional Workshop on Capacity-building for LIFE in Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Arab States: Adult (15+) Literacy in Multilingual Contexts, 29 September–2 October 2009, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Arabic script used to write African languages). Literature in Hausa, Fulfulde and Kanuri in the Ajami script has a long tradition that goes back to the 7th century, the time of Islamization.

A broad variety of content and mass media

Dabino publishes drama, poetry, prose, academic books, newspapers, and magazines. His publications have a multilingual readership, especially in African languages. Recognizing the potential of new information technologies, in 2000 Dabino changed his company from a straightforward publishing house to a multimedia enterprise producing DVDs and running radio programmes. Popular novels are transformed into videotaped dramas and vice versa. Women in particular benefit from the radio programmes because most Nigerian women are based at home and do not engage as much with the outside world as men do. Programmes such as the women's forum and cookery programmes are of interest to many Muslim Hausa women. Moreover, Dabino's use of social media on the internet provides opportunities for self-expression in the Hausa language. Dabino has a blog where readers, publishers, researchers and writers from Africa and abroad interact (www.gidandabino.blogspot.de/, accessed on 27.1.2015). He also maintains a page on Facebook and shares video productions on Youtube (www.youtube.com/user/adoahmad, accessed on 27.1.2015). In this way, he promotes the idea that multimedia productions in African languages are as normal as those in any other language. Dabino's multimedia approach sets an example for the use of African languages in any media that are socially and economically valued.

Figure 5.2 **Novels in Hausa that were made into movies**

Reading and writing clubs

Dabino has been instrumental in encouraging reading clubs. In urban areas, fee-paying borrowing facilities such as libraries and clubs are very common. These facilities are particularly popular with women, who are the predominant consumers of the materials, especially of prose fiction. There is also a cross-fertilization with schools which use literature produced by Dabino. Dabino encourages writers and readers to get together and interact through writers' associations. Women are active in these associations as writers, readers, distributors, and actresses, something which was not envisaged one or two decades ago. Dabino has therefore helped to bring about a social and cultural transformation in Nigeria through the creation of a vibrant and dynamic literate environment.

Synthesis of guiding principles and quality criteria emerging from practice

The three examples above show that the inclusion of non-official languages in literacy projects benefits the whole country in which they are in use.
The cases of Nirantar, Zia Community Learning Centre and Gidan Dabino show that adult literacy education and learning takes place multisectorally in the educational, home, community and work environments. The examples show how a literate environment benefits from local agency that can engender the creation of new institutions such as readers' and writers' clubs, community centres, multimedia publishing houses and online communities, where anyone who is interested can be supported and trained to contribute to the reading and writing culture in the language(s) they understand.

Table 5.1 summarizes the quality criteria that emerge from these cases along the lines of the basic guiding principles set out above. It also includes the quality criteria that emerged from the other cases analysed during the 2009 cross-regional dialogue on 'Adult Literacy in Multilingual Contexts in Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Arab States'.

Table 5.1   **Overview of guiding principles and quality criteria identified for the creation of a literate environment for adult literacy in multilingual and multicultural contexts**
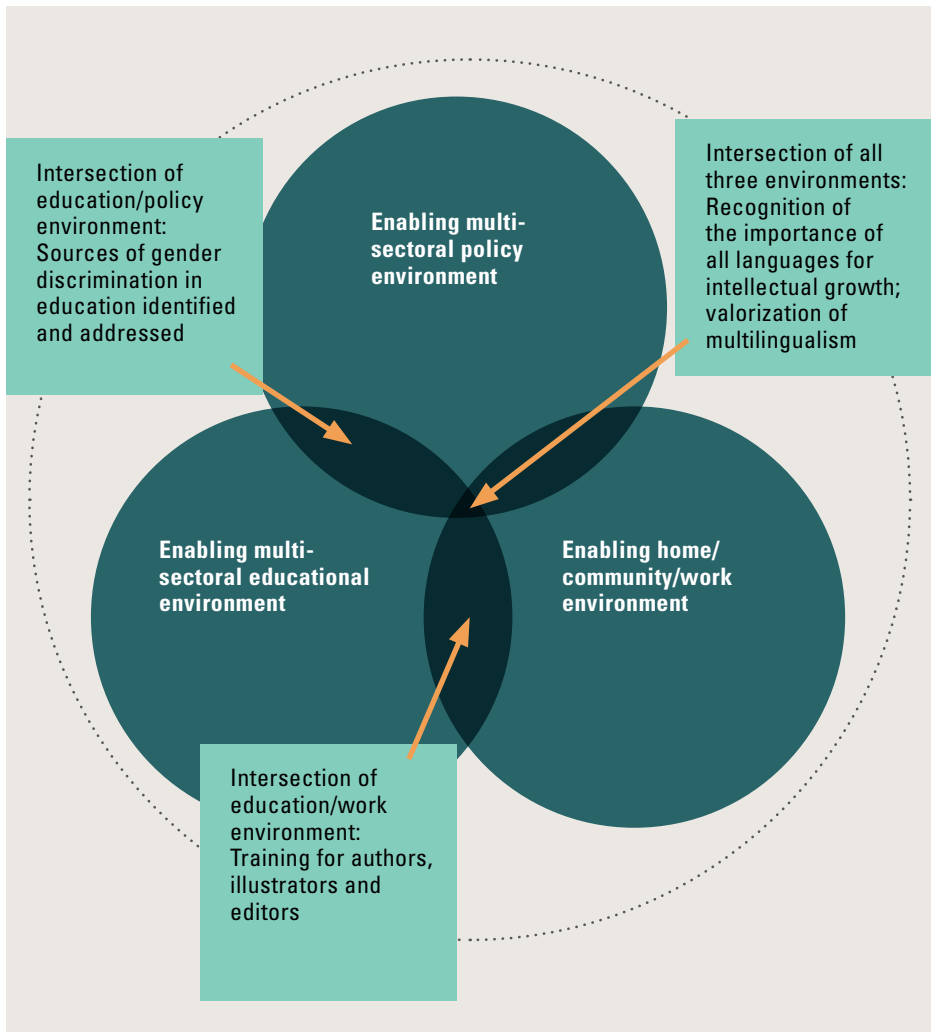
Sphere of action: Creating a multilingual literate environment

Guiding principles	Quality criteria
Inclusion • Gender equality • Widening the scope of democratic participation	• Social domains where gender is the source of discrimination are identified and addressed. • Women from marginalized sections of society, neo-literates, and people who have not completed formal schooling take active roles in the creation of the multilingual literate environment. • Readers can access and use information on local, national and international political, social and economic processes in the language they understand well and use locally.
Lifelong learning	• The strategies and activities implemented create social spaces for youth and adults to make use of literacy, learn without age limits, and discover new motivations for using literacy and learning. • The strategies and activities reflect the four pillars of education that help unfold the treasure within people (learning to be, to know, to do, to live together).
Literacy from a multilingual and multicultural perspective as an essential aspect of the human right to education	• People read and write in their languages in a way that is meaningful to them. • Good quality educational materials are available for teachers and students in both the languages of instruction and languages taught as subjects. • Training for authors, illustrators and editors is available in various languages. • Orientation documents for education providers on how to develop and sustain a multilingual literate environment are developed and used.
Multilingual ethos • Recognition of the impor- tance of all languages and of being multilingual • Valorization of minority languages	• The population is sensitized about the importance of their first language(s) and of being multilingual. • Linguistic minorities and speakers of non-official language(s) are valorized and recognize their languages as tools for intellectual growth. • All languages have a written form.

Sphere of action: Creating a multilingual literate environment	
Guiding principles	**Quality criteria**
	• Good uses of local languages are recognized, for example with awards. • Courses and materials are available for blind and hearing-impaired people in the Braille script and relevant sign languages.
Sustainability • Valorization and creation of a multilingual and multicultural literate environment	• Literacy in various languages is valued as an economic, cultural, social and symbolic resource. • Local languages are used in writing in a variety of domains in urban, semi-urban and rural areas, in such a way that reading and writing is useful, interesting, relevant and entertaining in everyday life. For example: 　• Local languages are used in all media. Publishing takes place in local languages; TV programmes have local language subtitles. 　• Access to mass media/ICT is available and affordable for all nationwide. 　• Official documents (e.g. marriage and birth certificates) are issued in the languages that the population understands. 　• The interests of newly literate populations with regard to reading materials are met. 　• Users of materials in various languages are engaged in their production. • A coherent and consistent book and ICT policy is in place, with a multilingual ethos that promotes national mass media institutions. • The mass media have the capacity, in terms of competences, financing and dissemination mechanisms, to produce programmes in the languages of their audience. • Youth and adult literacy classes are linked to real life issues. Learners practice what they have learned outside the classroom and encounter interest from community members. • Learners and multimedia institutions take an active role in enhancing the reading and writing culture by creating new institutions such as clubs and newspapers, using a broad range of media that are accessible to the linguistic community from local to diaspora level. • Literary competitions are organized and authors invited to submit their texts. • Literature is cross-translated. • Catalogues on available literature in all languages are easily accessible.

