



LITERACY AND ADULT EDUCATION (L A B E) U G A N D A

REPORT OF THE FINAL EVALUATION

OF

“Literacy and Continuing Education in Uganda 2000-2005” and “Family Basic Education in Uganda” 2003-2005 Programmes

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L A B E’s work is outstanding. Its capacity for flexible adaptation to the changing national scene and for outright innovation is extraordinary. Undertaking such initiatives in a difficult, complex and resource-poor environment is exemplary. L A B E is succeeding where other NGOs may be struggling. By documenting and sharing its methods and approaches more widely, it will multiply its impact and be a beacon for quality literacy work in Uganda, Eastern Africa and beyond. (Extracts from this report)

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Glossary/acronyms

ABEK	Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja
ACORD	Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development
ADEA	Association for the Development of Education in Africa
ADRA	Adventist Development and relief Development Agency
ALBEC	Adult Literacy Basic Education Centre
BEtA	Basic English to Adults
BEUPA	Basic Education for Urban Poor Areas
BTL	Breakthrough to Literacy
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CCT	Coordinating Center Tutor
CDA	Community Development Assistant
CDO	Community Development Officer
CFS	Child Friendly School
CHANCE	Child-centred Alternative Non-Formal Comprehensive Education
COPE	Complementary Opportunity for Primary Education
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DCI	Development Cooperation Ireland
DEO	District Education Officer
DFID	Department For International Development
DIFRA	DIFRA Language Services
DIS	District Inspector of Schools
DVV	German Basic Literacy Association
EAI	Education Action International
EFAG	Education Funding Agencies Group
ESAMI	Eastern and Southern Africa Management Institute
ESR	Education Sector Review
FABE	Family Based Education
FAL	Functional Adult Literacy
FBO	Faith-Based Organisation
FDG	Focus Group Discussion
FENU	Forum for Education NGOs
GCE	Global Campaign Education
HQ	Headquarters
ICEID	Icelandic International Development Agency
IGA	Income Generating Activity
IS	Inspector of Schools (in charge of a county)
KSW	Kakira Sugar Works
LC	Local Council
LABE	Literacy and Basic Education
LACE	Literacy and
LITKIT	Literacy Kit
LitNet	Literacy Network Uganda
LIWE	Literacy and Women Empowerment
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MGLSD	Ministry of Labour Gender and Social Development
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MTCEA	Multi-Purpose Training and Community Empowerment Association
NAADS	National Agricultural Advisory Services
NALSIP	National Adult Literacy Strategic Investment Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NOVIB	Netherlands Organisation for Development Cooperation
NUSAF	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
O/W	Of which
PAF	Poverty Action Fund
PEAP	Poverty Eradication Action Plan
P/S	Primary School
PMA	Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture

RCU	Reflect Coordination Unit
SIL	Summer Institute of Linguistics
SMC	School Management Committee
SOCADIDO	Soroti Catholic Diocese Integrated Development Organisation
SWAP	Sector-Wide Approach
UJAS	Uganda Joint Assessment
UGAADEN	Uganda Adult Education Network
UGAFE	Uganda Association for Functional Education
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UN HABITAT	United National HABITAT
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UPHOLD	Uganda Programme for Human and Holistic Development
UPLIFT	Uganda Programme of Literacy for Transformation
UPE	Universal Primary Education
VSO	Volunteer Service Overseas
YMCA	Young Men Christian Association
YWCA	Young Women Christian Association

Executive Summary

From very humble beginning and through gradual learning by doing and collaboration with others, particularly central and local governments, LABE has grown into the largest and best recognized Civil Society Organisation (CSO) successfully piloting important innovations in and providing adult literacy and family basic education services. It has also become an indigenous organisation of international stature. Its vision is a literate, well-informed and prosperous society able to participate fully in its own development. It exists to promote literacy practices and increase access and utilization of information, particularly amongst women and children in local communities to effectively demand and protect their individual and wider rights. LABE has a presence in 12 districts. LABE has chosen to realise its mission by operating through partnerships as illustrated appendix 1 on LABE partnerships in action.

LABE, Education Action International, NOVIB and other agencies have worked in partnership on a number of initiatives focused around literacy, training for literacy, and participatory learning, including piloting a family learning initiative, the first of its kind in Africa. Two major projects will reach their completion in 2005: *Literacy and Continuing Education in Uganda* and *Family Basic Education in Uganda (FABE)*. LABE and its principal partners in these programmes have agreed to undertake end-of-programmes evaluation primarily intended as a formative exercise to inform future initiatives by and investments in LABE. As such the evaluation focuses on the broad objectives of the programmes and on how well they are being met through the strategies employed. The objectives of the evaluation are as follows:

- i. To review the progress made in the implementation of the programmes with particular reference to LABE's contribution to women's empowerment.
- ii. To evaluate the success of the Family Learning Pilot Approach.
- iii. To identify the effects on the various beneficiaries of the activities of the programmes so far, and assess whether and how the positive effects could be increased in future initiatives.
- iv. To look at the challenges faced in the implementation of these programmes within the current context of non-formal education in Uganda.
- v. To make recommendations about LABE's relationships with other stakeholders in education in Uganda, in particular with the national and local government.
- vi. To identify and recommend new opportunities and dimensions for LABE.
- vii. To assess the effectiveness of LABE's governance procedures and how its governance might develop.
- viii. To suggest how the role of Education Action International and other partners of LABE might develop in future.

Illiteracy being a major barrier to poverty eradication and remaining high among the Ugandan population, particularly in rural areas, Government has prioritized functional adult literacy and partnerships with NGOs and religious institutions. But while acknowledging the contribution of these partners, it is the work of LABE that Government singles out as having a national coverage and a visible impact on women.

However, due to various constraints, the problem of illiteracy remains big and women continue to be marginalised and excluded from education because of their gender. LABE's initiatives therefore were designed to improve and widen the opportunities for women by increasing literacy skills among women and making them permanent in such a way that empowers women and makes grassroots development more equitable. Its main components are: Training for literacy; Improving literacy environment; Advocacy; capacity strengthening for LABE partners; and organisational strengthening and staff development for LABE itself. Under FABE, LABE aims to improve and increase parents'

ability to support improved educational performance of primary school children through a family learning initiative where adults and children learn together.

LABE has traditionally worked with the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development. In addition, LABE now works closely with the Ministries of Education and Sports mainly on FAFE; and the Ministry of Constitutional Affairs, mainly on the National Civic Education Programme.

In March/May 2003, a mid-term review of the Literacy and Continuing Education Project was conducted and a number of important recommendations and specific actions were made. During this evaluation, it was established that there was a deliberate effort by management to have the staff deliberate on, understand, internalize and act upon the findings and recommendations of the mid-term review, for which LABE is to be commended.

The evaluation reaches the following conclusions: At the level of service delivery, LABE's achievements are remarkable. 1427 literacy instructors of the targeted 1440 were trained; 126 English instructors were trained, exceeding the target of 120. And of the targeted 36000 literacy learners 29432 were trained. As an innovator, its contribution to adult literacy is second to none in Uganda. In some districts LABE is synonymous with Functional Adult Literacy. In Bugiri district, FAFE has become a household name. As illustrated by case studies in this report, both these aspects have life transforming effects on the individuals, their families and their communities. As one of LABE partners put it, "Literacy is power. To protect other rights one needs literacy".

Under FAFE, LABE is effectively delivering what it planned for family learning – reading, writing and counting for children and their parents, at school and at home. The programme has gone very well in 17 of the 18 schools in the programme. 1462 parents have enrolled. Of these 920 are mothers. 3341 pupils are participating in the programme and of these 1755 are girls, thereby surpassing the planned target by 35.4%. Not only is it getting children to school but it is also keeping them in school. It has successfully combined the use of professional teachers and 'para-professional' adult educators to deliver parent-child lessons, parents-only sessions and to conduct home visits. It has stimulated parents to do home visits themselves and to make home-made learning materials at low cost. FAFE has transformed ordinary things, such as school open days and school compounds into extra-ordinary learning opportunities, such as "talking compounds".

Regarding effectiveness of LABE in respect of the two programmes, we conclude that against the set targets of the programmes, LABE has met and sometimes exceeded the planned outputs and done so cost-effectively. From the evaluation, it is clear that the intended aim of the literacy training component to "pay particular attention to women's empowerment" and put women at the centre of the initiative is being achieved especially with regard to learners but also to a large extent literacy instructors. FAFE is producing confident parents and children, parenting skills are being enhanced, the school is becoming an integral part of the community and parents have increased skills for dealing with other situations like local councils and health units staff. LABE is building social capital critical for poverty reduction.

LABE seems most effective at the local government level – at district and sub-county, where it engenders community demanded/driven initiatives/innovations, although it has also been very successful in linking its practical work at the local Government level to policy analysis and influencing at district and national levels.

In the Literacy and Continuing Education Project, the main challenges identified include increasing men's response to adult literacy activities, quality assurance, premature phase-out of certain partnerships often dictated by a shift in donor priorities and the fact that oftentimes Government does

not come through on its commitments. Others include demand for adult literacy that outstrips response, attrition of literacy instructors by HIV/AIDS and insecurity in northern Uganda, one of LABE's operational areas.

For FABE, the main challenges are the low level of involvement by the department of social development, which in turn has made Family Learning more focused on child education than on parents and children learning together. Related to this is another challenge – the fact that it is perceived as part of the mainstream school programme with enhanced parent and community participation. This makes it difficult for the MoES to 'mainstream' it because it is not clear what that would mean in practical terms. However, it is the opinion of the evaluators that FABE falls in the same category of non-formal education initiatives as Alternative Basic Education for Karamoja (ABEK), which is adapted to the migratory nature of the population; Basic Education for Urban Areas (BEUPA), Child-Centred Alternative Non-Formal Comprehensive Education (CHANCE) or Complementary Opportunity for Primary Education (COPE).

In order for LABE to address these challenges and consolidate and scale up its interventions and effectiveness, it needs to undertake remedial work to improve male participation in literacy programmes, address quality assurance, integrate HIV/AIDS and translate goodwill into additional resources. There is a lot of goodwill and appreciation of the work being done and its impact on illiteracy and poverty eradication, rarely achieved by NGOs. LABE action has stimulated further government action on behalf of literacy. However, this is not turning into enough additional resources to support LABE initiatives, mainly due to the environment being resource-constrained. LABE needs additional resources, provided in a more predictable manner, but this challenge is largely outside its control. Government needs to move from strong endorsement of LABE's initiatives to effective and sustained action in literacy learning and in sustaining the literate environment.

It is in the best interest of the Government and the international community to provide enough predictable funding to NGOs/CSOs like LABE which have demonstrated their effectiveness in delivery of vital social services. Furthermore, potential for basic adult literacy to transform women's lives and their communities in conflict situations, which is beginning to merge, and the approach to education using family learning methodology should be supported and carefully studied for modeling, mainstreaming and replication in similar situations elsewhere. Government should integrate capacity-building for literacy learning into its overall capacity development and that of its structures, utilizing LABE to do this.

On its part, LABE should be more active in documenting and disseminating its successes, thereby making itself and its extraordinary work more visible; and more aggressively raise resources needed to consolidate and excel in its work. In this regard, and to avoid focusing only on external sources of funding, LABE should do more to 'sell' its professional skills to raise funds, and to leverage the opportunities available within the communities, local and central government systems.

LABE is implementing or contemplating a number of strategic shifts, including setting in motion processes to renew its leadership and bring gender balance into the top management level, are good for the long term of the Organisation, particularly since the top leadership is still comprised mainly of the founders. This has been carefully thought through and the likely impact on the programmes taken into consideration. We recommend a phasing of these shifts, starting with a few changes that are interconnected, then moving on to the rest. To avoid possible disruption of the programmes, and to assure the main stakeholders, we recommend that the process for transitioning the current director is open and the incumbent ensures his availability to make his contribution to the change process as may be required.

With regard to the shift to increase emphasis on advocacy, LABE is aware that its work is pioneering, is cutting edge and is for Uganda and the Eastern Africa Sub-region. Over the life of the literacy and continuing education project, LABE has integrated advocacy into its work, not only as an activity but also as an approach to its literacy work and family learning work. Thus it has set up LitNet and uses its district-like structures as a means of sensitizing and challenging government and civil society to become more engaged in literacy. LABE plans to continue its advocacy work at national level, mainly through LitNet; at district level, which it is doing successfully by working very closely with Local Government (with whom it has a symbiotic relationship) to increase budget allocations to adult literacy, to supplement those resources with additional (LABE-generated) resources and by keeping adult literacy on the political agenda. It plans to also extend advocacy to community-level institutions such as the school, by engaging school management to ensure that there is purposeful literacy. This is based on the findings that a significant number of children in UPE schools “are not acquiring” basic literacy skills. As a result, LABE has included children in its mission. LABE is also extending literacy to civic education and human rights. As people acquire literacy skills, they apply them to governance issues, to challenging their local leadership on accountability and on the delivery of their rights. This way, LABE will remain close to the pulse. In fact in one of the shifts, it is moving senior programme staff “down to the dust” where the action is and impact most felt. Clearly, LABE is effectively linking its experience of providing literacy services to increase the voice of the poor with government and community structures and that is what is making its advocacy work relevant. However, the work LABE is doing or pioneering is too large for it to do alone. Therefore it needs to multiply itself by linking with tertiary training institutions to offer courses in its approaches to literacy and development.

Lastly, there is the issue of new opportunities if LABE is to be transformed into a permanent and national literacy agency working directly with central and local government and a technical expert on literacy. For LABE’s potential to be maximised, in a situation where “the provision of adult literacy in Uganda still falls short of the need and the demand”, and if LABE is to be what its partners wanted and thought of for the future, as the hub for literacy work, the home for literacy involvement, then a more permanent resourcing mechanism should be found by LABE and its partners – donors and the Government. As the NALSIP puts it, “scaling up will inevitably involve forming (closer) partnerships with Government, including adult education training institutions, various community groups and the private sector”. LABE’s approach to adult literacy, and the way it has chosen to work collaboratively with Government both at the central and local level, is already the perfect fit for what Government and LABE partners envisage. LABE anticipated and provided safeguards to potential pitfalls that come with close and cooperative government-CSO relationship. For example, it insists on retaining its autonomy and flexibility when dealing with government and government officials are the first to acknowledge this. It is recommended that LABE undertakes a light and reflective study on how it learnt to do this, why and how it has gone about doing it, highlighting lessons in CSO-government cooperation.

In conclusion, LABE’s work is outstanding. Its capacity for effective cooperation with government and communities and flexible adaptation to the changing national scene and for outright innovation is extraordinary. Undertaking such initiatives in a difficult, complex and resource-poor environment is exemplary. LABE is succeeding where other NGOs may be struggling. By documenting and sharing its methods and approaches more widely, it will multiply its impact and be a beacon for quality literacy work in Uganda, Eastern Africa and beyond. LABE partners, including government and development partners need to move from strong endorsement of LABE’s initiatives to effective and sustained action in literacy learning and in sustaining the literate environment by providing LABE with additional resources, availed in a more predictable manner to complement those opportunities available in the community and local governments and through LABE’s sale of its professional services.

About LABE

The idea of Literacy and Adult Basic Education (LABE) was born in 1989 out of a desire by a team of students undertaking studies at the Makerere Institute of Adult and Continuing Education to put what they were learning into practice. So they sought and obtained permission from University authorities to collect house helps, group employees and other non-literates around the campus and impart literacy skills on them. With time, the students extended the initiative beyond the university and even started to charge a fee for the service. From there, during a course in Social Work Social Administration, the same team of students reached out to various NGOs to introduce to them and get them to take on adult literacy. In 1995, the team formalized LABE and left the university to set it up. Three of those colleagues, including the Executive Director, are still working with LABE to this day. The other four also still work with adult literacy in organisations like Save the Children, Karamoja Diocese and one is in charge of non-formal education in neighbouring Rwanda.

