

EDUCATION FOR ALL: REFLECTING ON ADULT LITERACY LEARNING FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN UGANDA

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ABSTRACT

When the 1990 World Conference in Education held in Jomtien (Thailand) revealed that illiteracy was on the increase especially in developing countries, UNESCO stepped up the campaign to reduce or end illiteracy. What followed was a series of interventions notable among which was the Education For All (EFA) campaign. The aim of this paper is to discuss Uganda's efforts at fighting illiteracy especially adult illiteracy. The Government of Uganda in joint collaboration with civil society organizations, non-governmental, community based organizations as well as the international community underscored the need to promote adult literacy programmes in local communities as a way of knowledge sharing and imparting of skills intended for development. The objective of the paper is to ascertain the extent to which the adult literacy programmes are viewed as socio-economic tools for development in the country. Indeed, illiteracy poses a heavy challenge to development and hence the provision of literate skills to adults is vital to in order to contribute to communal and national development. Evidence suggests that even though adult literacy learning in Uganda is being promoted, there is little regard of this effort as an avenue for reducing illiteracy and promoting socio-economic development, which forms the research problem of this discussion. Qualitative research data from 2006 and 2011 on Uganda Government's Functional adult literacy programme will inform the discussion. Furthermore, findings from the data indicate a gap between knowledge and skills offered and actual socio-economic development in the rural communities where the literacy programmes are promoted. A number of factors are mentioned as hindering programme effectiveness hence suggesting a lot that needs to be done in order to make adult literacy learning a vital tool in achieving socio-economic development in Uganda.

Keywords: adult literacy, literacy programme, socio-economic, development