Visualizations are useful in action research processes to enhance our own and the participants' understanding and reflection processes. Going back to figure 4.1, we can see which enabling environment(s) the identified quality criteria and principles help to establish. Figure 5.3 below shows that quality criteria and principles refer to more than one environment, which means that the action research process needs to include stakeholders from more than one environment.

Figure 5.3 **Examples: Quality criteria and principles connect different social environments**

Intersection of education/policy environment: Sources of gender discrimination in education identified and addressed

Intersection of all three environments: Recognition of the importance of all languages for intellectual growth; valorization of multilingualism

Enabling multi-sectoral policy environment

Enabling multi-sectoral educational environment

Enabling home/community/work environment

Intersection of education/work environment: Training for authors, illustrators and editors

Point for reflection 9

Please respond to the following questions by making notes in your notebook:

1. Do you recognize any quality criteria that match with the literate environment in your own context?

Building on your findings in the previous point for your reflection (the last question in chapter 4), consider the following:

2. What kind of change in practice could help remove one of the barriers to the creation of a multilingual and multicultural literate environment that you identified?

3. If you could use participatory action research to do this, who would need to participate?

4. What quality criterion would indicate an improvement in practice?

Curriculum development

We believe that a curriculum should create a strong link between the policy, home/community and educational environments. The UNESCO International Bureau of Education explains this link and the difference between narrower and broader understandings of what a curriculum is:

In fact, the term curriculum is mostly used to refer to the existing contract between society, the State and educational professionals with regard to the educational experiences that learners should undergo during a certain phase of their lives. For the majority of authors and experts, the curriculum defines: (i) why; (ii) what; (iii) when; (iv) where; (v) how; and (vi) with whom to learn.

Using educational concepts, we can say that the curriculum defines the educational foundations and contents, their sequencing in relation to the amount of time available for the learning experiences, the characteristics of the teaching institutions, the characteristics of the learning experiences, in particular from the point of view of methods to be used, the resources for learning and teaching (e.g. textbooks and new technologies), evaluation and teachers' profiles. [...]

Increasingly, theorists of education recognize the political component of the curriculum—the fact that the curriculum is a field of ideological and political struggle that takes place in each society in order to give meaning to education. It is recognized that this meaning not only originates among experts, following professional criteria, but also through complex cultural processes. (Braslavsky, 2012, n. p.)

The new, broader understanding of what a curriculum should do corresponds to a systematic articulation of the values of a society and of people's needs and motivations regarding learning and training. The curriculum constitutes a framework of orientation for the whole learning and training process. A curriculum for any educational intervention, including for the training of trainers, therefore extends beyond the syllabus. It encompasses (i) policy, (ii) guiding principles, (iii) course contents, and (iv) pedagogical approaches from macro to micro level. At the macro level, we look at the policy orientations provided for curricula that synthesize political intentions and values. At the meso level, we look at the management and planning which result in the ensemble of educational programmes, their organization, evaluation and certification, and didactical materials. At the micro level, we look at teaching and learning activities (Jonnaert, Ettayabi and Defise, 2009).

As a result of the analysis of good practice and research in 2009, several quality criteria emerged with regard to curriculum development. These are illustrated by three concrete examples from Africa and summarized in the table that follows.

Example 1: A curriculum for the Afar pastoralist people, Ethiopia[50]

The first example comes from Ethiopia. Ethiopia is a multilingual and multicultural country in East Africa where about 80 languages are spoken. The national language is Amharic, which has its own unique script and a long literary history. The Afar are around 1.4 million people. They live in the North East of the country and share the Afar language and culture and the Muslim religion. Only about 10 per cent of them live in urban settings. The other 90 per cent are nomadic pastoralists and live in an arid environment. Mobility is a crucial part of their lifestyle. Although the government provides primary education in the Afar region, certain obstacles prevent the Afar people from benefiting from this provision. Firstly, the schools are not adapted to the nomadic lifestyle, because they are located in towns and villages where only a minority of the Afar live. Secondly, despite the fact that the national policy for education allows use of the mother tongue as medium of instruction, the language of instruction in government schools is Amharic, which many Afar do not understand.

Adaptation to a nomadic lifestyle and use of the Afar language
Against this background, the Afar Pastoralist Development Association (APDA) has initiated different educational programmes to help the Afar people to cope better with their living conditions and to improve their standard of living. APDA facilitated the development of the Afar language for use in education by establishing an orthography using the Latin script and developing the vocabulary necessary to accommodate concepts that have not yet been expressed in the Afar language. Until 2009, APDA had 84,000 learners and estimates that the Afar's literacy rate was 17 per cent. On APDA's initiative, community development committees take responsibility for constructing mobile shelters for learning. These committees also identify a facilitator for the educational programme, decide the time and place of classes, and guide the daily activities of the teacher.

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50 The following explanations are based on: Ismael Ali Gardo. 2009. Literacy among the Afar pastoralists, Eastern Ethiopia. Presentation. Cross-regional Workshop on Capacity-building for LIFE in Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Arab States: Adult (15+) Literacy in Multilingual Contexts, 29 September–2 October 2009, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Figure 5.4 **Class in Afar**

©Afar Pastoralist Development Association

Integrating literacy in the Afar language and in Afar everyday communication

Prior to the initiation of the project, literacy was rarely put to use in the daily life of the Afar. As a community-based organization run by and for Afar people, APDA understands the context in which the Afar live and could envision how literacy and education could be useful. APDA's Afar literacy programme promotes the development of a literate environment in Afar communities. Before starting a literacy programme, APDA conducts a four-month literacy campaign to mobilize the community. During that period, they set up community bookshops selling Afar literature and use music and drama to raise awareness about literacy for empowerment. Women are a particular target group of the campaign. Literacy is used in all activities conducted in the community, such as health education, income generation projects, and HIV prevention. By promoting literacy in this way, ADPA ensures that it is useful in everyday life.

Creating bridges between educational programmes and access to learning of the national language

ADPA works closely with the local government and has adapted its curriculum so that participants can enter non-formal education where they can learn Amharic. Through the non-formal education programme, participants are then able to enter formal education. Creating bridges between different sub-sectors of the education system in this way is important for the promotion of lifelong learning.

Cultural rooting of teaching content and practices

In 1996, when APDA started its first literacy programme, the curriculum consisted of a Teachers' Emergency Package in the Afar language. This package included an alphabet chart, a teachers' manual, and five literacy primers developed in the 1970s. Since then, the curriculum has been modified by adding a REFLECT approach component. REFLECT is a participatory approach to literacy and development which encourages participants to take an active role in developing learning materials that are culturally rooted, so as to generate new knowledge that is perceived as relevant. For the development of learning materials, APDA employs three permanent Afar writers and runs regular writers' workshops. The topics for the new materials are based on APDA's development sectors and the demands of the community itself, such as primary health, women's issues (including stopping harmful practices), community economic development, HIV and AIDS-related issues, and the use of the environment and land. The books are distributed to community bookshops to ensure that they are available in the community. The facilitators understand the language and culture of the Afar people, have basic literacy and numeracy skills, and travel with the people when they move from one place to another. APDA provides the facilitator with an initial training of two months, repeated each year, and portable equipment such as a blackboard, chalk, register book, lesson plan book, and exercise books for the learners.

The programme is jointly monitored by the community, APDA and the local government. Facilitators meet monthly in teams with their coordinator, who collects their monthly reports on participation and learning achievements. These reports are presented in a quarterly field office meeting where progress is assessed and the coming three months are planned. Every six months, a household assessment is conducted to monitor progress.

The impact of the programme

APDA asserts that the beneficiaries of the literacy programme appreciate their language more and integrate literacy in their communication. Graduates of the programme have gone on to continue their education, become involved in local governance and train as community health and women's extension workers. After participating in the programme, they were ready to give up harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation. Women gained the self-confidence to speak up about their rights in marriage and to get involved in income generating activities. A journal in the Afar language has been set up where Afar people can exchange their ideas.

Example 2: A curriculum with an intergenerational approach by the Institute for Popular Education, Mali[51]

The second example of effective curriculum development comes from Mali in West Africa. At least 30 languages are spoken in Mali, with 13 recognized as national languages. Bambara is the language of wider communication spoken by about 80 per cent of people, while French is the official language. Mali shares with many West African countries a tradition of French-oriented schooling which creates a linguistic barrier between language use at home and at school, and fails to appreciate the cultural heritage of the population. The Institute for Popular Education (IEP) has developed an alternative education system that recognizes indigenous knowledge and local languages. The underlying principles of this system are based on Paulo Freire's ideas about participatory learning and empowerment.

Programme design and curriculum
IEP started in 1994 by facilitating a women's literacy class in a small town near the capital Bamako. They used an action research approach to involve the learners in developing their own learning materials based on local knowledge. The materials reflected people's experiences and related to critical issues in the community. The curriculum focused on education, development, human rights, leadership, identity, change, organization, economics, gender and health. By involving women in doing action research, IEP empowered them to take part in development and to become co-visionaries for social change. As a direct result, the women realized that the education they received was much more effective than what their children received in the formal system. They therefore asked IEP to develop a similar education programme for their children. In response, IEP developed a curriculum with an intergenerational approach.