From this humble beginning and through gradual learning by doing, collaboration with other NGOs and CBOs, private sector concerns and local and central government, LABE has grown into the largest and best recognized Civil Society Organisation (CSO) providing literacy and adult basic education related services and an organisation of international stature. Its vision is a literate, well-informed and prosperous society able to participate fully in its own development. For its mission, LABE exists to promote literacy practices, increase access and utilization of information, particularly amongst women and children in local communities, to effectively demand and protect their individual and wider rights. LABE has a presence in 12 districts¹. LABE has chosen to realise its mission by operating through partnerships as illustrated below.

Background to the evaluation

LABE, Education Action International, NOVIB and other agencies have worked in partnership on a number of initiatives focused around literacy, training for literacy, and participatory learning. Two major projects will reach their completion in 2005: *Literacy and Continuing Education in Uganda* and *Family Basic Education in Uganda (FABE)*.

Literacy and Continuing Education in Uganda is a large-scale programme encompassing literacy training, advocacy, development of materials and working with a variety of partners. It is in its fifth and final year, closing in October 2005. FABE is a three-year pilot project introducing an innovative approach of combining support to primary school pupils and their parents. It is due to end in December 2005.

LABE and its principal partners in these programmes have agreed to undertake end-of-programmes evaluation² primarily intended as a formative exercise to inform future initiatives by and investments in LABE. As such the evaluations focus on the broad objectives of the programmes and on how well they are being met through the strategies employed.

¹ LABE is present in the districts of Arua, Yumbe, Moyo, Adjumani in West Nile region, Kitgum, Gulu, Pader in Northern region, and Jinja, Kamuli, Iganga, Bugiri and Mayuge in Eastern region.

² At the time of the evaluation, the programmes still had some months to run.

The objectives of the Evaluation

The objectives of the evaluation are as follows:

- ix. To review the progress made in the implementation of the programmes with particular reference to LABE's contribution to women's empowerment.
- x. To evaluate the success of the Family Learning Pilot Approach.
- xi. To identify the effects on the various beneficiaries of the activities of the programmes so far, and assess whether and how the positive effects could be increased in future initiatives.
- xii. To look at the challenges faced in the implementation of these programmes within the current context of non-formal education in Uganda.
- xiii. To make recommendations about LABE's relationships with other stakeholders in education in Uganda, in particular with the national and local government.
- xiv. To identify and recommend new opportunities and dimension for LABE.
- xv. To assess the effectiveness of LABE's governance procedures and how its governance might develop.
- xvi. To suggest how the role of Education Action International and other partners of LABE might develop in future.

Methodology

In conducting this evaluation, the evaluation team employed the following methodology:

- A desk review of LABE and FABE documents including the project documents stating the original objectives and expected outputs/outcomes; the Literacy and Continuing Education mid-term review report 2003, Progress and M&E reports from Jinja, Bugiri and Gulu districts; the audit report for the year ended 30th June 2004, and many others. Key documents reviewed are listed in *appendices 1 and 2*.
- Review of Government of Uganda documents at Central and Local levels including the NAL Strategic Investment Plan 2002/3 – 2006/7, the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), sub-county literacy plans, etc.
- Review of some of the training materials and district plans produced by or in collaboration or with support of LABE.
- Field visits to programme areas, interviews with district and sub-county officials; Focus Group Discussions with literacy instructors, teachers and head teachers, and beneficiaries; discussions with implementing partners and observation at certain project activities such as a quarterly review in action (Jinja district) and a joint parents-pupils class (Bugiri district). The list of those interacted with is attached as *Appendices 3 and 4*.
- Interviews with key strategically selected stakeholders, including LABE and FABE staff at the HQ and in the field; local government officials, literacy instructors/adult educators, school management and committees, LABE Board members, LitNet Coordinator; and donor representatives, including Education Action International.
- Discussion of the preliminary findings with the Consultant Evaluator and FABE evaluator;
- Teleconference and a visit with EAI representative.
- Discussion of the draft findings with LABE staff (by the lead evaluator and by EAI representative).

The evaluations were essentially qualitative rather than quantitative although quantitative data obtained during field visits or provided by LABE staff has been fed into the report.

The evaluation was conducted in the months of June, July and August 2005 by three evaluators as follows: The FAFE programme was conducted by Aanyu Dorothy-Angura, who reviewed literature and reports provided by LABE and undertook field work in Bugiri district where the programme is situated to carried out interviews with various stakeholders, conducted Focus Group Discussions and observed what was going on. The Literacy and Continuing Education project was evaluated by Warren Nyamugasira, the lead evaluator who undertook field research in Kampala and Jinja districts of LABE operations. His report was then reviewed and commented on by the Consultant Evaluator, Prof. Clinton Robinson, a UNESCO consultant whose input included an analysis of the Non-Formal Education factors beyond LABE's current interventions which could be linked to its work. His comments were also made with reference to the mid-term review in which he was the lead consultant. Drawing on these comments and the FAFE evaluation report to which he contributed, the Lead Evaluator prepared a final report that included sections from the FAFE evaluation report. This was submitted to LABE and its partners, principally Education Action International and NOVIB for appropriate use.

Structure of the report

The report is in two parts. The first part covers the detailed finding of the Literacy and Continuing Education project and begins with a brief background to the evaluation, its objectives and methodology. This is then followed by a brief context about adult literacy and its importance in Uganda. This is immediately followed by a description of the programme under review before an assessment of the achievements against targets is done. The report then examines the progress LABE has made in the implementation of the recommendations of the Mid Term Review, conducted in 2003. This is followed by an assessment of the extent to which LABE is meeting the wider objectives of the programme, with particular attention on the effect of the programme interventions on the empowerment of women. The report then attempts to find out from the various stakeholders what excites them about LABE. This is followed by an assessment of how LABE's 2005 – 2009 Strategic Plan seeks to address the key issues around adult literacy in Uganda. It ends with a summary of the challenges LABE has faced while implementing the programme and the recommendations on the way forward.

The second part covers the Family Basic Education project. It begins with discussion of FAFE as a concept of family learning and provides the context in which the project was conceived and is being implemented at district and national level. The main part of the report deals with the finding of the evaluation, objective by objective before summarising them. This is followed by a section that discusses achievements at two levels – the technical level and the strategic level. It then discusses the policy implications, which are followed by a section on issues, challenges and a way forward. In addition to what is contained in this report, a full evaluation report of FAFE activities and methodology is available as a stand-alone report.

Adult literacy and its importance in Uganda

It is widely accepted that illiteracy is a major barrier to the reduction and eventual eradication of poverty. According to Uganda Poverty Status Report 2001, the current literacy rates stand at 64% of the population but much lower for rural areas. According to recent UNESCO, UNDP and World Bank reports, this rate is the lowest in East Africa and Uganda is one of the countries unlikely to meet the Millennium Development Goal target of halving illiteracy by 2015, despite government commitments in the National Adult Literacy Strategic Plan. At 77%, the rate for men is much higher than the one for their women counterparts, which stands at only 54%. In 2000, 5.5 million Uganda women were illiterate. According to the National Adult Literacy Strategic Investment Plan 2002/3 – 2006/7, despite previous attempts to deliver adult literacy services, all government and NGO efforts currently reach

only 4.3% of the nearly 7 million non-literate adult Ugandans. Yet, it is an established fact that literacy serves as a strong foundation for removing gender inequalities, increasing ordinary people's entrepreneurial capacities, enabling poor communities to collectively act more effectively in pursuit of their development goals, improves agricultural practices, reinforces quality and access to education, enhances family health and health, increases civic participation and overall, raises living standards (National Adult Literacy Strategic Investment Plan, p.vii). Currently the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development has the overall responsibility for coordination of adult literacy activities in Uganda. In the districts the responsibility is with the department for Community Development. These departments have community development officers and assistants in each sub-county. While activities are currently implemented in all the districts, the coverage is still limited in most (National Adult Literacy Strategic Investment Plan).

The current National Adult Literacy Strategic Investment Plan aims to expand the Government functional adult literacy activities and scale up the literacy work of NGOs by taking a deliberate step to invite religious institutions and together, with donors and other partners/stakeholders, work collaboratively towards universal adult literacy and lifelong learning. The plan commits to achieving 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2007 and acknowledges the potential opportunities offered by the diversity of different Civil Society Organisations. One of the partner CSOs specifically mentioned in the Government Strategic Investment Plan is LABE. Under Literacy Providing Agencies, it is stated, "There are two major national level Adult Literacy training NGOs – LABE and Reflect Coordination Unit (RCU) of Action Aid. LABE, the only indigenous national level NGO whose first interest and focus is literacy, operates as a literacy resource organisation, offering literacy management, Training of Trainers and literacy instructors, consultancy and materials development for NGOs, CBOs and Government Departments" (p.6). In the Government Plan, the Family Basic Education being piloted by LABE in Bugiri district is cited as a possible model for further study and possible adoption and adaptation elsewhere in Uganda.

While the work and contribution of other agencies is acknowledged in the Government Investment Plan, such as that of international NGOs (Care International, Save the Children UK and USA, Action Aid International Uganda, Adventist Development and Relief Agency, Young Men Christian Association and Young Women Christian Association, Christian Relief World Council, SIL, Finish Refugee Council, and others), they are criticized for having been patchy, tending to concentrate in small geographical areas (although this is changing as these agencies are slowly shifting from being operational to capacity building of local NGOs and to advocacy related activities). Also mentioned is the work and contribution of Religious Organisations. However, while almost all are recognized to have a strong community base, they are criticized for having *questionable technical capacities and competencies* and lacking solid organisational skills and resources. Most of their activities also cover small geographical areas and need intensive training and supervised resources to put in place community-grounded literacy education.

From the foregoing, the issues identified participatorily are: the sheer size of the problem, the strong link between illiteracy, poverty and under-development, women illiteracy and gender-related issues; coverage and scale; participation, efficiency and effectiveness, technical quality and coordination of literacy work. In this review, we attempt to assess how well LABE in general and more specifically the two programmes under review, situate in this context. We do this firstly by evaluating the technical aspects of the programmes – the extent to which they meet the set objectives and targets. Secondly, we take a broader view so as see how strategically LABE is placed in the broader context of adult literacy.

PART ONE: Literacy and Continuing Education in Uganda

Brief description of the project

The Literacy and Continuing Education in Uganda 2000-2005 initiative is concerned with the need of women in Uganda for sustainable and *permanent* literacy skills essential for more equitable grassroots development and as a way out of poverty. It is premised on the fact that few women have a functional level of literacy, and consequently, the majority of women face a significant barrier to their full participation in democratic development. The initiative was designed to build on its work of the previous five years, partly funded by Comic Relief, centering on basic literacy training and support for local community organisations to extend adult literacy related services in 10 of Uganda's 45 districts³.

The new phase was designed to facilitate post-basic *sustainable* literacy to 13000 women and men, through the training of literacy teachers, the majority of whom were to be women; materials production, follow up support, community libraries and continuing adult basic education, including the teaching of English. Women were to be at the centre of the activities of this initiative, which aimed to meet their needs in terms of both access and content because literacy programmes tend to emphasize the accumulation of knowledge and rarely encourage the development of skills relevant to women's daily lives.

Wider objectives of the initiative

- To improve and widen the opportunities for women who are excluded from education because of their gender, to develop literacy skills and participate in their own right in development, thereby reducing their marginalization in the development processes of their communities.
- To contribute to a literate and well-informed Ugandan society through the improvement of training for literacy teachers, a new continuing education curriculum and an enhanced literacy environment.

Main activities:

External relations (Government and other): LABE was to build on its existing external relationships to establish a more formal link both with the relevant government ministry, an education body, and with the National Literacy Learners' Association in order to jointly develop a learners' curriculum.

LABE was also to explore the possibility of certification approved by a recognized institute for LABE's training of literacy instructors. In addition, LABE was to contribute to the formulation of a national adult basic education policy which was being planned by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development by contributing a draft blue-print on adult literacy.

LABE was to undertake the facilitation of district and sub-county literacy planning, working within the national policy on continuing literacy.

Expected outputs:

- A national recognized adult basic and continuing education curriculum workshops;
- Contribution to a blue-print on adult literacy.

³ The number of districts increased to 56 and is going up to over 76 between 2005 and 2006

Progress / Achievements

LABE has traditionally worked with the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development. In addition, LABE now works closely with the Ministries of Education and Sports mainly on FABE; the Ministry of Constitutional Affairs, mainly on the National Civic Education Programme. LABE designed and piloted the national civic education document and was among agencies accredited to deliver civic education during the just concluded national referendum. Beyond Government Ministries, LABE also collaborates with other institutions like the Makerere-based project on training manuals. LABE has established contacts with the National Curriculum Development Centre. On the development of an Adult Basic and Continuing Education curriculum, LABE's efforts have been hampered by the fact that the National Curriculum Development Centre lacks specialist professionals on this. On the Certification for LABE's training of literacy instructors and Contribution to a blue-print on adult literacy, LABE was commissioned by the Ministry to develop a certification for trainers and learners. LABE developed a draft, brought together stakeholders and submitted a document to the Ministry. Since then, "nothing has happened. No strategies have been developed out of the document". This is mainly attributed to lack of a champion at the Ministry since the interdiction of the senior official responsible for this work. Consequently, no 'blueprint' on adult literacy exists at that level. LABE points out that this is still a 'work in progress' and that they anticipate eventual positive results. This activity will not stop at the end of the project.

Table 1: Work with Government and other partners

Output	Target for 2000-2005	Actual output 2000-2005 ⁴
An Adult Basic and Continuing Education Curriculum	One Curriculum in place	LABE contracted by the National Civic Education Programme to develop and it developed a draft National Civic Education Curriculum. Also LABE was commissioned by the Ministry of Labour, Gender and Social Development to develop a certification for trainers and learners. The absence of a national policy on adult education has delayed work on the curriculum.
District level workshops with all literacy providers	12 district level workshops planned	9 district level workshops conducted
Sub-county level workshops with all literacy providers	48 workshops planned	51 sub-county level workshops conducted with representatives of instructors, community development assistants, Local councils and sub-county chiefs.
Contribution to national policy on adult literacy	A draft blue-print on adult education contributed towards the formulation of a national policy	LABE has contributed 2 policy briefs through the LitNet on the proposed Adult Basic Education policy that will inform the development of the national curriculum.

Source LABE M&E Coordinator

⁴ Because there are still a few months to run on the project, some of the targets in this and the other tables in this report may change although perhaps not significantly by the closure of all the activities.

Facilitation of district and sub-county literacy planning

From the field visits to Jinja, the Consultant was able to establish that facilitation of literacy planning is one of LABE major activities in the districts. At one of the quarterly review meetings, partners at sub-county level, including the LC3 chairpersons, sub-county chiefs, community development workers, the secretaries for education and the literacy instructors come together for review of the previous quarter and planning of the next. It was established that such meetings take place every quarter for all the 7 sub-counties and three municipal divisions⁵. These meetings are convened by the Community Development Officers and LABE is invited. In the one observed by the Consultant, the objective was “to review the literacy plan” including: the performance of the activities planned, challenges encountered and anticipated; discuss the way forward and LABE role in the Action Plan. For example, challenges identified for Mpumudde sub-county, one of the 10 sub-counties at the quarterly review, included:

- Fluidity of instructors, which was attributed to poor facilitation;
- Boring reading materials;
- Low attendance of men, which was put at a paltry 5% of those attending the classes;
- Undermining of FAL programmes by the technical officers who refuse to facilitate the programmes unless they are ‘facilitated’.