The intergenerational approach
The women worked together with IEP to start a community pre-school with parents on its staff. The curriculum and reading materials were developed by all generations (parents, young people and children) and by people with

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51 The following explanations are based on: Cheick Oumar COULIBALY. 2009. « KALANKE MALI YE» Le Service Apprentissage : Une stratégie mobilisante pour l'élaboration du curriculum. Presentation. Cross-regional Workshop on Capacity-building for LIFE in Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Arab States: Adult (15+) Literacy in Multilingual Contexts, 29 September–2 October 2009, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. And: Maria Diarra Keita. 2006. Processes, Approaches and Pedagogies in Literacy Programs. Case study on the experience of the Institute for Popular Education (IEP) in Mali. Working Document. ADEA Biennale on Education in Africa, Libreville, Gabon, March 27-31, 2006.

different status in the community (farmers, learners, parents and researchers). Learning content is culturally rooted and the medium of instruction is the local language.

A curriculum that empowers learners and cherishes African teaching and learning methodologies

As a next step, the pre-school developed into a community school with multiple grades. The overarching objective of the curriculum is capacity development in leadership. This is reflected in four pillars: identity, activism, justice and competence. The curriculum is theme-based, using history/ geography and science as a core. Mathematics, reading, writing, and the visual and performing arts are perceived as cross-cutting competencies. By using the local language as a medium of instruction, the learners acquire high competences in African languages as well as French. Storytelling, music and art play a key role, since these have always been ways of transferring knowledge in many African traditions. Special attention is given to making the curriculum attractive to girls.

The impact of the programme

The innovative approach of these educational programmes resulted in positive learning outcomes for adults and children alike. People developed the skills and knowledge to be actively involved in expanding possibilities for themselves and their children. Leadership skills were enhanced through this process. By recognizing the importance of the first language of the learners for cognitive and personal growth, learning outcomes improved. IEP has thus successfully set up an education system that recognizes the importance of African language, culture and values, but at the same time prepares the participants to fully interact with society at the local, national and international level.

Example 3: A method for African language based learning of French, Burkina Faso

The third example of an effective curriculum comes from Burkina Faso and concerns a method for teaching French as a foreign language to speakers of African languages. In Burkina Faso about 60 languages are spoken, all of which are recognized as national languages and three of which are languages of wider communication. French is the official language, but only a minority of people have a high level of competence in it. As in other African countries, today's school education system was introduced by the former European colonial power which used its own language as medium of instruction. As early as the 1970s the government of Burkina Faso realized that adult literacy programmes in French were not successful, and decided to use

the African national languages for adult literacy. In the early 1990s a village association had a group of adult neo-literates who wanted to learn French in order to continue their education in the formal system. The only possibility for learning French, however, was at primary school. The ALFAA method[52] was developed in response to this situation in collaboration with the University of Ouagadougou. Its aim was to teach French based on the learning outcomes of adult literacy education. The development of the ALFAA method preceded a critical analysis of prevailing second language[53] teaching methods in the region.

The ALFAA method
The ALFAA method aims to make national languages media for self-learning and support to access new knowledge. It also aims to democratize learning of the official language, French. If these objectives are attained and people become bilingual and literate in both French and the national languages, the conflictual relationship between these linguistic domains will be modified. Moreover, the linguistic barrier between the two subsystems of education, non-formal and formal, is bridged. The ALFAA curriculum teaches French as a foreign language, mathematical skills and other subject matter required to transition successfully into the formal system.

The ALFAA method builds on learners' existing knowledge and skills in their first language. Learners therefore have to have passed a literacy programme in their first language before starting to learn with the method. The method uses the learner's first language as a reference and builds on it by using contrastive linguistic analysis, introducing first the structures that are common in both languages and later structures specific to French. Both the first languages and French are written in the Latin script.

Non-formal education following the ALFAA method for adults and youth (age 9–14) has three levels, each of which comprises 500 teaching hours. The number of daily teaching hours can be chosen (8, 6 or 4 hours per day). At level one learners learn the rules of pronunciation, initial oral expression, comprehension, basic literacy rules (symbol-sound correspondence and

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52 La méthode d'apprentissage du français à partir des acquis de l'alphabétisation (ALFAA). The following explanation of the ALFAA method is based on an unpublished workshop paper: Norbert Nikièma. 2009. La méthode ALFAA dans le programme d'éducation multilingue au Burkina Faso. Communication. Atelier interrégional de renforcement des capacités pour LIFE en Asie, Afrique sub-saharienne et dans les Etats arabes : alphabétisation des adultes dans des contextes multilingues, 29 septembre–2 octobre 2009, Addis Abeba.

53 See the Glossary for a definition of 'second language'.

some relevant aspects of orthography) in French that are similar to their first language. They are also introduced to basic mathematical concepts in French that correspond to those acquired in the first language. Level two of the training aims to strengthen the learners' French comprehension, reading, speaking, listening and writing skills and mathematics. Learners discover the structure and organization of the French language and learn the vocabulary that is used in teaching different subjects. They also learn practical language skills such as how to use a dictionary, write a letter, read a newspaper, write a cheque, etc. At level three all skills are further strengthened. Mathematics teaching focuses on the practical uses of mathematics for solving problems in everyday life. At this level general knowledge is taught in French. This includes practical knowledge, cultural knowledge and topics based on the expressed needs of the learners. Successful ALFAA students can present themselves as candidates for the primary school leaving examination.

The impact of the programme
ALFAA has been instrumental in developing sector-wide bilingual education in Burkina Faso. Bilingual schools are using it in conjunction with an intensive literacy programme for youth, AFI-D. AFI-D is a four-year non-formal education programme which finishes with the primary leaving exam, thus opening access to secondary education. These bilingual education programmes have had much better results than monolingual French schools. Their success has also inspired other countries.

The ALFAA method takes account of the prevailing linguistic situation. It is adapted to the learners' first language, recognizing that each language is different and that French is a foreign or second language to the learner. In 2009 the adult and youth version of ALFAA was adapted to four first languages and the children's version to eight. Every year adult literacy providers organize training sessions for trainers to learn the ALFAA method.

Synthesis of guiding principles and quality criteria emerging from practice

These three examples demonstrate how policies and curricula can correspond to the linguistic and cultural profile of the learners and their home, community and work environment. The table below summarizes the quality criteria that emerge from these cases along the lines of the basic guiding principles. It also includes the quality criteria that emerged from the other cases analysed during the 2009 cross-regional dialogue on 'Adult Literacy in Multilingual Contexts in Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Arab States'.

Table 5.2 **Overview of guiding principles and quality criteria identified for curriculum development for adult literacy in multilingual and multicultural contexts**

Sphere of action: Curriculum Development	
Guiding principles	**Quality criteria**
Inclusion • Effective inclusion of communities in curriculum development • Gender equality • Empowerment of learners	• Beneficiaries participate in curriculum development in a conscious and effective way through action research and participatory analysis of communities' existing knowledge and needs. • A pragmatic modus operandi of negotiation and mutual comprehension is employed. • Unequal social conditions vis-à-vis women are balanced. Measures are taken to encourage and provide incentives for women and girls. Content and images valorize the role and status of women. Content that reinforces sexist stereotypes is avoided. • Content, images, techniques and learning situations provoke critical thinking and analysis of the living conditions of girls, boys, women and men, promoting social change in the direction of greater equality and peace. • Profiles are defined for adult learners to work towards based on the following competences: communication, analysis, reason, teaching others, searching for information, problem-solving, using new technologies, leadership and empowerment skills, critical spirit, and socio-professional competences.
Lifelong learning	• The identification of learning content starts with understanding the context and what learners do and know and how they live together in which language/s by using an ethnographic approach. Based on this, it can be identified what learning contents and skills are beneficial for the target group. • Subject matter goes beyond learners' immediate needs and includes activities that are relevant to their lives, such as using technology (mobile phones, calculators etc.) and banking. • Linkages are created between different non-formal educational programmes and with formal education so that people can progress. These linkages include bridging linguistic barriers. • Curriculum development is intergenerational and involves children, youth and adults. • The curriculum is based on the four foundational pillars of education: identity, activism, justice and competence.

Sphere of action: Curriculum Development	
Guiding principles	**Quality criteria**
Literacy from a multilingual and multicultural perspective as an essential aspect of the human right to education	• Forums for discussion and mobilization are created in areas where there has been no literacy tradition. • Learners develop the language and literacy skills they need to attain a profile that is attractive and motivating to them. • Written materials that adults are confronted with in their everyday lives are identified and included as learning materials. • Literacy is first acquired in the learner's first language. • Literacy in a second/foreign language is taught with second language teaching methodologies that take into account the first language of the learner and the aims of the curriculum. • Bi-/multilingual materials are available as part of effective literacy teaching and learning methodologies.
Multilingual ethos • Working with the linguistic profile of the target community	• Policies promote a multilingual ethos and multi-sectoral perspective for curricula. • The use of literacy, numeracy and other widely known symbols and signs in the language/s of the community are researched and embedded in the curricula. • If a language does not have an orthography or certain vocabulary, it is developed. • The main medium of instruction is the learners' first language, which is recognized as being important for cognitive and personal growth. • Teaching and learning methodologies are developed that enhance a multilingual ethos: for example, foreign language teaching methods are developed for official languages that speakers of local and national languages have not yet mastered. • The learning of the official language is democratized.
Sustainability • Teaching and learning is practice-oriented	• The curriculum aims to make learners highly proficient in both their mother tongues and the official language. • Learning spaces are adapted to the living conditions of the community and maintained by the community itself. • Teaching and learning is also carried out in places where the learning content will be applied, such as the workplace. • The teaching of numeracy, literacy and other symbols reflects real life situations and is meaningful to the learners. • Reading materials of interest to the community are produced and made accessible through various structures. • Literacy in the relevant language is used in community activities.

Point for reflection 10

Use the following questions to help you clarify your ideas about this section of the book:

1. Do you recognize any quality criteria mentioned here that match with curriculum development in your own context?

Answer these questions by building on your findings in the last point for your reflection in chapter 4:

2. What kind of change in curriculum development practice could help lift one of the barriers you identified previously?

3. If you could use participatory action research to do this, who would need to participate?

4. What quality criterion would indicate this improvement in practice?

Training of Trainers

It is essential to the success of every learning programme that the trainer does a good job. As a result of the analysis of good practice and research in 2009, several guiding principles and quality criteria emerged for an effective training of trainers programme for adult literacy in multilingual contexts. These are illustrated by three concrete examples from Africa and Asia and summarized in the table that follows.

Example 1: A training of trainers system for a community-based programme by ASHRAI, Bangladesh[54]

Bangladesh is a country with about 73 indigenous communities, in which 65 languages and 8 scripts are used in written communication. The largest community are the Bangalee; their language, Bangla (Bengali), is spoken by the majority of people and is used as medium of instruction in both schools and adult education. Most of the languages spoken by the 2% of the population known as the Small Ethnic Groups (SEG) do not have a written form. The SEGs face social, political and economic exclusion, lack of recognition, fear and insecurity. These communities live in poverty and most of their members are non-literate. Mother-tongue education for both children and adults is therefore one of the major quality measures for education and learning in Bangladesh. The local NGO ASHRAI (www.ashraibd.org/) has worked for the inclusion of small ethnic communities since 1990, in particular involving women, using the learners' mother tongue. Based on the experience of the programme, this is clearly a strength.

The literacy programme
The adult literacy programme that ASHRAI has run since 2002 is called 'Lahanti', the Santali word for 'totally developed'. ASHRAI's Lahanti programme is village-based and brings together about 20 women to form a Lahanti circle for one year (about 2–3 hours in the evening on about 190 to 200 days per year). At the end of the year, two to three circles form a community-based organization with a community resource centre. The organization's function is to facilitate getting information for the community, identifying problems, seeking solutions, networking, organizing cultural events, and undertaking advocacy at local level to protect and/or achieve rights and social justice.

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54 The following explanation of the Lahanti programme of the NGO ASHRAI is based on an unpublished workshop paper: Samad A.O.M. Abdus, Training of Trainers: The case of ASHRAI in Bangladesh. Cross-regional Workshop on Capacity-building for LIFE in Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Arab States: Adult (15+) Literacy in Multilingual Contexts, 29 September–2 October 2009, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The Lahanti circle participants learn about communication (including literacy and numeracy), social issues (e.g. child marriage, poverty), natural disaster and common diseases, organizational development (financing, management), and empowerment (rights, advocacy and culture). The Lahanti literacy programme uses a customized REFLECT method in the local language. At the initial stage the group identifies an issue and develops an action plan. This is then discussed with the spouse forum linked to the programme so that spouses are involved in the learning and implementation of the action points. The programme has made communities more aware of their socio-cultural and economic conditions and empowered them to change them, showing that literacy learning is an integral part of development and empowerment.

The facilitators
ASHRAI has selection criteria for facilitators. As the Lahanti circle participants are mostly women, it is important that the facilitator is a woman. The facilitator must come from the same community as the participants and speak both the local language and Bangla. This criterion ensures that the facilitator has knowledge of local culture and communication methods, and is aware of the difficulties people face. Other selection criteria for facilitators are a secondary school qualification, acceptance by the community, and an ability to motivate people. Facilitators may not be involved in the making or drinking of alcohol. The facilitator is hired on a part-time basis and receives a small remuneration (in the year 2009 this was 1,500 Bangladeshi Taka per month). The organization is aware that this remuneration is low and perceives it as a weakness. Finding facilitators with the required academic qualifications is a challenge, because as a result of their exclusion not many adults from ethnic minorities are suitably educated.

ASHRAI has developed a system to train the facilitators which includes residential trainings, peer group meetings, and on-site feedback and demonstration. The trainers of the facilitators are experienced in Lahanti programme implementation and preferably bilingual in Bangla and the language of the trainees. The training programme uses a variety of learning methods such as role play, practical exercises, group work, lecture, discussion, games, etc., which the trainees will also apply in the Lahanti circle. The residential trainings are sensitive to the living conditions of women: mothers can come with their babies and a nanny. Childcare costs are taken over by the organization.

Figure 5.5 **Training of trainers' class by Ashrai**

© A.O.M. Abdus'Samad

Residential training of trainers

The selected facilitators are introduced to the work through an initial four-day residential training on the methodology of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) in the Ashrai training centre. The aim of the training is to ensure that the facilitators fully understand the objectives and usefulness of the programme and the processes involved. Facilitators learn how to set up a Lahanti circle, including a spouse forum and a circle support committee composed of community members, so that the circle's activities can run effectively and benefit the whole community.

When the circle is set up the facilitators receive a second residential training of 14 days where they learn to be trainers/facilitators for the group. The curriculum includes modules on the importance of education, Freirean philosophy and literacy education using the REFLECT method, the status of indigenous communities, and pedagogical methods to facilitate learning and implement the circle's activities. The facilitators learn to work with different media, from paper to film.

After a few months of work with the Lahanti circle, the trainers undergo a third residential training for five days on gender and human rights. The fourth residential training takes three days and teaches the facilitator how to facilitate the sessions in which participants determine the competencies they want to acquire at the end of the programme. In these sessions, each individual member expresses her own individual expectations and the group determines the scope and level of competencies. These are then planned as the target of the circle.

Peer group exchange and on-site feedback for trainers
Each facilitator works under the supervision of a programme officer who makes regular visits to the circle, provides feedback to the facilitator and occasionally facilitates a meeting of the circle. Every two weeks, facilitators of neighbouring circles meet to discuss problems and possible solutions, etc. This cluster meeting is chaired by the supervising programme officer. The facilitators thus develop a common understanding, learn from each other, receive advice from the supervisor and prepare themselves for upcoming activities.

At the end of each month, a half-day refresher training for a group of ten facilitators takes place in the Ashrai branch office. The aim is to discuss and prepare for the next month's activities. Role plays are used to simulate situations. Solutions are developed for literacy learning issues and action points implemented. At the end of the training the facilitators submit monthly reports and have the opportunity to raise and solve management issues and receive their remuneration. It was observed that, generally speaking, women are better at facilitating the learning process and men are better at networking with local government and non-governmental organizations.

Example 2: Institutionalizing professional training for adult literacy educators, Niger[55]

Niger is one of the few countries in Africa that offers an academic qualification for adult educators and inspectors. The *Centre de Formation des Cadres de l'Alphabétisation* (CFCA, Centre for Training Personnel in Adult Literacy Education)[56] was established by the government in 1977 as

55 The following explanation of CFCA is based on an unpublished presentation: Laouali Malam Moussa. Centre de formation des cadres de l'alphabétisation. Cross-regional Workshop on Capacity-building for LIFE in Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Arab States: Adult (15+) Literacy in Multilingual Contexts, 29 September–2 October 2009, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

56 The CFCA is today called Institut de formation en alphabétisation et education non formelle (IFAENF).

a professional training institute for literacy and adult education. It became autonomous in 2009. The institute provides initial and continuing training to professionals working in the field of adult education. It provides a solid foundation in adult education and literacy in particular. The centre also trains French-speaking adult educators from other African countries.

In Niger about twenty local languages are spoken, of which ten have the status of national languages and two are used as languages of wider communication. French is the official language of the country. The CFCA recognizes the importance of responding to the multilingual context. It therefore requires trainees to master literacy in their first language and a second language of their choice. Trainees also learn how to teach French. As well as writing in the Latin script, the trainees learn how to write the national languages in the Arabic script which is also used in Niger. Ideally, trainees will learn to work with all ten national languages.