More strikingly, ideas of how to address some of the challenges were also discussed by the group. They included having instructor selection criteria that targets those who are “driven by service to the community” rather by remuneration. This means that only those willing and having the capability to forego whatever they would be doing in order to serve others will be prioritized. Another idea was to form literacy clubs to boost men’s interest in attending literacy classes. Men like to join clubs rather than attending classes with no immediate economic benefit. Another suggestion was for the programmes to put greater emphasis on functionality of adult literacy by integrating into the plan stronger links to health, agriculture, commercial activities, etc.

The Consultant was able to see a report of one of the quarterly literacy review workshops held on 16th January 2004 at the Jinja Municipal Council Hall. Also viewed was a Sub-county Literacy Plan for Mafubira Sub-County drawn “with support from: Sub-county Chief, LC3 Chairperson, Community Development Officer – Jinja and LABE” – in that order. The plan aims at:

- Mobilizing resources from the sub-county to implement adult literacy programme;
- Sensitize both the local leaders and instructors in the sub-county about the need for this programme;
- Implementing and complementing central government efforts.

The Plan has a foreword by the LC3 Chairperson (the political head of the sub-county) and the Sub-county Chief (the technical head of the sub-county). In the foreword, the LC3 Chairperson appreciates the fact that Central Government has acknowledged adult literacy as a priority in its development programmes. According to him, “this programme plays a big part in local communities especially where literacy rates are still low”. He highlights how the programme is used mainly by poor women which research has shown that such “un-schooled and even elderly adults do learn the skills of reading, writing and counting even more rapidly than pupils in primary schools”.

The Consultant considers these to be very important and strong endorsements for adult literacy efforts at the local government level. The endorsements also demonstrate a high level of support and ownership by both the political and technical leadership at sub-county level. Above all the whole process of developing these plans is highly participatory and this increases the chances of their being

⁵ Rural sub-counties are Kakira, Mafubira, Busedde, Buyengo, Buyengo rural, Butagaya, Budondo. Urban ones are: Mpumudde, Walukuba/Masese and Jinja Central

implemented, despite the obvious constraining factors. While LABE is present at that level, it has succeeded in making its role discrete and subservient, restricting itself to a facilitative and catalytic role.

In Gulu, LABE supported the Municipality to develop an integrated literacy plan which has been integrated in the Municipality’s division plans. More recently, a regional quarterly review brought together participants from the districts of Pader, Kitgum and Gulu to share experiences and challenges in the literacy work. In a cross-learning initiative, the more experience Jinja district was invited to share her experience.

Training for Literacy:

Five LABE trainers were to participate in training workshops to add to their training methods a shift in emphasis from teaching literacy theory to teaching practice, to reflect a move towards more creative, flexible and less didactic teaching methods. Refresher courses were to be organised while teachers of English from NGOs and the Private sector were to be trained, with follow up workshops organised. LABE was to produce and distribute training materials, primarily the LITKIT, an adaptable trainer’s resource developed and field tested by LABE prior to this initiative.

Outputs and progress / Achievements – disaggregated by sex⁶

Table 2: Training: actual versus targeted outputs

Training	Target outputs 2000-2005	Actual outputs 2000-2005	Of which were women	Percentage of actual over targeted
Adult literacy instructors	1440	1427	658	99
English facilitators	120	126	59	105
Adult literacy learners	36000	29432	26646	81.7
Trainers	480	112	48	23 ⁷

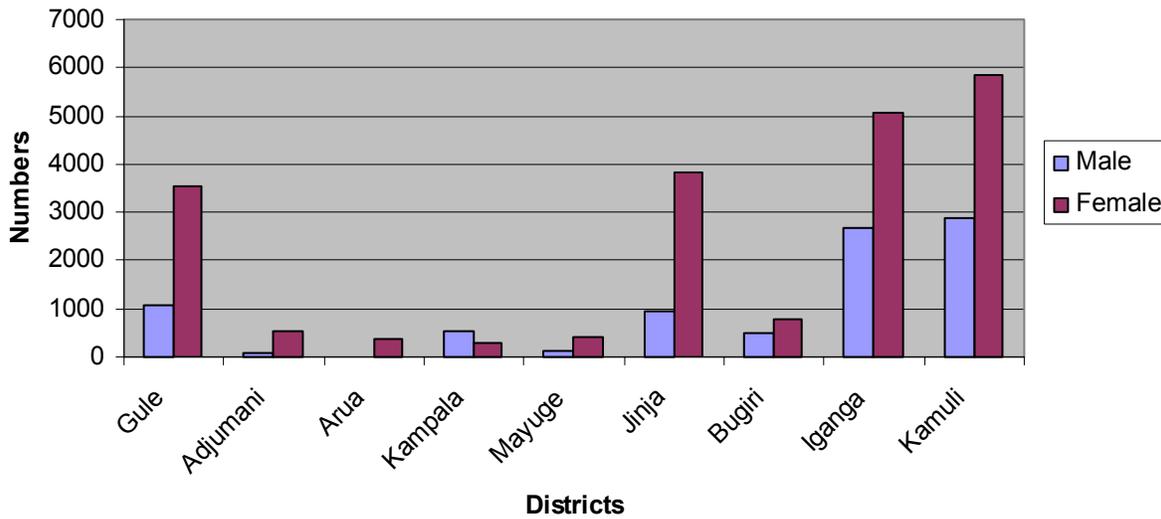
Source LABE M&E Coordinator

Concerning the training of trainers, at the early stages of implementation, the strategy changed from focusing on training of trainers to training instructors. However, the government CDOs and CDAs were retained for the training because they were already in the system and were the managers of the programme. The shift from trainers to instructors was as a result of the realisation that the approach was not as effective and it was turning out to be more expensive. The project has since put emphasis on higher caliber instructors and modified the training kit to suit them.

⁶ While it would have been more interesting to have this data disaggregated further by age groups or status in the family (e.g. whether married or not, have children or not, size of family, and the like) this information is not being collected.

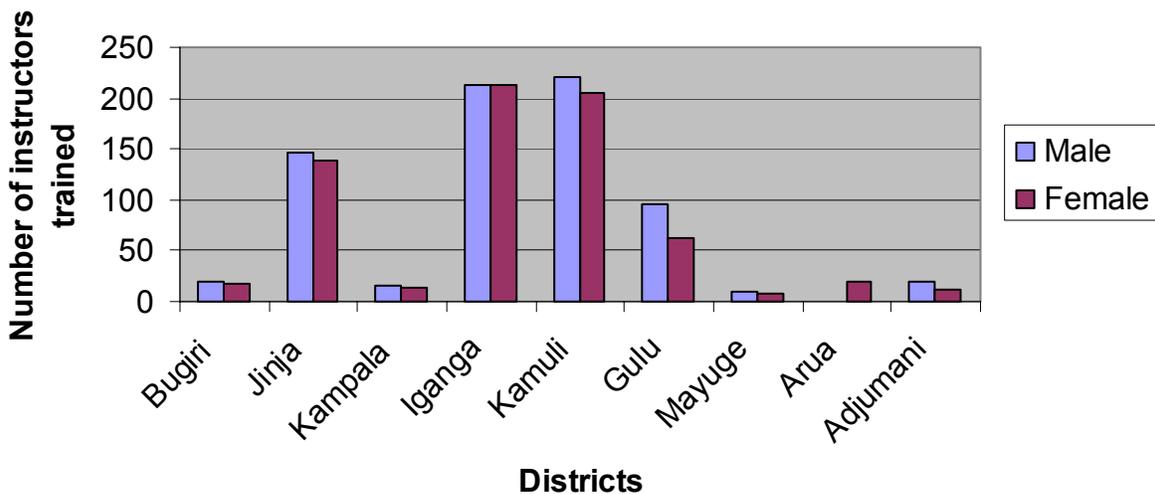
⁷ Focus shifted from selecting and training a large number of trainers to training a smaller number and a bigger number of instructors and some Community Development Officers (CDOs), Community Development Assistants (CDAs) and staff of strong CSOs who are already within the system, which was considered more sustainable.

Number of learners by district



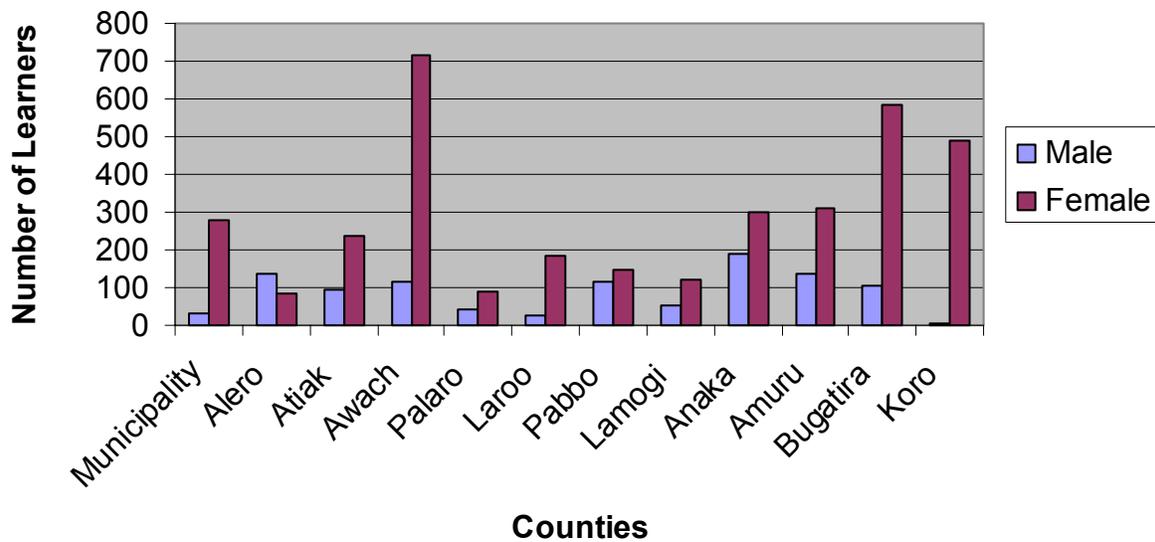
From the above graph, female participation among learners, in proportion to male learners is very high. It is only in Kampala where there are more male than female learners. This is largely because the centres supported (DIFRA, ALBEC, Literacy Aid Uganda, YMCA, Plan International – Kawempe, Wellspring) offer Basic English to adults, which is very attractive to male learners. English is in high demand in other areas. It could be that if offered as part of a standard package of literacy learning, more men will be attracted to the programme. It should also be noted, as clearly indicated in the graph below, that in training of instructors, the level male participation matched and even exceeds that of women. This may be explained in terms of the power game, with instructors considered more ‘powerful’ than learners.

Literacy Instructors trained disaggregated by district



In Gulu, a district that has suffered violent conflict for the last 18 years, and where more than half the entire population lives in Internally Displaced Camps, a situation which has adversely affected the provision of social services, LABE has been working through partners such as The Department of Community Development and religious organisations such as the Roman Catholic and Church of Uganda dioceses and the Christian Outreach and Education Centre to provide adult literacy services. These include training of instructors and running literacy classes for learners. These activities have been scaled up since October 2004 with partnership expanded to include the Directorate of Education and a number of other NGOs. With its partners, LABE has trained instructors, assessed learners' needs and compiled learners and instructors' profiles by location, sex and expectations about the literacy programme. The learner distribution is as below.

Gulu district Adult Learner by Sex and Subcounty



The largest numbers of learners are in IDP camps. This is largely due to the fact that they have more time on their hands, and also see it as a means of getting organised as groups more easily access support from such programmes as NUSAF. Furthermore, classes that are supported by different CSOs like Awach and Bungatira also have larger numbers. For example, Awach and Bungatira are supported by Christian Outreach Ministries and education (COME), an already well-established NGO which helps with mobilization and resources and links literacy work to other programmes such as Income Generating Activities and improved methods of farming and provides HIV/AIDS support. The rest of the centres have maintained their original learners. Low numbers in the municipality is explained by the fact that classes there started late.

In terms of disaggregating by sex, in Gulu district, it is only Alero which has more male learners than female learners. The explanation is that there has been a concerted effort by the district literacy network to get more men into the programme and so far, Alero has been the most responsive.

The literacy Environment

At the national level, LABE was to develop the resource centre in its Kampala office while at the district level, a literacy materials need assessment was to be conducted and the establishment of community resources centres supported.

Table 3: Establishment of resource centres, production and distribution of literacy materials

Output	Target for 2000 – 2005	Actual over 2000 – 2005
National Resource Centre	1 Centre	Established with global and national adult literacy materials
Magazines	20 issues of LIT Magazine	16 issues and 8000 copies of the Literacy News.
Literacy materials needs assessment surveys	72 literacy materials needs assessment surveys	44 reports produced
Materials writers training	48 people trained in writing of materials for continuing literacy	45 trained
Instructor lesson plan books	-	2670 distributed in 6 districts of Bugiri, Kampala, Kamuli, Jinja, Gulu and Iganga.
Class registers	-	1902 distributed in 6 districts
Lit Kits	-	272 distributed in 3 districts of Jinja, Iganga and Kamuli
Learners worksheets	-	6000 in Jinja
Follow up readers	5 books in each of the 5 languages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 6000 agricultural booklets ▪ 4000 instructor generated agricultural booklets ▪ 120 Swahili booklets for KSW
Black Boards and chalk	-	36 board and 1080 boxes of chalk distributed in Bugiri
District level resource centres	12 district level resource centres	4 established or strengthened
Community level resource centres	24 community learning resource centres supported	26 established or strengthened
District resource centre volunteers	24 district level resource centre volunteers trained	8 trained
Community resource centre volunteers	48 Community level resource centre volunteers trained	36 trained

From the table above, some actual outputs exceeded those planned while in others achievement was less than what was planned. In the case of the latter, the issue of resource centres deserves some discussion. In the course of project implementation, it was discovered that resource centres at the sub-county level were not being utilized. These were then substituted by ‘reading clubs’ and ‘book sack’ for literacy classes, which are currently being piloted in Jinja. Members agree who will read what material and then they meet and discuss. Preliminary results show that these are more popular and more effective than sub-county resource centres.

In the case of outputs that were not planned, such as instructor lesson plan books and litkits, these became necessary in support of instructors, as they are materials provided as part of their training. Provision of blackboards and chalk is essentially the responsibility of the government. However, where there is need to supplement, LABE came in. For the establishment of district resource centres, focus was put on active districts with strong CSOs to support them. These include Jinja, Iganga, Bugiri, West Nile and Gulu.

The literacy material needs assessment surveys were broadened with materials being just one component. The results were used as a basis for designing programmes and further needs assessments. The strong trends that emerged from the surveys include the need for literacy in both the local language and Basic English, the need to base literacy learning on learners' day-to-day practical encounters, learning in clusters, and the need to build into the programme continuous assessments for instructors and learners.

Advocacy

LABE was to advocate the importance of adult literacy as a development tool and as an essential accompaniment to the Universal Primary Education Programme of the Government of Uganda. It was to work with others to strengthen LitNet in order to then campaign through it. Through its lobby work, it was to draw public attention to the important social role of adult literacy, and the literacy instructors and was to lobby, together with the others for them to be paid for their work.

LABE was also to help its partners to play the role of advocacy for adult literacy in their districts by providing them with such skill as negotiation, lobbying, networking and canvassing as well as assessing funds. In Gulu, LABE in conjunction with LitNet and the other partners facilitated a peaceful demonstration by literacy learners and instructors on the criticality of adult literacy in the district. The demonstration was flagged off by the District Resident Commissioner and petitions presented to the Mayor. This has raised awareness of the issue by both local and national leaders as anything that happens in Gulu is noticed at the highest political level. The event was well covered both in the local and national media. All intending learners have been registered. LABE has been made part of the District Literacy Taskforce and participates in the Northern Uganda Education NGOs Network, an advocacy forum formed to lobby for greater attention on the education of children in this war-torn region.