An important linguistic challenge is the low level of French competence and multicultural understanding among trainers, which makes it difficult for them to transfer knowledge between the national languages and French. A further challenge is that despite the higher linguistic competence in national languages, there is a lack of reading materials in these languages.

Figure 5.6 **Library on the campus of the IFAENF**

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The training programme

The training centre provides initial and in-service training. In 2009 it offered a three-year middle level course of four years of post-primary education and a superior level course of two years for pedagogical advisors and one year for inspectors. The middle level course provides trainers with a solid foundation in literacy, adult education and administrative skills, and assists the learners in identifying development priorities. All programmes are centred on current techniques and methods. Pedagogical advisors also learn about research methodologies and inspectors about educational management issues. In addition to the theoretical content, the course offers practical internships of one month per year, which ensure that knowledge is applied in real life situations.

The training of trainers programme takes account of gender equality issues. There is a quota for recruitment and the curriculum encompasses learning about human rights, women's rights and children's rights as well as the link between gender and development issues.

Example 3: Training trainers for the 'Kha Ri Gude' mass literacy campaign, South Africa[57]

In 2008 the Government of South Africa (Department of Basic Education) launched a multilingual mass literacy campaign to enable about 4.7 million adults (15 years and over) to become literate in one of the eleven official languages of South Africa. The government wanted to fulfil its commitment made at Dakar in 2000 to reduce illiteracy by 50 per cent. The name of the campaign is Kha Ri Gude, which means 'let us learn'[58]. The campaign has an inclusive approach and is particularly targeted at women, youth, and disabled (deaf and blind) people over the age of 15. All materials are available in braille in the eleven languages. The campaign has won several awards. By the end of 2009, the programme had assisted about one million learners (380,000 in 2008 and 620,000 in 2009) to acquire basic literacy skills and spoken English. It has opened up work opportunities for 40,000 volunteers in poor communities, while offering blind and deaf matriculants the opportunity to learn to teach in braille and sign language respectively.

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57 The following explanation of Kha Ri Gude is based on (i) an unpublished presentation by Veronica McKay: The Kha Ri Gude Literacy Campaign South Africa: Cross-regional Workshop on Capacity-building for LIFE in Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Arab States: Adult (15+) Literacy in Multilingual Contexts, 29 September–2 October 2009, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia), and (ii) on the case study on the Kha Ri Gude programme available at UIL's Effective Literacy Programmes Database www.unesco.org/uil/litbase/?menu=13&country=ZA&programme=69 (last update 1 August 2011), (Accessed 19 November 2014).

58   For further information see also www.kharigude.co.za/ (Accessed 19 November 2014.) and www.unesco.org/uil/litbase

Guiding principles of the literacy campaign

The campaign follows the following key principles:

- learning is offered in all official languages
- there is no cost to learners
- the teacher-student ratio is 1:18 and smaller for learners with special needs
- volunteer educators are paid a small stipend
- there is a focus on literacy for disabled people

The campaign assesses each province's literacy needs per language by mapping the levels of illiteracy and determining the number of learners per province. In order to effectively address the particular and diverse learning needs of different groups of learners, the programme employs an integrated and multilingual approach to literacy skills training. Accordingly, the curriculum integrates basic literacy skills training in learners' mother tongue with life skills training. The life skills component of the programme focuses on themes that are central to the learners' socio-economic context and everyday experience, such as health, civic education (e.g. human rights, conflict resolution and management, peace building and gender and racial relations), environmental management and conservation, income generation and livelihood development. In addition, the programme provides instruction in English as a second language in order to enable learners to conduct ordinary tasks such as filling in forms, for which English, as the official language of the country, is generally required.

The materials were developed by a writing team for each language and an editorial, artistic, photographic and design team. The materials follow an integrated, 'whole word' approach to literacy acquisition, drawing on learners' existing language experience while taking seriously the findings of recent neuro-cognitive research. The thematic approach ensures that the content is the same in all eleven languages.

Recruitment and training of volunteer personnel (coordinators, supervisors and educators)

In order to facilitate the effective implementation of the programme, until 2011 the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) recruited and trained about 75,000 community-based volunteer coordinators, supervisors and educators or literacy training facilitators, including 100 blind and 150 deaf educators who provide specialized instruction to their illiterate compatriots with disabilities. Of these, about 66 per cent are under 35; 80 per cent are women; 85 per cent were previously unemployed and all were recruited from the same communities as the learners they serve. As a rule, only matriculants with a

minimum of Grade 12 qualifications and qualified professionals are recruited to serve as programme facilitators. 51% of the volunteers (coordinators, supervisors and educators) have one or more tertiary qualifications.

Programme facilitators are provided with basic training in various aspects of adult education, including:

- adult-appropriate teaching and learning methods
- classroom management
- how to use teaching modules to conduct lessons and how to moderate the learning process
- how to conduct the assessment activities in the Learner Assessment Portfolios (LAPS).

Facilitators receive an initial training of four days and in-service training of one day per month. The lessons and learning materials are tightly structured with in-built sequenced activities to teach, because the campaign relies on volunteers who work in less than ideal circumstances. Training videos present the steps for teaching the lessons. Each facilitator receives a step-by-step guideline for each lesson. They also receive action research instruments with questions that help them assess their own performance and discuss critical incidents.

The campaign has instituted an extensive, action-oriented internal monitoring and evaluation system carried out by supervisors who each monitor ten educators/facilitators and coordinators who each monitor twenty supervisors.

Figure 5.7 **Teaching and learning wherever you are**

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The monitoring and evaluation process includes monthly class visits by supervisors to monitor and assess the teaching/learning process and the learners' progress, and spot checks carried out by a team of external monitors and 'line' coordinators. This ongoing monitoring and evaluation system enables supervisors to advise facilitators on how to improve their teaching strategies in order to enable learners to acquire literacy skills more effectively. Furthermore, the system enables programme supervisors and coordinators to solve many problems on site and thus to maintain programme standards. Each trained educator/facilitator is responsible for between 15 and 18 learners. Volunteers are paid a monthly stipend (about R 1,200) which is contingent on their meeting a number of pre-defined criteria such as submitting LAPs. This 'outcomes-based payment' is necessary for reasons of accountability and motivation and to ensure that the learners are not compromised. It is also essential in ensuring the integrity of the campaign's payment system. Experience has shown that the provision of adequate training opportunities and payment of stipends to facilitators is central to the success of adult literacy campaigns.

Synthesis of guiding principles and quality criteria

The three successful cases of training of trainers described above demonstrate how the policy, education and community environments can be interlinked in an enabling and empowering way. The table below summarizes the quality criteria that emerge from these cases along the lines of the basic guiding principles. It also includes the quality criteria that emerged from the other cases analysed during the 2009 cross-regional dialogue on 'Adult Literacy in Multilingual Contexts in Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Arab States'.

Table 5.3 **Overview on guiding principles and quality criteria identified for the training of trainers for adult literacy in multilingual contexts**

Sphere of action: Training of trainers	
Guiding principles	**Quality criteria**
Inclusion • Participatory and decentralized approach • Equality (Gender, disabled people)	• Partnership with the State, provinces and locally elected representatives and non-governmental organizations. • The training of trainers is contextualized and adapted to the trainers' living conditions. • Vulnerable groups such as women and blind people are trained as trainers and provision is made to accommodate their special needs, such as childcare. • The learning programme and materials are audited with regard to gender equality. • Key actors are sensitized on the importance of gender equality for the development of society.

Lifelong learning
 • Development of a relevant curriculum for trainers and trainees with their support
	• Trainers' needs are identified in a participatory way.
	 • The training is adaptable and flexible with regard to the changing realities of the trainees' lives.
	 • The training facilitates learning in practice (as opposed to just providing information).
	 • The training accompanies the trainers' professional development through a process consisting of pre-service training, in-service training, peer learning and learning from specialized trainers.
	 • A profile is defined for the trainee and facilitator to work towards. The profile includes skills that relate to the four foundational pillars of lifelong learning. The following skill sets are proposed:
	   • Linguistic skills: mastering both first and second languages orally and in writing.
	   • Pedagogical and technical skills: understanding of the curriculum; knowledge of literacy acquisition pedagogy; communication, listening and facilitation skills; awareness that learning is a continuous process; capacity to conduct action research; good comprehension of gender issues, continuous up-date on the respective subject matter.
	 • Trainers use participatory action research to develop training modules with specialists in the subject matter, in adult education pedagogy and in the development of local language learning materials.

Sphere of action: Training of trainers

Guiding principles	Quality criteria
Literacy from a multilingual and multicultural perspective as an essential aspect of the human right to education	• Trainers value the local reading and writing culture and use it in their everyday lives. • Trainers are trained to use the scripts associated with the language(s) they teach. • Trainers learn how to make use of literacy with different media relevant to the community.
Multilingual ethos • Trainers' recruitment, curriculum and profile follow a multilingual ethos	• Linguistic and cultural diversity is taken into account by choosing trainers from the specific community who also master the official language of the country. • Trainees' and facilitators' profiles have a multilingual ethos.
Sustainability • Suitability to the context • Ownership of the process • Effective and efficient management	• The local language is used as a medium of instruction so that the trainers become capable actors in defining the form, role and value of education that contributes to local development initiatives. • The trainees have ownership of the training process. • Trainers are recruited who possess the minimum required educational qualification in addition to language competences, knowledge of the relevant culture and teamwork skills. Recruiters are aware that trainers and facilitators are seen as role models and should therefore have experience in what they teach. • A career plan for the trainees is put in place, covering financial remuneration, job opportunities, training and officially recognized certificates. • A training and guidance system is in place, covering initial training, regular monthly in-service training and regular monitoring and evaluation (quantity and quality), including action research. • Training and teaching materials are readily available and provide the guidance required with respect to the circumstances in which the trainers teach. • Adequate financing is available. • Training is technically and financially sustainable.

Point for reflection 11

Please think about the following questions and write your responses in your notebook:

1. Do you recognize any quality criteria that match the training of trainers in your own context?

Building on your findings in the last point for your reflection, please consider:

2. What kind of change in training of trainer practice could help lift one of the barriers you identified in your context?

3. If you could use participatory action research to do this, who would need to participate?

4. What quality criteria would indicate this improvement in practice?

6

Summary of the main messages

By Hassana Alidou and Christine Glanz

The Osmanya script was created in 1922 and sporadically used to write Somali until 1972. It is also known as the "Somali alphabet". The Latin alphabet was officially adopted for Somali in 1973.

All the successful cases of adult literacy programmes we discussed above have one important aspect in common: they emerged in a context where people's literacy skills in the languages and for the purposes that matter to them are not promoted. Official spaces and institutions of power use literacy in a script or a language that these people cannot read or do not master. This linguistic exclusion and exclusion from literacy as medium of communication is used in these contexts to exert social power, particularly in formal domains, such as in government and administration, the mass media, the formal economy, and formal education. The literacy researchers Hamilton and Pitt underline that this "is a manifestation of inequality as much as a cause of it" (2011, p. 604). Their research shows that simple cause and effect models with literacy skills taught in isolation cannot make a difference to such inequalities. The educational programmes we introduced to you, by contrast, are based on the understanding that literacy is not a stand-alone cognitive skill, but gains its significance and social meaning from the particular socio-cultural context in which it is used for communication.

In this guidebook, our aim has been to propose a frame of reference which could inspire you to ask questions for your own action research in the field of youth and adult literacy. The frame of reference is concrete, and is based on the broader guiding principles and values that frame visions and practices in youth and adult education. These basic guiding principles are essential for promoting peace and social justice in a linguistically and culturally diverse world. The frame of reference proposes to assess whether youth and adult education takes place in enabling environments. We identified the policy environment, the multisectoral educational environment, and the home, community and work environments as crucial for youth and adult education. The case studies enabled us to see that the interplay of these environments is an important factor for quality. The frame of reference therefore analyses them in multiple dimensions.

The frame of reference we propose in chapter four is flexible with regard to the concrete strategies and quality criteria employed in each case, recognizing that understanding and practices evolve and contexts differ. Nevertheless, we have illustrated in concrete terms what it means to apply the same

basic guiding principles in different contexts for the creation of a literate environment, curriculum development and the training of trainers. These initiatives show that applying a multilingual ethos can sometimes mean working with a multi-/bilingual approach, and at other times concentrating first and foremost on developing the reading and writing culture in the previously neglected local language. The inclusion of people with different lifestyles (such as nomads), different social roles (women and men) or special communication needs (such as blind and hearing impaired people) had in each case an empowering effect that made the society stronger, because formerly weak and inactive members became able to contribute to it. People's agency was strengthened and their communicative competences (including literacy) expanded through culturally rooted and enabling environments which make education and learning sustainable.

All along, our work has been inspired and reinforced by calls for greater social justice, gender equality, social inclusion, sustainable development and inclusive growth, summed up by what Bokova (2010) calls the new humanism. These themes have been addressed in various forums, particularly the post-2015 debates on the international *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs) and *Education for All* (EFA). The fundamental questions are: what type of education policies and programmes should we promote in order to achieve MDGs and EFA goals? How do we accelerate progress, particularly with regard to EFA goal 4 (literacy, basic and continuing education for adults) and MDG goals 1 and 7 (eliminating extreme poverty and achieving environmental sustainability)? Are we taking people's cultures and needs as the starting point and key factor for motivating and mobilizing all people - children, youth and adults – to become lifelong learners in formal, non-formal and informal educational settings?

The promotion of good quality education is a social project which requires the active participation of all members of society. To ensure this involvement, certain principles should be upheld. The role and importance of people's cultures and languages are recognized by UNESCO in its various policy documents (e.g. UNESCO, 1960, 2001, 2003, 2005) and more recently during the global debate on MDGs and post-2015 goals, which include respecting diversity, gender equality, and social inclusion. We believe that the multicultural and multilingual ethos should be applied as one of the foundational principles in promoting literacy, education and lifelong learning in multilingual and multicultural contexts.

In order to develop the frame of reference for the improvement of adult and youth education that we presented to you, we engaged in a review of theories on quality education (Friboulet et al., 2006; Barrett et al., 2006; Tikly,

2010 and 2011; Tikly and Barrett, 2011; Lesgold and Welch-Ross, 2012) and action research (e.g. Altrichter, 1999; McNiff, 2002; Chilisa and Preece, 2005; Reason, 2006; Quigley, 2006; Kerfoot, 2009; Somekh and Zeichner, 2009). We also carried out an analysis of case studies related to the development of literate environments, curriculum development and training of trainers in multilingual and multicultural contexts. This research enabled us to identify five guiding principles for the promotion of good quality adult and youth literacy in multilingual and multicultural contexts.

We learned that action research allows policymakers, practitioners, learners, civil society organizations and all stakeholders to work together democratically to define challenges, identify strategies or solutions, test the application of these solutions and learn from the process. Action research allows for both bottom-up and top-down approaches, ensuring the ownership and sustainability of policies and programmes at both local and national levels. The end goals are the emancipation and empowerment of all learners and stakeholders and the promotion of good quality adult and youth education to help people overcome exclusion, improve their livelihoods and promote sustainable development and inclusive growth.

Action research teaches us that each case is different. The principles and criteria applied to improve the quality of a particular system may be adapted to suit another, or new principles and criteria can be determined. This implies that the five basic guiding principles for good quality adult and youth literacy in multilingual and multicultural contexts are not exhaustive. Nevertheless, they should be considered critical and foundational. We invite policymakers, practitioners, adult and youth learners, civil society organizations, researchers and private sector members to work together at local and national levels to identify solutions that can further elucidate the issues at stake, enabling us to revise the proposed framework and to consider new dimensions. The reflections by the various authors and editors of this guidebook represent our contribution to the task of improving the quality of adult and youth literacy and education within EFA and the MDGs, in 2015 and beyond.

Internationally, adult (literacy) education has been inspired by Brazilian educator Paulo Freire's call to make education a source of empowerment, democracy, peace, freedom, and social and individual transformation. His reflections and practice as an educator, intellectual and researcher were informed by his participation in Brazil's transformation from a colonial state to an independent nation. We would like to close this book with some reflections by Paulo Freire, as we believe that a critical reading of the evolution of a society is a resource for our understanding as responsible actors in the present. The dialogue with past experience helps us to put

present social and individual conditions into perspective, to understand the task of the current generation, and to reflect on essential principles of our common humanity. Looking at social heritage, Freire concluded that "since our [Brazilian] cultural history had not provided us even with habits of political and social solidarity appropriate to our democratic form of government, we had to appeal to education as a cultural action by means of which Brazilian people could learn, in place of old passivity, new attitudes and habits of participation and intervention" (Freire, 1974, pp. 33–34). With regard to literacy it meant that "we wanted a literacy program which would be an introduction to the democratization of culture, a program with men [people] as its subjects rather than as patient recipients, a program which itself would be an act of creation, capable of releasing other creative acts, one in which students would develop the impatience and vivacity which characterize search and invention" (ibid., p. 44). We agree with Freire's vision of using educational settings as a space of compassion and dialogue where we can learn to express ourselves and to live together creatively: "Democracy and democratic education are founded on faith in men [people], on the belief that they not only can but should discuss the problems of their country, of their continent, their world, their work, the problems of democracy itself. Education is an act of love, and thus an act of courage. It cannot fear the analysis of reality or, under pain of revealing itself as a farce, avoid creative discussion" (Ibid., p. 34). It is with these words of profound wisdom that we end this work, hoping that they are a source of inspiration for all of us.

Point for reflection 12

You have reached the last point for your reflection in this book. It should help you to sum up your ideas and take the first step towards transferring your ideas to practice. Write your reflections in your notebook.

Please select the most energizing/appealing idea for improving practice from the last three points for your reflection, either on the literate environment, curriculum development or training of trainers. We invite you to take this idea and the related questions as starting points for an action research study.