Table 4: Advocacy – performance against targets

Planned Output	Target 2000-2005	Actual performance
A national adult literacy network capable of advocating the benefits of literacy	Functional Adult Literacy Network for Uganda	LitNet formed
District level literacy networks	12 district literacy networks formed	5 district-level literacy networks established, supported by LABE (Bugiri Adult Education Network; Iganga District Literacy and Adult Education Network; Arua Adult Literacy Network; Gulu Adult Literacy Network; and Adjumani Adult Literacy Network)
Regional literacy networks	3 Regional level literacy networks	The following 2 language-based networks formed: West Nile adult Literacy

	formed	Network and Busoga Literacy network in partnership with Busoga Cultural Research Centre. A loose one exists for Northern Uganda based on Acholi language
Increased profile of literacy and adult basic education in Uganda	Increased funding of adult literacy in the country; remuneration of literacy instructors; accreditation and certification of literacy instructors and learners	There is increase in Government budgetary allocations for adult literacy both national and sub-county levels. CSOs, with LABE as the lead, are formulating a Public Private Partnership policy on Adult Basic Education. Adult Basic Education has been included in the National Functional Education Bill. There are more radio broadcasts on adult literacy. LABE submitted a blue-print on remuneration of literacy instructors to the MGLSD and successfully advocated for literacy trainers to receive an allowance from Government (verified in Jinja district) and is advocating for this remuneration to be formalized on the government payroll.
A campaign supported by materials to raise awareness of literacy issues	Linkages that provide positive synergy between literacy and UPE explored. Local initiatives to voice out adult literacy issues promoted.	A Family Learning project (FABE) initiated to link adult learning to children's education. LABE supported LitNet and adult learners in Gulu to hold a petition to increase Government support for adult literacy.

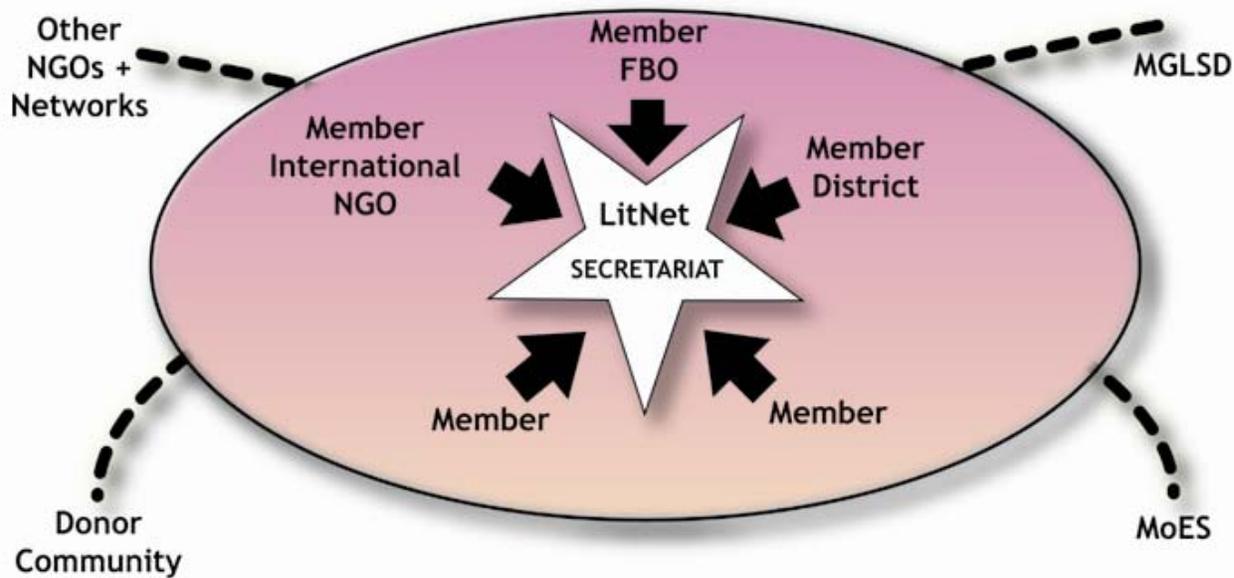
Only 5 out of 12, less than half of the planned district level literacy networks were formed. LABE and LitNet concentrated on districts with strong CSOs to use and sustain these networks. On issue of certification, nothing has happened, despite LABE's continued lobbying of Government. Presently there is no government accreditation body to handle this kind of certification and as was noted in the mid-term review, there seems to be inertia on the part of government to establishing such a body. LABE will continue lobbying government and mobilizing other CSOs and networks to do the same.

LitNet experience

The Literacy Network for Uganda (LitNet) is a coalition of international, national and district civil society organisations, international agencies, researchers, educational institutions, religious organisations, media and business groups committed to promoting adult basic education. Among the members are: LABE, Uganda Programme of Literacy Transformation (UPLIFT), Literacy Aid Uganda and National Women Association for Social and Educational Advancement. Internationals include UNESCO national Commission, Action Aid, Save the Children USA, YWCA and YMCA, Care International, Voluntary Corps Overseas (VSO), Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) and Finnish Refugee Council. Educational Institutions are: Institute of Adult and Continuing Education

– Makerere University, Nsamizi Institute for Social Development and Kyambogo University. Private businesses include DIFRA language Services, which currently chairs LABE board. Other members are district-based NGOs and CSO networks. LitNet is supposed to be membership driven and provides a platform for them to engage in various policy processes. It has been in place since 2000. Its formation was one of the targets for the programme under review.

LitNet ‘Lines of Interaction’



Source: LitNet files

So far, its main achievements are:

- Steering the process of reviewing the National Adult Literacy Strategic Plan 2002/3 – 2006/7. LitNet drove the process of its formulation and is now undertaking a thorough review with support from Development Cooperation Ireland.
- Trying to put Adult Literacy Policy together. Has commissioned a major study to inform the process. LitNet has also commissioned a study on Public-Private Partnerships for literacy.
- In the process of documenting partnerships members have with Local Governments.
- Produces Policy Briefs. The outstanding being on the recently concluded PEAP revision process.
- Involved in global campaigns such as Global Campaign Education (GCE).
- Planning a review of the Functional Adult Literacy Programme in Iganga in collaboration with Iganga District Literacy Network.
- Produced an ‘Advocacy Kit’ but it is not yet published.
- Supposed to provide paid up members with training annually – this has not happened yet due to constraints such as resource and time.

The Litnet concept was conceived as a result of Dakar 2000 and other debates going on at that time. However, the need was intensified when tension arose between UGAFE members who wanted emphasis for the network to encompass the whole range of adult education - non-formal, basic, higher and vocational education; and those who wanted the focus to remain on Adult Basic Education. From that was formed Uganda Adult Education Network (UGAADEN) to promote lifelong education and

LitNet to focus on adult literacy with LABE supporting it in the formative stage. As a result, there is a strong association of LitNet with LABE to the extent of them being seen as one and the same.

However, there is an unspoken concern within LABE that if it was to let LitNet go its own ways, the distinguishing focus on adult basic literacy could be considerably diminished. To the outsider and the un-initiated, the difference in emphases may appear insignificant, a non-issue. But to LABE, the two conceptualizations are miles apart as the one favoured by LABE remains focused on literacy and basic education, while the other considers literacy to be only one (and perhaps a relatively minor) component of adult literacy. To eradicate mass poverty, LABE is convinced that adult literacy and basic education takes precedence over focusing on the other aspects such as higher education. And while LABE and LitNet interact with UGAADEN, sometimes the differences become stark. A case in point is the recent engagement in the drafting of proposals on adult education policy which was led by UGAADEN which, to LABE, was so skewed to other forms of education other than literacy and adult basic education that LABE and LitNet were unable to endorse and append their signatures.

LitNet's approach is to emphasize adult literacy in a wider perspective and its selection of districts of focus is very much influenced by the capacity of a partner to get things done, for example Save the Children US in Nakasongola; UPLIFT in Nebbi, SOCCADIDO in Soroti and COME in Gulu, IDLEAN in Iganga and LABE in Gulu and Jinja. However, LitNet sometimes feels like it is constantly working under the shadow of LABE. For example, LitNet staff is an employee of LABE; joint publications always put LABE before LitNet and as a result LitNet ends up not being recognized in its own right. For LABE, maintaining LitNet is a considerable cost as it provides 80% of the resources for running LitNet. However, this cost has considerable benefits like demonstrating that LABE is in favour of joining forces with others, and collaboration rather than working in isolation. And presently, LitNet still needs LABE as most donors would not be willing to support LitNet independently of LABE. Beyond LABE, it is only the Development Cooperation Ireland (DCI) funds that provide organisational development and some overheads for LitNet and is for three years; and (DVV) a German Adult education Association that provides support for bulletins. As the LitNet Coordinator put it, "If we were to move out of the LABE premises, we would have to go to a slum as we could not afford anything better".

As the current Coordinator was preparing to take an extended study leave, LABE tried but failed to get other LitNet members to provide or support an interim Coordinator: "We have spent hours on end discussing staffing within LitNet members but so far no member has been willing to second a staff, leaving LABE with no option but to second one". It seems therefore that if LitNet was to become completely independent of LABE, not only would it live in the slums, it would also be without a full-time staff to coordinate its activities. It is our considered view that in the matter of LABE/LitNet segregation, LABE and its partners should do everything possible to avoid a 'premature ejaculation' – it satisfies neither partner and the outcome could be regretted.

Clearly, the first step towards segregation is the strengthening of LitNet with emphasis on strong coordination (a person), not equipment or separate offices, as the most critical factor. LABE is fully aware of and working towards it. The proceeding of the current Coordinator to pursue a higher degree in Education Policy is one of the longer-term strategies to strengthen LitNet. However, other members need to play their part, especially since some command more resources than LABE.

Capacity strengthening for LABE partners

LABE was to continue work with district level partners although these would be coordinated into a district level LitNet as LABE adopts the strategy of working through one lead NGO partner in each district of operation. Once trained, the lead NGOs with their respective LitNets would undertake to train sub-county CBOs. The impact was to be assessed.

Table 5: Capacity strengthening for partners

Output	Target 2000-2005	Actual outturn 2000-2005
CSOs with strong management planning and organisational structures and functionality	12 district level CSOs linked to district local government education and gender departments	9 district level CSOs offering quality adult literacy services with their literacy plans reflected in local government corporate development plans
Local CSOs running effective projects	720 local CSOs targeted	720 local CBOs established and supported by LABE to provide effective literacy services LABE to adjust these figures and clarify meaning of CBO and CSO.
NGOs with increased female representation in leadership positions	24 NGOs targeted	19 district level NGOs with strong representation of women in leadership positions

Organisational Strengthening and Staff Development (LABE)

As a priority, LABE was to set up comprehensive monitoring structures and processes, including self-reporting and target setting for learners, and using indicators which relate to the learner's viewpoint. New computer equipment was to be installed at LABE's office to enable increased work capacity and optimum communications. LABE staff was to agree individual training plans to enable them to keep their skills up to date and to add new skills. LABE was to develop a strategy for its work with partners on disengagement from and entry into districts.

Table 6: Staff development and organisational strengthening

Output	Target 2000-2005	Actual 2000-2005
Strengthening capacity of LABE as a professional and competent institution for literacy services in Uganda	LABE becomes a competent and professional institution, advocating and strengthening the provision of literacy services in Uganda.	LABE staff attended various short courses in fields related to their work. At least six Board meetings were held annually.
Monitoring and evaluation systems implemented at village, district and regional levels	Functional monitoring and evaluation systems implemented at village, district and regional levels	1179 monitoring kits distributed to literacy classes in 8 districts. 631 literacy instructors trained in the use of the monitoring kits. Monthly, quarterly and annual quantitative data collected and analysed and feedback given to at least 2 of the districts on data received. Quarterly assessments (largely qualitative) and

		literacy needs assessment surveys conducted in sample districts on the effects of LABE's intervention.
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Regarding LABE staff attending courses in fields related to their work, it was established that a range of trainings for staff were organised in form of in-house seminars and training with other organisations in such topics as Advocacy, gender and adult literacy. Others were in financial management, teaching Basic English, Information Technology, such as the development and use of power point, video scrip writing and participatory monitoring and evaluation. By taking a sample of two field staff, the Evaluator established the following: Stella Tumwebaze, who at the time of the evaluation was Programme Manager – Jinja and Kamuli area has attended 9 short courses in subjects ranging from Training of Trainers for Adult Literacy offered by LABE; Gender mainstreaming offered by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development; Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation offered by ESAMI in Zambia and a diploma in Project Planning and Management at the Uganda Management Institute. Joyce Nairuba, a LABE staff in Bugiri, has undergone training in advocacy (Tanzania), organisational management with Community Development Resource Network – Uganda; and PRA/PLA methods with the Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment Project.

Institutionally, LABE has held staff meetings, retreats and planning sessions regularly with at least 6 such activities held annually. The board chair and other board members have been involved as appropriate. Organisational Policies and Manual have been revised to reflect the changed organisational structure, staffing and partnerships envisaged in the new Strategic Plan. At least six Board meetings have been held annually and as a result the organisation has run smoothly.

Monitoring kits distributed to literacy classes in 8 districts of Bugiri, Kampala, Kamuli, Jinja, Gulu, Iganga, Arua and Adjumani. (LABE M&E report) As a result, good data which is consistent and reliable is being collected, analysed and used by LABE for monitoring and evaluation and for better planning.

Progress towards implementation of the mid-term recommendations

In March/May 2003, a mid-term review of the Literacy and Continuing Education Project was conducted and a number of important recommendations and specific actions made. From interactions with the entire LABE staff, it was established that there was a deliberate effort by management to have the staff deliberate on, understand, and internalize the findings and recommendations of the mid-term review. Retreats were held especially for that purpose. As a result, the actions taken or to be taken by LABE have wide and full ownership of the staff. In the matrix below, we identify actions taken on each of the 20 recommendations.

Table 7: Progress towards the implementation of the Mid-Term Review recommendations

Recommendation	Action taken	Comment
1. LABE needs to apply strategic criteria to its selection of partners, particularly with a view to ensuring sustainability of work.	LABE has streamlined criteria for selection of operational partners. They include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How well a potential partner fits into the Local Government Plans or how willing they are to be assisted to do so. (Previously, decisions were based on a potential partner's need for support); ▪ Organisation's financial and non-financial resource base (for sustainability purposes). ▪ LABE has intensified work with Local Gov't since structures and human resources exist already. ▪ By subscribing to wider networks, LABE is better 	Hard choices have been made, resulting in LABE disengaging with some partners. Obviously, this has not endeared them to these partners.

	able to link up with organisations with resources and influence. An example is the Northern Uganda Education Forum. In the new Strategic Plan, new partnerships are to be forged with civic education agencies, human rights groups, the media, children's and women's organisations.	
2. LABE should broaden its contacts with government beyond the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development	<p>Beyond the MGLSD, LABE now works closely with the Ministry of Education and Sports mainly on FABE; the Ministry of Constitutional Affairs, mainly on the National Civic Education Programme for which LABE designed and piloted the Civic Education programme document and was among agencies accredited to deliver civic education for the just concluded national referendum.</p> <p>Beyond Government Ministries, LABE also collaborates with other institutions like the Makerere-based project on training manuals.</p>	Although the civic education programme did not go as planned, with NGOs taking the central role, aspects of the design by LABE are being turned into civic education modules by the Electoral Commission, other actors such as MS Uganda and ACORD, Gulu (on conflict situations). LABE could also work more closely with NAADS groups under the PMA.
3. LABE should strengthen its role in supporting other Civil Society Organisations in policy dialogue and monitoring policy implementation.	Strengthening smaller NGOs is intended to be done through the activities of LitNet. LitNet has not been able to provide the training of members due to resource constraints.	
4. Make explicit the framework for collaboration with government at national and district levels	LABE has MoUs with all the districts and sub-counties where it operates. They lay down the framework for collaboration and are subject to availability of funds.	There is high expectation on LABE especially in light of dwindling resources at Local Government level.
5. Strengthen regional focus	LABE has supported/facilitated the formation of and works with two regional literacy networks of West Nile and Busoga Adult Literacy Networks, particularly for enhancing their planning and collective advocacy capacity.	
6. LABE should review its advocacy role	LABE has placed a premium on advocacy in its new Strategic Plan.	There is need to not tip the balance too much as services are a 'witness' to advocacy and demand remains high.
7. Devise strategies for making services and products better known in Uganda and the region	LABE has plans to 'brand' its products although this has not yet been achieved.	
8. Segregation of LABE and LitNet	Time was needed to internalize this recommendation and lay workable strategies to implement it. Some members would like this recommendation implemented faster as LitNet currently lives in the shadow of LABE. On LABE's part, one strategy is to strengthen LitNet first before leaving it to its own devices. To this end, LitNet is being supported to develop its own Strategic Plan, deepen links with its member and other NGOs/CBOs (to make it truly owned and supported by them) and to attract its own resources. The other is to link it to bigger networks such as the Uganda National NGO Forum, whose membership includes national and thematic networks, such as Uganda Women's Network, Uganda Land Alliance, etc. in order to establish an Adult literacy/education thematic group at that level, thereby raising the profile of the issue.	During the evaluation, two views emerged on the matter: those who wish to see a faster segregation and those more cautious, with such groups as the Busoga Cultural Research Centre in strong support of caution. LitNet remains fragile and issues behind its formation complex and conceptually strong. If segregation is rushed, there is a real risk that LitNet could 'die' or be seriously disaffected and what it stands for lost. As a first step, LitNet needs a strong Coordinator, able to mobilize and reactivate members and inspire donors. The pursuit of a higher degree in education policy by the current Coordinator is potentially a good strategy for strengthening LitNet.
9. Develop a clear strategy for the training of trainers	LABE has shifted its strategy on TOT to the training of Community Development Officers, Community Development Assistants and staff of strong CSOs.	This strategy appears to be working well in all LABE operational areas.
10. Expand training to cover the writing and production of a wider range of materials	LABE deliberately works with local language association members as adult literacy trainers and learners. For example, the such as the Lusoga Language Cultural Centre provides easy local language reading materials and edit materials produced locally. Was exploring work with Madi and Lugbara (West Nile) when partner phased out of the area.	Progress has been hampered by a key partner (Finnish Refugee Council) changing its plans in West Nile which affected the exploration with Madi and Lugbara language groups.

11. Strengthen capacity in the design of training events	LABE changed its strategy to contributing to what Government does. Now provides pre-packaged training.	
12. Work with the Ministries of education and Gender to spell out literacy competences and levels and develop flexible and credible ways of assessment	Have collaborated with the Ministries to define ways of assessing Learners, Trainers and Materials. LABE was contracted by the Government to undertake (and actually produced a document) a study on national adult literacy assessment and qualification framework. The learner assessments sheets used in LABE supported literacy classes come from the Community Development Departments at the districts.	When collaborating with the Ministry, often LABE is let down after playing its part. Often there is no follow up and implementation on the part of Government.
13. Maintain commitment to and investment in innovation in ways that enable partners to scale up successful ventures	LABE's new Strategic Plan articulates a number of innovations including Literacy and Adult Civic Education (LACE), Literacy and Women Empowerment (LIWE), and Basic English to Adults (BETA). This is in addition to expanding the Family Basic Education (FABE) now under piloting in Bugiri district. At the village level, schools have been identified as strategic partners for implementing FABE.	Past experience with LABE innovations is that they are quite easy to adapt and adopt by others.
14. Improve Board practice	Board meeting held as planned.	Some reforms afoot
15. Adopt a strategy to systematically document and disseminate its work for advocacy and learning purposes	Policy briefs issued periodically. A comprehensive one issued on the recent PEAP revision. LABE experience documented in the Commonwealth's "Composing a New Song, Stories of Empowerment from Africa". LABE has used its experience to inform the National Adult Literacy Strategic Investment Plan 2002/3-2006/7, the development of a number of primers. LABE's work received internationally recognition in a number of prizes.	A lot more could be done to get to the wider public the good work of LABE. LABE should consider closer collaboration with such partners as Education Action International on this.
16. Integrate monitoring and evaluation into each activity from the start	LABE has developed and is collectively applying formats for collecting information for monitoring and evaluation purposes. 2 staff trained in M&E. LABE has set up milestones to monitor non-quantitative aspects of its work. LABE is putting together an M&E guidebook.	LABE culture makes it possible for field staff to provide headquarters with feedback. The M&E guidebook will make it easy for staff to use M&E in their work
17. Initiate a process of strategic planning	A 5-year (2005-09) Strategic Plan in place	Plan attempts to address the key issues identified through various reviews
18. Clarify areas of comparative advantage and use 'quality' as an integrating principle	LABE consciously setting out to be a "pace-setter" within the country and the Eastern Africa Sub-region. One of its Board members is from the Institute of Adult and Continuing Education (Makerere University). However, LABE admits that it has not done enough on quality assurance of its materials and training, including unpacking what 'quality' means in the context of adult education. The challenges of geographical expansion, deepening of its work through decentralised structures have overshadowed the need to focus on quality assurance. The problem is compounded by the National Curriculum Development Centre lacking professionals on adult literacy.	In Uganda LABE has no peer organisation to benchmark itself against. It has addressed this by developing links with such agencies as 'Project Literacy' in South Africa and 'Basic Skills Agency' in the United Kingdom. Partners such as Education Action International could assist LABE in linking it to other regional and international networks.
19. Move from activity-based programming to output-based approach to clarify likely impact and improve monitoring	This is made a guiding principle in the new Strategic Plan.	
20. Continually assess its place in a constantly changing literacy and adult education landscape in Uganda and the region in order to maintain relevance and flexibility.	LABE consciously setting out to be a "pace-setter" within the country and the Eastern Africa Sub-region, including the New Sudan. Developed links with such agencies as 'Project Literacy' in South Africa and 'Basic Skills Agency' in the United Kingdom.	LABE needs a national set of peers against which it should benchmark itself.

In our assessment, actions undertaken by LABE to implement the recommendations of the Mid-Term Review are remarkable. This is perhaps best captured in the comments on the draft of this report by Dr. Clinton Robinson who was the lead evaluator in the Mid-Term Review: "It is fascinating, two years and a half after undertaking the Mid-Term Review, to look at where LABE has moved in the meantime, and to see the continuing impact of the organisation in Uganda. LABE's capacity for flexible adaptation to the changing national scene and for outright innovation is extraordinary.

(Undertaking) such initiatives in a difficult, complex and resource-poor environment is exemplary. LABE is indeed succeeding where other NGOs may be struggling.”

However, in the short time frame, it was not possible to LABE to implement all the recommendations to the same degree, particularly as it had to respond to other opportunities which were not even on the horizon at the time of the review. Clearly, it concentrated on the operational aspects of its work, including M&E – criteria for selection of partners, formation of regional networks, restructuring its training packages, and introducing new innovations. Work on M&E included staff development and the production of a manual. It has broadened its partnership with Government ministries and put a lot of work into the development of a strategic plan to guide its future work. But it seems to have devoted less time, attention and resources to matters that those aspects that could facilitate its own functioning - documenting its work and disseminating its results, strengthening its core expertise like making quality its hallmark; and assessing its place in the literacy landscape. These aspects are crucial to its future as they serve to create and maintain the image of LABE and increase its visibility with other networks and partners, both actual and potential, especially at the international level. It is both the track record (in which LABE excels) and the visibility and presence which serve to bring in new partners and new resources. LABE needs to give greater attention to those recommendations which project its name and its reputation, just as it has done with those that set its track record. In the appendix, we list selected fundamental parameters for LABE’s wider action and new options.

Efficiency/Value for money

A review of LABE’s Audited Accounts for the year ended 30 June 2004 revealed some important aspects about LABE’s efficiency and cost effectiveness. For example, it is noted that by changing its modus operandi to work more closely and in partnership with districts and bigger NGOs and by deciding to sell some of its materials and expertise, LABE has been able to leverage its resources and to generate its own funds, which makes its resources go farther than would otherwise be the case. Partner districts make financial and non-financial contributions reduce LABE’s costs. For example, districts such as Iganga, Bugiri, Jinja and Kamuli made in-kind contributions towards training conducted in sub-counties. Following this example, some trainers donated their time, met their feeding needs and some paid for their transport to participate in training sessions. The LABE Training Kit “was well received as a model training guide” for districts and NGOs/CSOs like the Mothers’ Union, Finnish Refugee Council, Plan International and Save the Children UK.

Because of close working relations, the Audit report notes the fact that such partners like the Finnish Refugee Council, Icelandic Development Agency and Uganda Community Based Association for Children (UCOBAC) were able to subsidize testing assessment exercises that saved LABE quite a bit of money. Also LABE has been able to secure free airtime, particularly during the marking of the international literacy week while training for two LABE overseas was fully funded through Education Action International, one of LABE’s partners, and on a Commonwealth professional scholarships. LABE staff has also been on fully sponsored exchange visits, such as Godfrey’s visit to Finland. Also the report makes note of the professionalism of the Board which makes its operations inexpensive to LABE.

Has LABE met the wider objectives of the programmes?

The initiative under review had the following two wider objectives:

- To improve and widen the opportunities for women who are excluded from education because of their gender, to develop literacy skills and participate in their own right in development, thereby reducing their marginalization in the development processes of their communities.
- To contribute to a literate and well-informed Ugandan society through the improvement of training for literacy teachers, a new continuing education curriculum and an enhanced literacy environment.

In this section, we assess the extent to which the two programmes have contributed to the realization of the two wider objectives.

At the level of service delivery, LABE's achievements are remarkable. As an innovator, its contribution to adult literacy is second to none in Uganda. Both these aspects have life transforming effects on the individuals, their families and their communities. As one of LABE partners put it, "Literacy is power. To protect other rights one needs literacy" – Fr. Richard Gonza (Busoga Cultural Research Centre).

From the programme review, it is clear that the intended aim of the literacy training component to "pay particular attention to women's empowerment" and put women at the centre of the initiative is being achieved especially with regard to learners:

- By 7 to 3, women are the majority in this aspect of the training programmes
- More women demand literacy training (as opposed to their male counterparts who have to be convinced and cajoled first)
- Women say that they benefit greatly at personal level, family level and community level. They also benefit culturally, socially and economically. The intervention in Gulu and its transformational outcomes on a women-in-conflict situation is particularly significant.
- Women are recruiting fellow women into the programme (the Consultant did not hear of a single case where a male learner was doing the same for his fellow men).

As the following stories illustrate so powerfully, LABE's literacy work has had life transforming impact on various participants. In our view, these impacts are generalisable. All testimonies from literacy learners, instructors and Government of Uganda officials at local and central levels point to this.

A literacy instructor in an Internally Displaced People's camp utilizes instructor's skills to mobilize women for economic activities and social transformation.

Ms Santa Oloya is a mother of 10. She has a daily schedule of an afternoon lesson of a group of 25 women in Layibi, Gulu Municipality. She narrates her story: "In 1997 soon after we abandoned our home in Paicho and pitched camp in Gulu Municipality due to the rebel attacks, ACORD (one of the development agencies) advertised posts of research assistants to gather data on the girls-children and displaced people's problems in the municipality. Soon after the exercise, ACORD requested me to facilitate a literacy class. I was trained by Christian Outreach and Education (a LABE partner). For 1 year... I ran a class at Holy Rosary, supported by ACORD. ... Apart from training me in how to teach reading, writing and counting to adults, I was also equipped with organizing and managing a class. So I used this knowledge to mobilize women in my community to start income generating activities. Currently, two women groups are running, with majority of members selling vegetables in the market.

Whereas I am a treasurer in the group of 35, I was elected as treasurer in another group comprising 56 women.

Later, I enrolled as a (literacy) learner in Queen of Peace Literacy class, since it is very close to my home. But soon it was realized that I was way beyond a learner, and on further discussions, I was immediately asked me to facilitate literacy class level 2 – which is an advanced class of mother tongue, and also introduces learners to Basic English. In my class, apart from reading and writing, we hold discussions on parenting, relationships, and every Wednesday, we hold talks on domestic education, agriculture and Christian Education. Now because of this, I have seen numerous benefits that these women have realized from these classes; I vividly remember one woman in my class (she no longer is) – when she had just joined, she was a real drunkard, and always came to class with bruises inflicted on her by her husband! But I want to testify, that by the time she left (2 years later), she had greatly transformed and completely stopped drinking (alcohol)! I visited her the other day and she told me how much her husband now respects her. In fact she has started a small business and confessed that it is only now that she sits down with her husband to plan for family.

Caroline gains confidence and leads fellow women into confronting their problems

Caroline, a mother of 5, is the class secretary of Mican Literacy Class. The 35-year-old learner, who has been in the adult class for 2 years now, is also a mobilizer for a farmers group. After dropping out of school at Primary 5 level in 1987, Caroline was at the verge of relapsing into total illiteracy. "During that time, it was very difficult for me to express my opinion even to a group of women as I always looked down upon myself. I never thought I could meaningfully contribute towards a public discussion". Presently, Caroline boasts of confidence in speaking during public gatherings, and hastens to say that the mere fact that she is freely and openly speaking to the interviewer - someone she has just met for the first time, is testimony of her confidence in public speeches.

"It was after we started getting used to each other that we openly spoke about the problems we face in our newly settled homes. ... as I had mentioned to you earlier, a large majority of us had just settled from Alero and Kitgum due to the current insurgency. In my view, some of the problems that we share are directly attributed to the trauma that we suffered during the rebel attacks and the memories of the people and property we lost during the incursions. One common problem, for example, is that many of us have lost our husbands, children or very close relatives. We also left behind very large and fertile (agricultural) fields, and are now living on very small plots of land, just enough for a house and a (backyard) garden for a few vegetables. Owing to the small plots of land allocated to us, we have always faced the challenge of food shortage. It was during the discussions in our class that we (formally) requested the Diocese (of Northern Uganda) for a large piece of land on which to cultivate at a large scale to produce enough food for our families.

Stories of social economic transformation abound. Learners in Queen of Peace literacy center formed development groups for income generation, collective farming and recently wrote proposals to benefit from World Bank funded Northern Uganda Social Action Fund projects. Learners mobilized themselves to form Gulu Women's Empowerment Network.

Lamunu Christine and a women's savings scheme

Christine, a 43-year-old single mother of 6, is one of the oldest learners in Queen of Peace literacy center. Being a P. 7 dropout (though she did not sit for primary leaving examinations), Christine did not join the literacy class to learn to read and write but to improve on the skills she was beginning to forget after being a housewife for so long. Christine wanted to join the tailoring class and learn to

make handicrafts in her case table clothes. Lucy learnt to make table clothes from the center, Sr Angela taught her so well that she stayed on at the center to teach fellow learners. The best part about the literacy class is the formation of groups among the learners where they work together, save money in a revolving fund. From the money she gets from the revolving fund, Christine is involved in petty trade where she sells charcoal and vegetables to supplement the income she earns from the table clothes.

Christine also helped in the formation of 'Mac ma tic group' a group of people living with disabilities, which group is supported by the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU). She is also the LC I councilor for the disabled in Layibi. In her group, Christine is the treasurer and using her literacy skills, she collects money for the group and gives back good accountability.