In order to test the idea and to transfer from your individual learning process to a collective one, share your idea and questions with any, several or all of the people you identified as partners in the previous points for reflection.

1. Discuss your idea with them, refine it as a worthwhile purpose and, if it is appealing, establish it as a common agenda.

2. Together, discuss your views on how an ethical, democratic and participatory community of inquiry could work for each partner.

3. Plan together the implementation of the idea on how to improve practice, with the available resources in mind.

Glossary

Action research

"Action research is a practical approach to professional inquiry in any social situation" (Waters-Adams, 2006).

Action research is also a form of evaluation for adult literacy programmes (see below).

"Action research aims to help practitioners investigate the connections between their own theories of education and their own day-to-day educational practices; it aims to integrate the research act into the educational setting to that research can play a direct and immediate role in the improvement of practice; and it aims to overcome the distance between researchers and practitioners by assisting practitioners to become researchers. […] action research as a form of participatory and collaborative research [is] aimed at improving educational understandings, practices, and settings, and at involving those affected in the research process. There are different approaches to action research and two main schools of thought. One aspires to improve mainly professional practice at the local level and within the constraints of the educational institution and another aspires to change education at a broader social level" (Kemmis, 1997, pp. 173–179).

Action research is conducted in an iterative cycle. "The basic steps of an action research process constitute an action plan:

- We review our current practice,
- identify an aspect that we want to investigate,
- imagine a way forward,
- try it out, and
- take stock of what happens.
- We modify what we are doing in the light of what we have found, and continue working in this new way (try another option if the new way of working is not right),
- monitor what we do,
- review and evaluate the modified action,
- and so on …" (McNiff, 2012).

Agency

Agency from a sociological perspective means the "capacity for individualized choice and action" as distinguished from acting unconsciously along the lines of socio-culturally predetermined patterns, no matter whether these are just or detrimental to the individual or social group. Agency includes being or becoming aware of one's own social situation, choices and perceptions. For example, how women can develop agency has been of central concern in the feminist movement (www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/1541079/feminism-philosophical/284112/Feminist-theories-of-agency?anchor=ref1049944, accessed on 19 November 2014).

Bilingual education / multilingual education

Bilingual education is defined in different ways. The term originally meant the use of two languages as media of instruction. It included, but was not restricted to, the learning of two languages as subjects. Today it is most often meant in the first sense. Increasingly, however, and particularly in North America, the term denotes using the first language as medium of instruction for a short time (see early-exit transitional models) followed by a second language as a medium of instruction for a greater amount of time. In other words, it has been misused to mean a mainly second language-based education system. This misuse of the term 'bilingual education' has been transported to many countries, resulting in the labelling of programmes as bilingual even though they feature very little use of the first language as medium of instruction. A definition of the different models used in bilingual education programmes (subtractive, early-exit, late-exit, and additive) is given below.

The term 'multilingual education' was adopted in 1999 in UNESCO's General Conference Resolution 12 to refer to the use of at least three languages in education, for example, the mother tongue, a regional or national language and an international language. The resolution supported the view that the requirements of global and national participation and the specific needs of culturally and linguistically distinct communities can only be addressed by multilingual education (UNESCO, 2003; Ouane and Glanz, 2010, pp. 64 and 65).

Types of bilingual education models include:

1. **Subtractive education model:** The learners are moved out of the mother tongue and into a second language as a medium of instruction as early as possible. Sometimes this involves going straight to the second language as the medium of instruction in the first year.

2. **Early-exit (or transitional) model:** The objective of this model is identical to that of the subtractive models: to establish a single target language in schools, usually the official language. Learners may begin with the mother tongue and then gradually move to the official language as the medium of instruction. If the transition to the official/foreign language takes place within one to four years, it is referred to as the early-exit transition model.

3. **Late-exit models:** If the transition from the mother tongue as a medium of instruction to a different target language is delayed to years 5–6, it is referred to as the late-exit transition model. An efficient late-exit model which maintains the mother tongue as a subject beyond years 5–6 can lead to additive bilingualism, provided that effective first and second language pedagogy is used in the classroom in combination with adequate content area literacy instruction.

4. **Additive (bilingual) education models:** In the additive education model, the objective is to use the mother tongue as a medium of instruction throughout (with the official or second language taught as a subject), or to use the mother tongue plus the official or second language as dual media of instruction right through to the end of schooling. In the additive education model, the mother tongue is never removed as a medium of instruction and never used less than 50 per cent of the day/subject. The target is a high level of proficiency in both languages. (Adapted from Ouane and Glanz, 2010, p. 64.)

Criteria
The specifications or elements against which a judgment is made. (The International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education/ INQAAHE glossary, www.qualityresearchinternational.com/glossary, accessed on 19 November 2014.)
Different from Guiding Principles (see below).

Critical or radical adult education
A lot of adult literacy work is rooted in the philosophy of critical adult education. The Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1978, 1973, 1971) is one of its leading figures. He wanted an education that liberates people by creating awareness of power imbalances and socially unjust living conditions that marginalize and oppress people, such as the poor peasants in postcolonial Latin America. "The focus of the radical philosophy is on systemic change with a more critical view of the society we live in", so that learners do not just feel good about what they have learned but also form a social group that addresses its problems and is involved in lobbying for the better (Quigley,

2006, p. 98). This approach to education does not place the individual alone centre stage, but sets her/his life within a specific social system.

Culture

Culture is today understood as something that is complex, not closed, and that reflects both its historical development and influences from other cultures. 'Culture' refers to a group's beliefs, values and practices, but also accommodates the diversity of identities and practices of its individual members. A culture is not static and homogenous but flexible and heterogeneous. It is not a realm where people just coexist peacefully; it is a space of agreement and disagreement between and within generations. The interplay of autonomy and closeness is normal in all human relationships and every individual and group needs both. People can identify with aspects of different cultures, belong to several subgroups or sub-cultures, and agree with certain elements of a culture and reject others (May, 2009).

This definition emphasizes that 'culture' means beliefs, values and practices in all areas of life, economic, spiritual, educational, political etc. Therefore, when we speak about culture we also speak about livelihood.

Cultural fluency

Cultural fluency means a deep understanding of cultures: their natures, how they work, and how they intertwine with our relationships in times of conflict and harmony. It is about recognizing culture as an important site of struggle in bringing about social justice. Essentially, cultural fluency is about being able to put ourselves in someone else's shoes. It is the ability to look 'critically' at social constructs and to acquire the attitudes, knowledge and skills to understand them and 'transform' them towards a more humane and inclusive society (Abeysekara, 2011, p. 7).

Curriculum

A curriculum is a systematic articulation of a society's values and needs regarding learning, training and competence development. The curriculum constitutes a framework of orientation for the whole learning, training and competence development process. It should be noted that different philosophies of education define 'curriculum' differently. We refer you to Jonnaert and Therribault (2013, in English) and Jonnaert, Ettayebi and Defise (2009, in French) regarding the difference between the Franco-European and the Anglo-Saxon/North American approach. The definition proposed in this book follows the broader Anglo-Saxon approach.

A curriculum extends beyond the syllabus to encompass: (i) policy; (ii) course contents (learning objectives, e.g. what kind of literacy competences are to be gained in which language(s)?); (iii) guiding principles; and (iv) pedagogical approaches. In fact, the term 'curriculum' is mostly used to refer to the existing contract between society, the State and educational professionals with regard to the educational experiences that learners should undergo during a certain phase of their lives. For the majority of authors and experts, the curriculum defines: (i) why; (ii) what; (iii) when; (iv) where; (v) how; and (vi) with whom to learn. The curriculum defines the foundation and content of learning materials, their sequencing in relation to the amount of time available for learning experiences, the characteristics of teaching institutions and learning experiences (especially as regards methods to be used), resources for learning and teaching (e.g. textbooks and new technologies), evaluation and teachers' profiles.

"Increasingly, theorists of education recognize the political component of the curriculum – the fact that the curriculum is a field of ideological and political struggle that takes place in each society in order to give meaning to education. It is recognized that this meaning not only originates among experts, following professional criteria, but also through complex cultural processes" (Braslavsky, n. d).

Democracy
Derived from Greek term demokratía, power or leadership by the populace. Democracy can be seen as a value and as a way to govern institutions. Democracy is a political or leadership order in which power is in the hands of the populace, which rules itself either through (a) direct participation in all decisions that are of general relevance and interest, or (b) through the selection and control of representatives who take these decisions on behalf of the populace (Free translation of Fuchs, 2009, p. 39).

Essentialism
Essentialism is the view that a particular group of people or culture is a closed, homogeneous entity with fixed boundaries and immutable characteristics that are not touched by internal or external changes (May, 2009).

Foreign language
A foreign language is a language that a person is unfamiliar with and that she/he does not master (Ouane and Glanz, 2010, p. 63).

Framework
A framework is a set of beliefs, ideas or rules that is used as the basis for making judgments, decisions, etc. (Oxford Dictionary, 2005, p. 616).