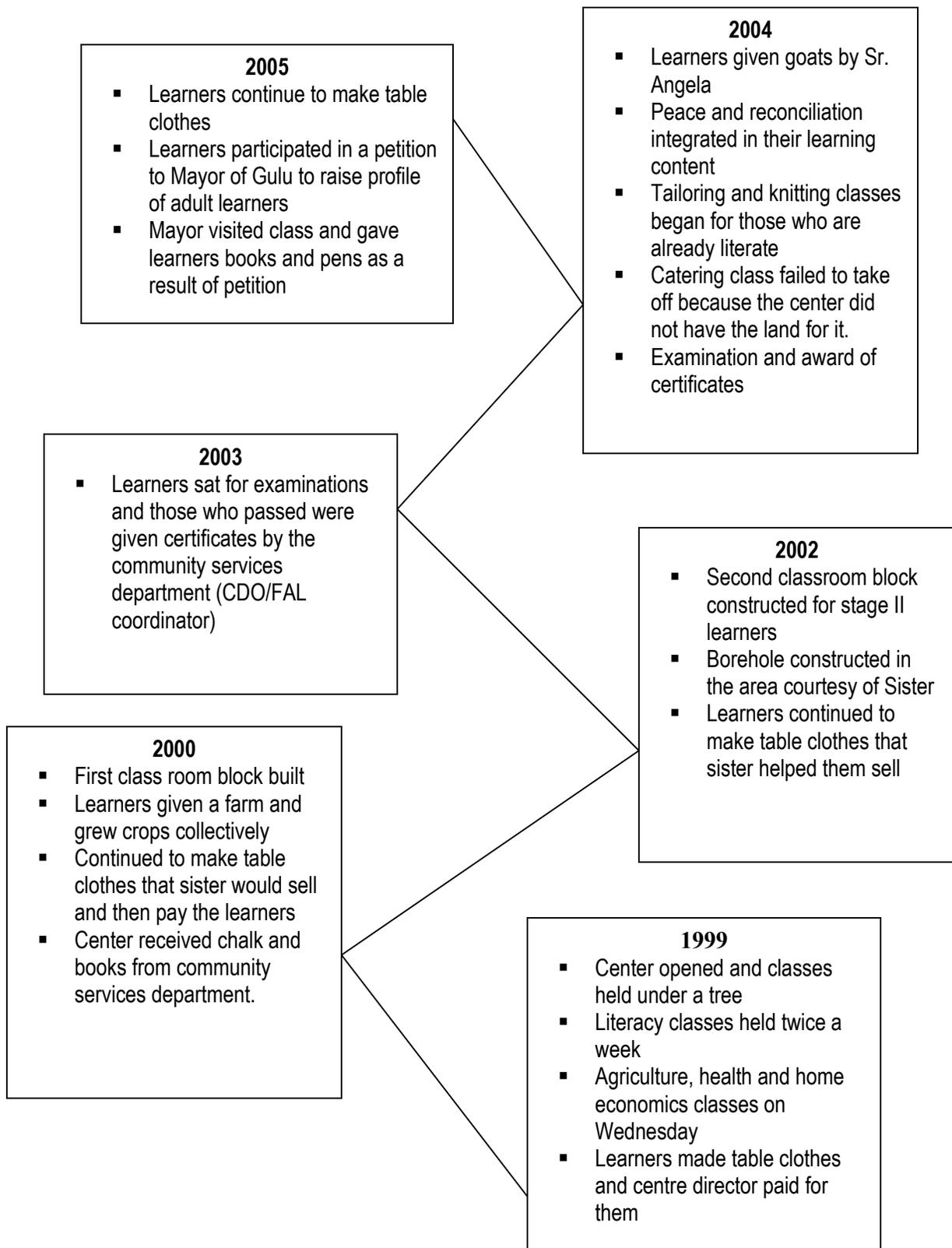
Giving back to the community - the case of two women in Jinja

Shiidah is in secondary school. At 28 years and with 5 children, she is at St. Stephens, Budondo, the same school as her eldest daughter who is in primary six. Shiidah dropped out of school at primary four when her father died and she could not afford school fees. She soon got married to man who had himself dropped out of school at senior three. She first attended literacy classes for four years and with private tuition covered enough ground to re-enter formal education at primary seven. When she took examinations she passed and went on to secondary school with financial support of her husband. Her target is to become a teacher or a nurse (*omusawo*). Because of the value she attaches to education, she has been able to encourage a friend to also get back into formal education and is now in primary seven.

Salimat (19) is a senior one student at Trinity College, Buwagi. Like Shiidah, she too dropped out of school for lack of fees. When adult literacy classes were introduced in her area, her mother enrolled and Salimat went along with her. This encouraged her to return to primary school which is now more affordable with the introduction of Universal Primary Education. For the other school requirements, Salimat is supported by her grandmother. Like Shiidah, she aspires to be a health worker and pay her grandmother back by being of greater service to the community of Buwagi.

As groups get transformed, so do their learning centres. Queen of Peace Literacy centre is an excellent example of such a transformation from a class under the tree to one that is whose members can influence policy and decision-making in a war-torn district.

Queen of peace adult literacy Center – a history of transformation



What do all these case studies illustrate? Among other possible things, these cases illustrate that:

- Adult education has additional value of inspiring beyond offering reading, writing and counting skills, the original motivation for most learners.
- Adult education can unlock the potential in the learner and transform their lives, possibly for ever.

Remarkably, as per LBE Auditor's report, LBE has been able to register these achievements cost-effectively.

These achievements have not gone unnoticed. **At the international level**, LBE's work has, more than once, received world-wide acclaim. For example, in May 2004, LBE won the Local Governance award for the best innovative Practices – awarded by UN HABITAT and FORD Foundation in recognition for LBE's 'outstanding contribution to community participation and poverty eradication in East Africa'. In 2002, LBE won the world-wide UNESCO Noma Prize. The jury appreciated the programme of literacy for development and welcomed the recognition it gives to development of partnerships. In the citation, it is stated that "the prize rewarded exceptional work in the fight against illiteracy ... and the innumerable women and men around the world who work hard every day, often anonymously, under difficult conditions, to teach people to read and write".

In 2002, Patrick Kiirya, the LBE Director was recognized as one of the leading four NGO leaders in Africa and awarded a Commonwealth Fellowship to document his experiences into a book. His experience was published in "*Composing a New Song: Stories of Empowerment from Africa*" by the Commonwealth Foundation, 2002. In it, it is said that "LBE has become Uganda's biggest national network in basic education, making more NGOs visible in the delivery of this educational initiative".

In our view, what LBE has been able to achieve is by design, not by default. As a team, it is driven by a desire to succeed. In 2002, Patrick Kiirya, LBE Director wrote, "In LBE, we have set targets. We want LBE to transform into a national Literacy Agency that works with central government as a joint provider of adult basic education". LBE wants to become a permanent institution. LBE has also mastered the art of effective influencing of policy: Focusing on an issue that is of Government priority concern, is not politically contentious and where there is a discernible policy delivery gap; ensuring strong linkages with Government's overarching goal of poverty eradication and attainment of the Millennium Development Goals; making service delivery become a 'witness' for policy-influencing and working with full devotion, professionalism and dedication.

However, while what LBE has achieved has been deliberate, in no case of the above case studies was LBE directly involved in the lives of the individuals, although such individual and community transformation is LBE's ultimate goal. In collaboration with its implementation partners, LBE needs to collect these stories systematically to document the qualitative change, so that the link between upstream policy and training work and downstream community benefits is strongly and empirically made. This can also help LBE to leverage these 'end-user' stories for its development.

Some programme-related challenges

While LBE has made an excellent start, to improve and widen the opportunities for women who are excluded from education because of their gender, to develop literacy skills and participate in their own right in development, and to reduce their marginalization in the development processes of their communities requires a lot of consolidation, deepening and scaling up of LBE-type initiatives. In particular the issue of men being less responsive to the programme has become a critical issue for the success of the programme. It was highlighted at all levels including district officials, sub-county officials and instructors, LBE staff and is told in all LBE statistics. Beyond LBE it is

acknowledged as a challenge for most FAL programmes. As illustrated in the Kakira Sugar Works Case, attracting male learners remains an unresolved matter.

The Kakira Sugar Works case study

The programme at this sugar estate is a work-based literacy programme. The participants are both contract workers (with yearly renewable contracts) and their and permanent workers' dependants. As most contractors are men, one would have expected the majority of the learners in this work-based programme to be male. On the contrary, of the 119 learners who sat for their tests in March 2005, 72 were female and only 47 male. So one of the main challenges pointed out by management is that of low male participation. When the Consultant visited, of the 9 learners met, only one was a man.

Compared to other classes, Kakira Sugar Works is in a much better position regarding male participation in the programme. On inspection of a literacy inventory prepared in December 2004 by the Directorate of Gender and Community Development in collaboration with LABE, women outnumbered men by nearly one to ten. In Gulu, sub-counties such as Koro, Bungatira and Awach with high learner responses, the ratio of women to men is simply too high. For example of nearly 500 learners in Koro, only about 4 are men. Of the group of 50 learners the Consultant met at Nabukosi LC1 in Butagaya sub-county, Jinja district, only a handful were men. Some of the reasons given for this disparity include:

- Pride/embarrassment on the part of men, especially in mixed classes.
- Opportunity cost – men are less willing to forego activities which have greater economic returns to go for literacy classes, although as instructors, the ratio of men to women increases somewhat.

Yet in terms of perceived benefits, the few men who participate quite easily identified as many benefits that accrue from their participation in the programme as women, including a boost in their social status, home improvement, economic benefits, the ability to write and read, etc. One participant narrated how, since joining the class, he has been appointed the recorder of community contributions at funerals – a real boost in his self-esteem. So whatever the real reasons for men's low response to the programme are, the matter needs to be investigated more thoroughly and ways to address it found if the benefits are to empower whole families and communities. For, while the programme was clearly designed with the empowerment of women in mind, it was never intended to sideline men. Future programming should address this more effectively.

Premature phase out: the experience of Multi-Purpose Training and Community Empowerment Association (MTCEA)

This is best illustrated with the case of MTCEA in Iganga district. MTCEA has been associated with LABE almost from the beginning. While the focus of MTCEA was and remains sustainable livelihoods, adult literacy was introduced into the objectives of its programmes because of its transformational potential such as helping so-called illiterates to question the status quo. The programme has moved from the training of literacy instructors, to the use of music, dance and drama, to using the demonstration plots as literacy classes.

As people got to grips with the real issues, MTCEA started to realise that available literacy materials were too shallow and needed to be deepened. Literacy instructors wanted to move on to a higher level. In response MTCEA worked with LABE to develop learner-generated learning materials. Training was standardized and a course for training literacy instructors introduced. With over 300 literacy classes,

the programme was getting stretched. More literacy instructors' trainers were trained and a resource centre opened resources with LABE's help. A newsletter was also introduced.

In 2003, even as the demand for services was increasing even more, LABE's strategy changed. It stopped operating district branches and shifted to working through partners; it stopped its support for the production of learner-generated materials which hurt those groups whose materials were not produced; and it ceased being a 'donor' to now doing advocacy. CSOs were no longer to train instructors as this role shifted to Community Development Officers. Joint monitoring by LABE and MTCEA reduced ad the innovations like the use of demonstration gardens as literacy classes fizzled out. As focus moved to facilitating districts and district networks, support went to workshops and consultations. This reduced impact on the ground. According to MTCEA officials, "this resulted in remarkable drop-out rates". The resource centres which acted as "information warehouses" suffered due to lack of funding even as a world space radio was recalled to Kampala. Translation of materials into local languages also stopped.

This shift in strategy by LABE was based on the fact that Government policy adult literacy was changing. A national policy was being developed and districts, through the District Community Development Officers, were to take on certain the lead role. They were expected to pick up from where LABE left off. This does not seem to have happened, creating sustainability issues for MTCEA literacy initiatives. MTCEA argues that the drastic shift was premature as the Government policy had not yet been ratified. It also feels that some form of recognition in form of a certificate should be awarded to CSOs that have had considerable involvement in adult literacy.

To address sustainability MTCEA has introduced the following:

- *Essentially MTCEA reverted to its original focus on agriculture-based livelihoods with some adult literacy added on. Its core work now is giving out loans in kind such as oxen, ox-ploughs and the like. This is a bit like some of the disciples when Jesus died. Simon Peter said to the others, "I am going (back) fishing". The others replied, "We will come with you"⁸. (It may be worth noting that fishing disciples laboured all night but caught nothing).*
- *Strong learners used for demonstrations and paid for that service.*
- *A charge for the use of the resource centre, mainly used by the students of the near-by Busoga University campus.*
- *English learners ready to pay (although English skills had not yet been developed by LABE).*
- *Theatre groups integrated into the programme.*
- *MTCEA went into doing consultancies.*

Lessons from this experience include the fact that too early exit/withdrawal/phase out, if not well managed, can hurt and even cripple good initiatives and innovations. Lack of long-term funding predictability, which seems the prime cause of premature phase out, clearly limits innovation and consolidation of some of those innovations.

Demand that outstrips LABE's capacity to respond: One of the challenges facing LABE is that of demand that outstrips its capacity to respond, both in terms of funding and human resources. This demand comes from Local Governments, partners and learners. In Jinja, LABE and Functional Adult Literacy are synonymous, at least in the minds of Local Government officials. Instead of scaling down, they want LABE to increase its support "tenfold". LABE has done a lot to open the minds of politicians to consider FAL a priority. This is reflected in their willingness to consider and allocate FAL some resources, although, due to limited resources and competing priorities, the actual budget

⁸ The Bible, John chapter 21 verse 3.

allocation is small. The resources mainly come from the central government in form of conditional grants, particularly over the past four years. Even sub-countries have been contributing additional resources from the graduated tax (which has been scrapped with effect from this financial year). This scrapping of graduated tax is to be compensated with additional transfers by the Central Government to Local Governments. However, it is most likely that the change will directly hit adult literacy activities because it is unlikely that allocations of these additional transfers will retain the portion that was going to FAL at sub-county level. As the new PEAP cautions, “identification of a priority does not necessarily mean that spending on it increases”. Adult literacy, which currently receives about 0.3% of the national budgetary allocation, is unlikely to see significant increases in funding, if at all.

Drop out by instructors and learners: Drop out is quite a problem for LABE. This is all the more pronounced as attrition among instructors, mainly as a result of HIV/AIDS is considerable. A major challenge for the Government’s Adult Functional Literacy programme is that instructors tend to resign because they are not remunerated. The new PEAP acknowledges what LitNet and LABE have been advising, that Government should pay the instructors an honorarium. LABE wants Government to go further and put the instructors on the official payroll. Government has also made the consideration of the option of contracting out the literacy services to CSOs a PEAP priority action. This was one of LitNet’s input into the PEAP revision process 2003/4.

Equating English with education and civilization; The Consultant found a lot of demand for English among the learners; so much so that even instructors believe that there would be a higher attendance by learners if English was widely taught in the literacy classes. However, it quickly became clear that knowledge accumulation and not its functionality, was the driving force. None of the learners could link the craving for English with its utility other than the desire to ‘charm and impress’ their spouse with a few English words. There is a real danger that the demand for English could divert LABE from the real objective of adult functional literacy. Fortunately LABE is very much aware of the danger as one of its posters correctly has it, “Knowledge is an asset only when applied”.

Attribution and the numbers game when working through others: As LABE works more through partners, one of the challenges is the “numbers game”. The perennial question of who takes the credit as both LABE and the partners want to be attributed with any success is paramount one.

Security concerns: For those operating in highly insecure areas, particularly Gulu and the neighbouring districts of Pader and Kitgum, and to some extent access to West Nile, security is a constant concern. Travel to and evacuation out of the areas has to be by air or at a high risk of ambush. Movement within the districts is affected and inter-district networking is reduced. The use of the media is highly monitored for security purposes, restricting what can and can’t be said. Although some effective mechanisms and innovative approaches to deal with these concerns have been developed, LABE still has no clear policy about this. For example THERE IS no insurance for staff and no guidelines on their movement, etc.

Late arrival of funds LABE has faced a number of funding-related challenges not uncommon to many NGOs: uncertainties and long delay between grants and delayed releases of funds. In a cover letter to the 2004 audit report, LABE Auditors point to a situation where LABE had its budget shrink as a result of one of its donors funding cycle coming to an end before a new one was in place. As a result, LABE had to rely on funds from one source, which were normally taking time to come through and many times were inadequate, creating “cash flow problems” for LABE which seriously affected planning and programming. For example it was established in Jinja that on a number of occasions LABE has had to postpone activities due to delayed release of funds both from LABE and Government

sources. This causes disruption to planned activities and is costly for participants to have to re-schedule their activities, thereby increasing their transaction costs.

Delays attributed to slow or inadequate government response:

A number of challenges have arisen as a result of inadequate response by the Government. Some examples include the following:

- Concerning the development of an Adult Basic and Continuing Education curriculum, LABE's efforts have been hampered by the fact that the National Curriculum Development Centre lacks specialist professionals on this.
- On the Certification for LABE's training of literacy instructors and Contribution to a blue-print on adult literacy, LABE was commissioned by the Ministry to develop a certification for trainers and learners. LABE produced a draft, brought together stakeholders and submitted a document to the Ministry. However, since then, "nothing has happened. No strategies have been developed out of the document". Consequently, no 'blueprint' on adult literacy exists at that level. Similarly, on Civic Education, Government accepted the CSO recommendation to open Civic Education Centres through NGOs, mainly lobbied for by LABE; but it was later set aside.
- While Government has agreed to the principle of paying literacy instructors an honorarium, the releases are often delayed or payments are in arrears. Instructors not yet on the Government payroll. This is a de-motivator for them.
- For no clear or convincing reasons, Government is not undertaking coordination of the players in adult literacy effectively. This is resulting in overlaps.

What excites different stakeholders?

Despite the challenges, the Consultant found LABE and its work to be exciting, succeeding where other NGOs may be struggling; establishing a very close working relationship with Government yet staying fairly autonomous; and striking a reasonably good balance between advocacy and service delivery. We wanted to find out what excites LABE partners and stakeholders. So we asked them, using ‘appreciative inquiry’.

Central Government of Uganda officials: From the information available, the profile of LABE is what seems to excite Central Government officials. As already noted, in the National Adult Literacy Strategic Investment Plan 2002/3 – 2006/7, under the section on Literacy Providing Agencies, LABE role is acknowledged as one of the two major national level Adult Literacy training NGOs, the other being Action Aid’s Reflect Coordination Unit. However LABE is singled out as being the only indigenous national level NGO whose first interest and focus is literacy and one that operates as a literacy resource organisation, offering literacy management, Training of Trainers and literacy instructors, consultancy and materials development for NGOs, CBOs and Government Departments” (p.6). In the Plan, the Family Basic Education being piloted by LABE in Bugiri district is cited as a possible model for further study and possible adoption and adaptation elsewhere in Uganda.

At Local Government level:

LABE is considered so central to the districts’ work in Functional Adult Literacy and the association is so strong that according to Jinja district CDO, “LABE and FAL are synonymous”. According to the District Chairperson, LABE has done a lot to open the minds of politicians to consider FAL a priority. This is reflected in their willingness to consider and allocate FAL some resources, although, due to limited resources and competing priorities, the actual budget allocation is small. And although the resources mainly come from the central government in form of conditional grants, particularly over the past four years, even sub-countries have been contributing additional resources from the graduated tax (which has been scrapped with effect from this financial year, directly hitting the adult literacy activities).

LABE’s modus operandi is greatly appreciated by district officials. First, LABE is fully integrated in the district planning system. It declares its allocation to district activities, is housed by the district and fully participates in the district programmes. According to the CAO of Jinja, LABE took an unprecedented position of accepting to integrate fully with the district, which was never heard of before. According to the CDO, unlike the other partner NGOs, “we plan together with LABE”. In fact when it comes to transparency, “LABE leads”. The cooperation is so good that LABE is allowed to fuel and use a district vehicle when need arises, which is not the case with other partner NGOs. This is all the more important because the department responsible for adult literacy (Community Development) is not well resourced and LABE resources supplement those of the department.

LABE was also credited for its literacy services. According to the Jinja District Chief Administrative Office, “almost every six months, a group of learners is being passed out. Its impact is felt in every village”. It was clear to the evaluation team that this would not happen if LABE was not involved in actual service delivery. While the resources LABE brings are significant, they are not the only reason for these outcomes: they ‘force’ local councils and the district to contribute their part, which in our view would not always be the case without LABE’s *catalytic* role. This role is important even beyond the leveraging of finances. It leverages policy. At local council level, bylaws promoting adult literacy can and have been passed in at least 3 sub-counties and adopted by LC3 and 5. Yet bylaws of this nature are rare in Local Governments.

LABE's appreciation of gender issues beyond numbers was also highlighted and appreciated by district officials. According to the officer responsible for gender, "previously LABE focused on numbers – how many women as compared to men. Now it looks at and brings out such issues as whose knowledge counts; who controls the resources, etc".

Development Partners: They are excited by the fact that past adult literacy interventions in Uganda, in which LABE is a central player, have produced improved development information access at individual and household levels. They have also enhanced strategic social roles of women by strengthening decision making in family and community affairs, increased active role of parents in playing supportive roles in primary school activities, utilization of basic literacy knowledge for income generation and improvements in livelihoods. Adult literacy empowers poor people, particularly women to participate more and demand good governance. It is important that development partners make the link between this perception and the larger development principles of poverty reduction in a rights-based perspective and to translate this into support for those that make it happen. If they are looking for answers, LABE is one of them.

Education Action International, whose tagline is "unlocking potential", and whose relationship with LABE goes back ten years, making it the largest and longest programme, is excited to be associated with LABE which it sees as being well established and respected by Government and other literacy agencies. It uses LABE as a model to inform its other programmes. The experience of LABE undergoing change has been utilized by creating a strong link between the directors of LABE and EAI, which is also going through change. This link is for mutual benefit.

Literacy Instructors: From a group of 19 Literacy Instructors from Butagaya Sub-county, who handle between 20 and 38 learners, the following were identified as excitements of the initiative:

- Adult classes have enhanced participation in voting for their leaders. Previously, there were a large number of spoilt votes. Since the introduction of these classes, the number of spoilt votes has reduced dramatically.
- More people who were not able to speak in public now can contribute to discussion at local council meetings, making their voices heard. They are even able to sing the local and the national anthems.
- Adult literacy has enhanced the leadership skills of some of the learners. Helen Bugaaga, who previously could neither read nor write, is now the LC1 Secretary for Information. This is probably a life transforming experience.
- The functionality of the adult literacy is overwhelming. Participants can now read the agricultural calendar and tell when to expect rains and when to plant and harvest. They know how to apply some of the inputs when cultivating their fields. This has increased their productivity. Mothers can read the immunization card for their children. This has reduced morbidity in the community. Their economic activities have been enhanced as they can read the weights and calculate what is owed to them if selling produce. Previously they felt people were being cheated.
- The value for education has greatly increased. They appreciate the need to send children to school.
- Above all most are motivated and appreciate the opportunity to assist their community in this way.

Literacy learners: Two focus groups for learners were met by the Consultant. The first was at Kakira Sugar Works, a group of wives, dependants and contract workers and the other was at Nabukosi LC, Butagaya Sub-county. In common, all the learners were excited that they could write their names, read signposts, tell the weight of their produce when they sell and they want improvement in the home. LABE is giving them permanent life skills. For Kakira Sugar Works, a work-based literacy programme, the ability for contract workers to sign attendance lists, sign for their money, or read notices/information posted on the notice board was a very high motivation for participation in the programme. As a result of participating, one lady has been promoted from junior to higher level house worker for one of the officials at the sugar estate.

For their employers, who are very keen on the programme, it is a cost-saving measure: when workers are able to read, write and compute there is less wastage of materials, etc. so they have made the programme part of the instructors' job description. A refresher course for the instructors is already budgeted for. In fact the concern is that most of their instructors are level one. The Estate needs more level two literacy instructors and more of the instructors' materials in Swahili, the most commonly used language on the estate.

Staff: LABE staff is excited by the following:

- LABE is a high quality NGO, involved in things that work, and scratching where people are itching because “learners highly value literacy” (international Volunteer).
- LABE has an organisational culture that “is borderless”. There is “almost zero gap” between management and the rest of the staff, be they administrative or programmatic. Management simply lets staff get on with the work they are good at, without overbearing supervision. Management is interactive and “trusting” of its staff. LABE insists on “thinking things through” even if this slows work down. Dialogue and discussion are always encouraged. Management always asks, “Have we thought this through? What is its impact on the people we work with?” (LitNet Coordinator).
- LABE is an innovative organisation. Staff has opportunity to be part of something new as it happens, instead of just being part of a maintenance team. I love innovation (One of the Regional Managers).
- The deliberate process of staff selection scouts around for and identifies human resources already accomplished (such as Dawn from Forum for Education NGOs (FENU) and Humphrey from Action Aid's Reflect Programme) or inducts those people that show potential as volunteers, those that take initiative brings to LABE the best of what is available. As a result, LABE has built a unique team of self-motivated and highly effective people who are likely to have a lifelong commitment to the delivery and promotion of adult literacy. (Director).

Clearly to a very high degree, LABE staff feel that their contributions are recognized and valued; they have a common purpose; they participate in decisions about the organisation and the work; they take pride in their work and they are very adaptive. On all these counts, on a score of 1-10, they would all fall within the 8-10 range.

Young Professionals: Coming in very ‘raw’, the young professionals are excited that LABE gives them the opportunity to gain experience, so vital in advancing themselves professionally. They appreciate the commitment by LABE “to building a cadre of young professionals that will take on development work”.

The role and contribution of International Volunteers

LABE operates a system of sourcing and deploying international volunteers. These volunteers integrate into the LABE team and work in administration/finance, Curriculum development and field operations. They current team are all experienced professionals. While LABE used to source the volunteers directly, currently, it obtains them in collaboration with VSO. A rigorous system matches the volunteer skills with LABE's needs. Consequently the volunteer scheme allows LABE to get high calibre experienced professionals at about US\$350 a month. Beyond helping LABE meet capacity needs, the volunteers contribute to organisational learning and capacity building. All respect LABE as a professional organisation with a dedicated team. They bring to the organisation, qualities that LABE would not have had the scheme not been in place. According to LABE staff, volunteers have taught them discipline, devotion and the value of taking time off. They have also broadened their world view. They sharpen the organisation and the also learn from LABE. Those we talked to can't wait to take back their experiences to their countries. According to Inez Sutton, "LABE's is the best type of training I have ever seen. I have come to the conclusion that the best training comes out of development work". Through the volunteers programme, LABE work is becoming more and more 'internationalized'. LABE is developing a mechanism to enable it continue long-term collaboration with those volunteers that pass through the organisation.

But there are challenges associated with international volunteers

They include the management of such a team, a clash of cultures and having to deal with another organisation (VSO). As one LABE official put it, "it is challenging when some of the internal issues get to a third party". And some of LABE's policy makers often challenge management to justify why Ugandan volunteers could not do the job. To deal with these challenges, LABE would like to ensure that international volunteers do not get directly involved in management and should not come through one single source.

Benefits outweigh challenges: Despite the challenges, however, the value added far outweighs the challenge LABE faces. LABE could never afford to pay for the kind of skills they get with these volunteers and the organisational learning would for ever be lost if the scheme were dropped

Relevance of LABE's 2005-2009 Strategic Plan

The LABE 2005-2009 Strategic Plan is now in place, developed through a "long and participatory organisational process" involving a lot of self-assessment. Its key features include:

- The "broadening" of LABE mission to target not only women adults but also children.
- A move away from a projects-driven organisation to LABE setting its own agenda and perspective.
- Greater decentralisation and relocation of most senior staff from Kampala office to rural districts so as to make the programme and staff response more local priority-driven, and for them to provide greater support to districts and sub-counties in the design of area programmes. The management structure has been restructured to emphasize team work and to introduce part-time and task staff.
- A deliberate adoption of a Rights-Based Approach to basic education provisioning and access.
- Introduction of new innovations for delivering "holistic" basic education. These include linking child and adult learning; linking written and oral development communication; and linking literacy, numeracy and context dependent development learning.

- A planned move away from vertical government literacy campaigns and push for public-private partnership models that use small-scale village-based providers rather than big ‘external’ organisations to implement large-scale uniform ‘projects’.
- A plan for LABE to play a strategic leadership role in Adult Basic Education in East Africa in the Framework of the East African Community, including scaling up work in the Sudan.
- An attempt to link LABE’s work and the Millennium Development Goals.
- Emphasis on documentation and long-term research and trial assessments and building monitoring-capacity of partner institutions.
- Giving attention to quality issues.

It is expected that the new plan will offer LABE new potentials to link its practical work with advocacy, policy analysis and influence. The team intends to explore possibilities of increasing influence at the Local and Central Government level and on donor views on adult basic literacy, civic education and family basic education. In particular, LABE intends to continue to challenge the World Bank about its absence of an adult education policy.

The three new strategic aims are:

- Strengthened participation of low or non-literacy women in national civic education
- Provision of effective demand driven literacy services to women in local communities, integrating a human rights approach
- Promotion and strengthening of community participation in primary school education.

Thematically, the following programmes will be developed or re-launched:

- Literacy and Adult Civic Education (LACE)
- Literacy and Women Empowerment (LIWE)
- Basic English to Adults (BEtA) and
- Family Basic Education.

Through this Plan, LABE aims at becoming a “pace setter” and will strengthen its linkages with partners in central and local governments, education institutions, CSOs and the private sector. In terms of funding partners, in addition to existing partners such as DFID, Comic Relief, NOVIB and Education Action International, the following are identified for the new or re-articulated programme initiatives: UPHOLD (with NOVIB) for LACE, NOVIB (for LIWE) and ICEID (for BEtA). Locally, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (for LIWE and BEtA) and the National Civic Education Programme (for LACE).

In assessing how the new Strategic Plan addresses the key issues identified in this review, the following matrix has been developed.

Table 8: Assessment of how the new LABE Strategic Plan addresses issues identified

Issue identified by this review	How LABE strategy addresses the issue	comment
The positive coloration between illiteracy and poverty	Plan intends to use Adult Basic Education interventions as catalyst for poverty reduction	
Women illiteracy and gender	Strong women focus, focus extended to include children	There is need to bring more men into the programme. As seen in FABE, fathers’

		participation is good for encouraging the girl child.
Scale	Coverage is 12 districts. Preference is to work with small-scale village based providers; LABE to advocate for funding of and government commitment to volunteer literacy workers.	Issues of scale not adequately addressed. So are issues of sustainability of initiatives started with LABE support.
Efficiency (cost of programmes)	There is a vigorous push for public-private partnership models	No cost-benefit analysis undertaken
'Projectization' of adult basic education	Adult Basic Education still 'projectised' in the new plan	Need to engage Government, the donor FAL sub-group and LABE partners to address this and the other issues of predictability, long-term resourcing
Quality	Quality identified as "critical"	The issue of how LABE will enhance quality and measure it is not well articulated in the new Plan
Coordination	LitNet has this responsibility	Issue not adequately addressed, particularly the roles of gov't and LitNet not addressed
Balance between service delivery and policy influencing	This is well articulated. Needs to strengthen the global to international linkages. LABE's strategic plan needs to articulate better the link with MDGs, Education for All and Commission for Africa initiatives	The role of international partners like EAI need to be well articulated
Financing and sustainability Creating new opportunities	This report identifies a number of new opportunities that LABE should consider, including raising visibility through documentation and dissemination of its work, leveraging its track record and international recognition, creating links with international networks and initiatives and selling its expertise, integrating HIV/AIDS into its work, etc.	Need further articulation
Making LABE the hub for literacy work, the home for literacy involvement; a clearing house, a literacy curriculum development centre; the pioneer and institute for literacy	LABE intends to become a "Pace Setter" in Adult Basic Education. Thematic programmes to achieve that are well-articulated in the plan. The idea of 'marketing' the innovation to government, donors and partners is	Needs further interrogation if to become a reality

professional development	muted.	
Leadership and management of change within LABE	The institutional implications is articulated	Implication of the expansion of LABE's role to the region not well articulated

The wider challenges faced by LABE in the implementation of this initiative

Within the context of the programmes under review and the new Strategic Plan, LABE is implementing or has planned a number of strategic shifts in its programmes and management structures. At programmatic level, it has already shifted the focus of its training of trainers (TOT) programme from training small NGOs and CBOs to training bigger NGOs (“which are more solid”) and Government Community Development Officers at sub-county level because they can use the training to more effectively utilize the Poverty Action Fund (PAF) funds. LABE assists them to make best use of their funds for literacy purposes, and to advocate for greater resource allocation. It is increasing emphasis on advocacy and lobbying as it re-orient its service delivery activities. In terms of management, LABE is shifting to a more decentralised management approach, sending more of its senior programme staff to operate at regional level. Already, it has appointed and sent Regional Managers to their respective region⁹. The new structure is premised on a transition in the current leadership team as a way to renew its leadership and make it more gender balanced. Hence the introduction of the position of Deputy Director who shall be female if the Director is male.