Guiding principles
Guiding principles (for example lifelong learning or respect for linguistic and cultural diversity) articulate the broad philosophy that directs the development of literacy in multilingual contexts. They direct policies, goals, strategies and types of work, and are reflected in core quality standards.

Habitus
Coined by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, this term refers to an individual's ways of 'being in the world', his/her patterns of perception, thinking and acting, attitudes, physical appearance, habits and lifestyle, which are shaped by his environment, socialization and personality.

Heteroglossia
Coined by the Russian literary analyst and language philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin, this term refers to the diversity of variations within a language, such as those used by people of different ages, professions or regional backgrounds. Bakhtin also draws attention to the social and political tensions and conflicts that these variations mirror (Bailey, 2012). In a broader sense, heteroglossia refers to the diversity of languages, their variations and the diversity of meanings and affiliations they represent. For example, research on language biographies shows that a multilingual person associates different languages and variations with different situations, feelings, activities and experiences (Busch, Jardine and Tjoutuku, 2006).

Humanist adult education
The humanist philosophy entered adult literacy education at the end of the 20th century. The Canadian literacy specialist Allan Quigley (2006, pp. 92–96) presents key features of the philosophy and explains how it translates into classroom practice. The humanist conception of human nature holds that all human beings are essentially good, curious and have an innate motivation to learn (that can become blocked during the course of life for various reasons). Quigley introduces the adult educator Malcolm Knowles, who made humanist adult education popular and who defined adulthood by an attitude (not skills or knowledge): "A person is an adult to the extent that that individual perceives herself or himself to be essentially responsible for her or his own life" (Knowles, 1980, p. 24). According to Knowles, the task of adult educators is to help individuals to put this attitude to practice by acquiring self-directed learning skills and becoming lifelong learners. Knowles coined the term andragogy ('andra' is Greek for 'adult' or 'man'; 'gogy' means 'to teach') as

opposed to pedagogy ('peda' is Greek for 'child') in order to point out that the 'top-down' teaching methods traditionally used to teach children are not appropriate for adults. In order to give more responsibility for learning to the adult learner, Knowles gave his learners contracts with which they could define individually with the facilitator what they want to learn and how they want to be evaluated. In a humanist approach, the learner's prior knowledge, motivation and interests are at the centre of the teaching and learning process and the learner is involved in decision-making.

Language (or medium) of instruction
The language of instruction is the language that is used for teaching and learning the subject matter of the curriculum (Ouane and Glanz, 2010, p. 64).

Language of wider communication
A language of wider communication is a language that speakers of different mother tongues use to communicate with each other. LWC is also called lingua franca or trade language (Ouane and Glanz, 2010, p. 63).

Literacy
A universally accepted and valid definition of literacy does not exist. According to the *UNLD International Strategic Framework for Action 2009*, literacy is a plural and dynamic concept. The latest definition by UNESCO, which also guides the *UNESCO International Literacy Decade*, defines literacy ['alphabétisme' or 'littératie' in French] as the ability to use written language as a means of communication in a plurality of contexts. Literacy learning and education ['alphabétisation' in French] is a process and should be guided by the communication needs of the learner: Literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy learning is a continuum, enabling individuals to achieve their goals, develop their knowledge and potential and participate fully in the community and wider society (UNESCO, 2005*b*, p. 21).

The latest revision of the francophone concept of literacy has emerged (originally in Quebec) through the terms littératie and, less commonly, littératies. While the former derives from Anglophone understandings of literacy championed by OECD (referring to competencies deemed important for 'information societies'), the latter (employed, for example, by the Centre de Recherche et de Développement en Éducation of the University of Moncton, New Brunswick) is akin to the anglophone concept of literacies advanced by the New Literacy Studies movement (UNESCO, 2005*c*, p. 148).

Different schools of thought have evolved as to how we should conceptualize literacy for education and as a means of communication. Each school of thought has developed a different way of describing the scope of a literacy education and the factors that it should consider. Literacy is variously described as a skill, a competence, a capacity, and a practice. The term *literacy skill* emphasises the cognitive and technical aspects of literacy (Papen, 2005). *Literacy competences* refer to a person's ability to use literacy in a specific, defined action. Literacy as capacity denotes a person's ability to use literacy in order to achieve purposes that are relevant to her/him. *Literacy practices* refer to the socio-culturally specific ways of using written language (Barton, 2007).

Mother tongue, first or home language in multilingual contexts
Mother tongue in the narrow sense is defined as the language that a child learns first from the person who plays the role of mother or carer. In multilingual contexts, children may grow up with more than one language. In order to root the definition in multilingual contexts, we define mother tongue in a broader sense as the language or languages of the immediate environment and daily interaction which 'nurture' the child in the first four years of life. The mother tongue is therefore a language or languages that a child grows up with and whose grammar he/she learns before starting school (Adapted from Ouane and Glanz, 2010, p. 62).

Multilingual ethos
The multilingual ethos advocates the acceptance and recognition of linguistic diversity in order to ensure social cohesion and avoid the disintegration of societies (Ouane, 2009, p. 168). It takes into account the intermeshing of languages within multilingual individuals and in communities, across social domains and communicative practices. The multilingual ethos stresses the commonalities and the complementariness of languages and heteroglossia across but also within communities and in a given situation. From this perspective, language ownership or fixed language boundaries cannot be claimed by any social group (Ouane and Glanz, 2010, p. 65). The multilingual ethos covers all social domains.

Multilingual literate environment
We are in an era of multilingual and multimedia communication. A multilingual literate environment can be seen from different angles. It is characterized by the use of written texts for communication purposes in at least two languages in a given social environment. Different scripts may be used to represent one or several languages. The written text could replace face-to-face communication, such as via signposts, SMS, books, or product packaging.

It can be used as a memory aid for oneself or be integrated in face-to-face communication events, such as writing on a blackboard during teaching or reading a newspaper together with a friend.

A literate environment offers new literates multiple opportunities for using their recently acquired knowledge, for enhancing it through continuing education, and for developing solid habits of lifelong learning. Experience with literacy campaigns, programmes and projects over the last few decades have conclusively demonstrated that the quality of the literate environment is a major determinant of knowledge and skill retention among literacy or non-formal education students, as well as of the ultimate impact of the training that they receive (Easton, 2006, p. 7).

Multi-sectoral
The term 'multi-sectoral' means that multiple sectors are involved. A sector is a part of an economy or society, such as the education sector, the health sector, the agricultural sector etc. The public sector refers to the part that is controlled by the state. The third sector refers to non-governmental and non-profit making organizations and associations. The private sector refers to the part of the economy that is not under direct state control (See for example www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/sector, accessed on 19 November 2014).

National language
Language in widespread and current use throughout a country or in parts of its territory, and often representative of the identity of its speakers. It may or may not have the status of an official language (Stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail. asp?ID=5589, accessed on 19 November 2014).

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)
A data-collecting technique used in emancipatory action research that involves the whole community and leads to a community action plan (Chilisa and Preece, 2005, p. 193).

Official language
An official language has legal status in a particular legally constituted political entity, such as a state or part of a state, and serves as a language of administration within that entity (Adapted from stats.oecd.org/glossary/detail. asp?ID=5590, accessed on 6 September 2012).

Quality in adult learning and education
There are many definitions of this issue. We choose the recent international agreement of the participants of the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI), stated in the Belém Framework for Action: "Quality in learning and education is a holistic, multidimensional concept and practice that demands constant attention and continuous development. Fostering a culture of quality in adult learning requires relevant content and modes of delivery, learner centred needs assessment, the acquisition of multiple competences and knowledge, the professionalization of educators, the enrichment of learning environments and the empowerment of individuals and communities" (UIL, 2010, §16).

Second language
The term 'second language' denotes a second language learned at school for formal educational purposes, and should not be confused with a student's second or other languages learned informally outside of school. The official languages of many countries are foreign to many students and are often only learned as a second language (Adapted from Ouane and Glanz, 2010, p. 63).

Transformative learning
"Transformative learning is a process of examining, questioning, validating, and revising our perspectives" (Cranton, 2006, p. 23).

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One of the greatest challenges in education today is to adapt and respond to a linguistically and culturally diverse world, and to combat social disintegration and discrimination. Participatory and collaborative action research represents an empowering and emancipatory approach to this challenge because the 'target groups' become involved as equal partners. In the words of Stephen Kemmis, action research "aims to integrate the research act into the educational setting so that research can play a direct and immediate role in the improvement of practice". Participatory action research has become a common feature of high-quality youth and adult education services. It opens up opportunities for individual and collective empowerment and transformation through collective learning.

This book provides guidance for trainers of youth and adult educators and for those who manage non-formal education and curriculum development programmes in youth and adult literacy. It is also aimed at publishers and authors who want to improve their services and products by collaborating more closely with their respective readerships.
The authors link theory and practice, which have often been treated separately in the training of adult literacy personnel. They share knowledge on how collaborative and participatory action research can be used to develop high-quality adult literacy programmes and other services in multilingual and multicultural contexts. In addition, they suggest a frame of reference for high-quality youth and adult literacy education.

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