In terms of planned shifts, LABE is introducing new innovative programmes to deliver more holistic basic education. Therefore it has planned that its programmes go beyond literacy to making literacy address human rights and civic education (as request by the Government). LABE also plans to play a more strategic leadership role in Adult Basic Education in the context of the new East African Community.

These strategic shifts in the focus of its work, in its partnerships, its programming and in its role of greater advocacy are designed to make LABE more effective. They involve a great deal of innovation and show a high degree of alertness to changing circumstances and, above all, to changing opportunities in the national and international context. However, is the case with all change, the shifts are quite contentious with some of LABE's partners and stakeholders. Of all the shifts, perhaps two are most contentious: the shift from service delivery to advocacy and the planned leadership change, especially the role of the current Director. This is a paradox: the fear and concern that sometimes these potentially shifts may work against long-term partnerships and may not result in sustainability either of institutions or expertise or of LABE's role.

For many stakeholders, what quickly springs to mind when the service delivery to advocacy shift is contemplated is that LABE will eventually cease to play a direct role in service provisioning, including providing financial, technical and logistical support to its partners. They base this on the experience of the other NGOs which have made this shift, where usually there is a total break, particularly as advocacy skills requirements mean that staff has to change or be re-oriented As Alice Shirley of Education Action International put it, “service provision has been a witness” for advocacy work. With it LABE is able to influence more than it can without it. “If LABE were to move out of service delivery completely, it would become ordinary NGO, just like one of the many advocacy NGOs that don't have

⁹ See LABE's new Organogram in the Appendix

LABE's current edge of influencing Government from within", contended one of the interlocutors. The argument being that provisioning of literacy services is what legitimizes and authenticates LABE's advocacy work. It is what motivated its founders. It is what has earned it international acclaim and recognition. Moreover, a shift could be misperceived as a following after money rather than being driven by conviction although this does not seem to be the case from LABE perspective. As raised by MTCEA, one of LABE's former partners, advocacy is also perceived as a shift to spend money on "seminars, conferences and workshops" instead of providing a service directly to those who need it - it is wasteful. The challenge LABE faces is to explain these strategic shifts to its stakeholders to get their sufficient buy in.

We recommend that LABE and its partners reflect further on these shifts and address such questions as: When do flexibility and innovation become opportunism? Is LABE making the sustainability of the impact of its work high enough priority in its medium to long-term planning? How likely is it that LABE may be moving from one promising or attractive opportunity to another without a clear end-goal in mind? What makes for sustainable learning in a Ugandan village context? Which institutions are the most like to show potential for sustainability? The answers to these and similar questions could then become central in guiding LABE's future development and mission.

Long-term effects of the programmes/ scaling up

From the MTCEA experience, even as LABE considers geographic and thematic expansions, such as the expansion into using adult literacy for Civic Education and Human Rights, the issues of long term sustainability must be reckoned with.

Changing Donor Criteria As DFID, one of LABE's donors swung towards supporting rights based approaches (RBA), with strong emphasis on advocacy, many NGOs supported by DFID have been under pressure to make a similar shift. Donors can be unpredictable and demanding and consequently NGOs find themselves shifting strategies and approaches to suit the donor. LABE has articulated very well the rationale for all its shifts but NGOs are vulnerable to the perception that shifts are planned and timed to correspond to donor shift. In the present circumstances, this may often be inevitable and NGOs like LABE have to be alert to changing opportunities in the international funding context. However, for a programme such as adult literacy which is not yet fully integrated into national budgets, there is need for consistency, for consolidation of initiatives and innovations and for deepening them. If the disruptions as narrated in the MTCEA experience are as a result of donor shift and unpredictability, then this is a serious matter that should not go unchallenged. Otherwise long term investments risk disintegrating because of premature withdrawal of support which is not compensated in any other way.

National Budget allocations and shrinkage and their effect on partnerships

Linked to the above concern, there is need to confront the premises under-girding budget support and basket funding, its efficacy and the effect on the initiatives and innovations in a programme such as that of LABE. Budget support and basket funding are the Government's preferred mechanisms for receiving and improving the modalities for donor support. Both budget support (given to the government) and basket funding (given to a specific sector) are based on the premise that Government will sub-contract non-state actors to implement some of the publicly-funded programmes. Nationally, the Ministry of Gender has acknowledged that LABE is the only indigenous NGO with national coverage of Functional Adult Literacy programmes. Yet there is no evidence of this being matched by resources from Government.

Furthermore, the resource envelope is not likely to expand considerably as, according to the most current PEAP, Government has responded to the currently excessive budget deficit by choosing to

“focus on enhancing the quality rather than the quantity of public expenditure”, determined to impose and maintain hard budget ceilings that encompass both Government and donor funding. Even donors, while recognizing that Uganda needs additional resources to scale up its interventions for it to meet the MDGs, accept that the additional resources will have to come from a more efficient utilization of available public funds and relying more on locally appropriate delivery mechanisms (Draft UJAS June 2005).

At district level, groups such as MTCEA have very good initiatives and innovations. There is no evidence that any of the money going to districts is deliberately being channeled through such a local NGO. The question these cases raise is: Are the assumptions behind budget support sound? Is the mechanism an effective one to deliver such services as adult literacy, so critical to poverty eradication? LABE is an excellent case for testing whether this approach by donors and Government is working more effectively than even the project approach. This is necessary since “direct support through non-state actors reduces as budget support and basket funding increase” (Draft UJAS). It is also important since DFID is one of the chief proponents of budget support and LABE, which has been supported by DFID, is one of those NGOs that have demonstrated capacity to deliver publicly funded services using “locally appropriate delivery mechanisms”. Also while donors respect Government preferences, they recognize the need to support projects that support community driven initiatives and those that transfer skills and build capacity. LABE fits these typologies per excellence.

Quality of LABE’s materials still difficult to independently verify – The issue of quality assurance remains a challenge to LABE, particularly with regard to materials. This is readily admitted by LABE itself. It is time real action was taken to institute a quality assurance mechanism.

LABE’s relationship with the Government: The way LABE has chosen to work with Government is radically different from how most other CSOs work with or relate to Government. In this report, we point out two aspects of LABE’s relations with government: they are close, cooperative and symbiotic; and that they are unusual in that genuinely independent NGOs rarely receive such recognition and trust on the part of government. This means that LABE can be viewed suspiciously as opting to be too close for the comfort of other CSOs, particularly the advocacy ones. LABE needs to constantly check its position and motives to make sure that it is not being compromised or becoming too conformist. While the evaluators found no evidence of its positioning actually limiting the extent to which it can challenge Government, LABE needs to regularly do a reality check to stop that happening.

Conclusions and recommendations

From the fore-going we make the following conclusions and draw the following recommendations:

Firstly, we discuss effectiveness of LABE in respect of this programme. Against the set targets of the programmes, we conclude that LABE has met the expected outputs and done so cost-effectively. In terms of outcomes, the level of literacy service delivery and as an innovator, its contribution to adult literacy LABE’s achievements, by any standard, are remarkable. Both these aspects have life transforming effects on the individuals, their families and their communities, particularly with respect to women. Indeed “Literacy is power. To protect other rights one needs literacy”.

From the review, it is clear that the intended aim of the literacy training component to “pay particular attention to women’s empowerment” and put women at the centre of the initiative is being achieved especially with regard to learners but also to an extent literacy instructors.

From this review, LABE seems most effective at the local government level – at district and sub-county levels. However, it has succeeded in linking its practical work at the local Government levels to policy analysis and influencing at district and national levels. The main weaknesses, which are in LABE’s control, are increasing men’s response and quality assurance. To address these and consolidate and scale up its interventions and effectiveness, LABE needs more resources, provided in a more predictable manner. LABE can address this challenge by leveraging resources locally, selling its technical expertise to government and partners more effectively and doing more in collaboration with its international partners to raise its visibility internationally.

But aspects of the challenge lie outside LABE’s control. It is in the best interest of the Government and the international community to provide enough predictable funding to NGOs/CSOs like LABE which have demonstrated their effectiveness in delivery of vital social services in which Government is not best suited to deliver; and which have excelled in innovations that are contributing to poverty reduction and social and economic transformation. The impact of policy changes, such as the assumptions underlying the preference by Government of budget support and basket funding; the recent scrapping of graduated tax and its eventual impact on basic adult literacy should be assessed and any defects corrected. Furthermore, potential for basic adult literacy to transform women’s lives and their communities in conflict situations, which is beginning to emerge, should be supported and carefully studied for modeling and replication in similar situations elsewhere.

Secondly, concerning the shifts that LABE in implementing or contemplating and how LABE should move forward, it is our view that most of the shifts that have to be implemented, including setting in motion processes to renew leadership and bring gender balance at the top management level, are good for the long term of the organisation. Particularly since the top leadership is currently comprised mainly of the founders. But they should be implemented openly and transparently, with wider partner participation. We recommend a phasing of these shifts, starting with a few changes that are interconnected, then moving on to the rest. We note that management shifts are not narrowly defined and the timeframes for some aspects of the transition are not hard and fast but flexible. However, to assure the main stakeholders, the current director should ensure his availability in another capacity, to steer the organisation through the main changes.

Thirdly, concerning the shift to increase emphasis on advocacy, LABE is fully aware of the need to strike a balance between advocacy and service delivery and to make one a witness to the other. After all service delivery is the implementation of policy. Policy is only as good as the paper it is written on if it is not implemented. LABE is aware that its work is pioneering, is cutting edge, for Uganda and the Eastern Africa Sub-region. In doing, so LABE will remain close to the pulse. In fact in one of the shifts, it is moving senior programme staff “down to the dust” where the action and the real impact are.

Fourthly, there is the issue of new opportunities if LABE is to be transformed into a permanent and national literacy agency working directly with central and local government and a technical expert on literacy. This echoes what was written in 1998 by Prof. Lalage Brown (UK); Dr. GWN Mayatsa (Uganda) in a LABE Evaluation now inscribed on the outside wall of the LABE offices in Kampala:

“What LABE’s partners wanted and thought of in the future: LABE should aim at acting as the hub for literacy work, the home for literacy involvement; a clearing house, a literacy curriculum development centre; the pioneer and institute for literacy professional development”.

However, if LABE’s potential is to be maximised, in a situation where “the provision of adult literacy in Uganda still falls short of the need and the demand”, and if LABE is to be what its partners wanted and envisaged for the future as the hub for literacy work and the home for literacy involvement, then a

more predictable resource mechanism should be found by LABE and its partners – donors, Local and Governments, implementation partners and indeed the communities. LABE should do more to leverage its track record internationally, just as it has done within Uganda. Initial steps might include participation in one or two regional African networks like ADEA and international events, with a deliberate intention of building strategic links. It could consider hosting an African or East African conference on literacy. To do this, it needs to document and disseminate its work, invest in creating links with international networks and continue to focus on quality as its hallmark.

And as the NALSIP puts it, “scaling up will inevitably involve forming (closer) partnerships (with Government), adult education training institutions, various community groups and the private sector”. It seems obvious that LABE’s approach to adult literacy, and the way it has chosen to collaborate with Government both at the central and local level, is already the perfect fit for what Government and LABE partners envisage. LABE is also a good example of a successful community driven initiative supported by Government/CSO partnership.

Government has a strong policy on increasing private sector participation in provision of services and delivery of public goods. Public-Private Partnerships, in such sectors as health, water, etc. is commonplace. While government remains the long-term provider of literacy services to the population, all things being equal, it the reality of things not being equal and the glaring lack of capacity by government for driving and execution of such a vital aspect as adult literacy that makes agencies such as LABE serious candidates for being delegated this role. For this it can borrow a leaf from such partnerships as the UK Government and the Basic Skills Agency, as long as the actors are carefully selected to target those with proven capacity. In terms of innovation, LABE has proved itself beyond doubt, being one of those rare NGOs that is truly indigenous but operates efficient and effective community driven initiatives to international standards. These and additional findings are summarized in the matrix below.

Table 9: Summary matrix of key findings, basis, implications and recommendations

Issue	Finding	Basis/Justification	Implications	Recommendation
Effectiveness of LABE’s work and approach	LABE’s effectiveness is remarkable. In some districts FAL and LABE have synonymous (e.g. Jinja district). LABE plays a very important <i>catalytic</i> role at district and sub-county levels. LABE is providing specialized and consulting services to Government, international NGOs, and academic institutions. FAL classes are being used as good entry points for raising awareness on PMA programmes such as NAADS. Often FAL learners are constituted from NAADS groups and vice versa.	Recognition of LABE’s effectiveness at local government level; in the National Adult Literacy Strategic Investment Plan; by the satisfaction of learners, LABE staff, interns and volunteers and in the international awards given to LABE. PMA and NAADS reports and the Uganda Joint Assessment Strategy	The potential of adult literacy for social transformation using LABE approaches and innovations is tremendous. Funding opportunities exist in sub-contracting for Government. LABE can market itself as a leading innovator.	The Government, LABE partners and the international community should do more to support LABE with sufficient and predictable resources. Time has come for the current patterns of development financing to be revisited. For example, drawing on the experience of other countries (e.g. the <i>faire faire</i> approach in Senegal and Burkina Faso) LABE and Government of Uganda should agree a mechanism (e.g. through joint structures, agenda-setting and programming) for LABE and similarly effective NGOs to access funds from budget support and basket funding. LABE should raise more resources through ‘sale’ of its

				professional expertise in its areas of proven its expertise (e.g. teacher/facilitator training, curriculum design and development, planning and strategy development, materials design and development, engendering participation and multi-level advocacy and lobbying, the special skills in focusing on women and children, family, special needs groups such as fisher folk, rural and urban poverty, etc.). Another opportunities that LABE could explore is the exploiting the existing link between FAL and government financed but privately delivered programmes such as NAADS to leverage funds
FAL Projectisation	Important initiatives being 'projectised' to attract funding instead of funding chasing after such model initiatives and innovations	Most of the Adult Literacy initiatives now underway are long term while funding is short to medium term, un-predictable and not increasing in keeping with the need. This funding approach can jeopardize excellent initiatives. Good initiatives appear to be chasing money rather than the other way round. Partnerships are never secure and can be terminated pre-maturely.	If LABE work remains projectised, it will affect its planned expansion and strategic positioning nationally and regionally. New initiatives will suffer or be curtailed as LABE may be forced to cut back. Considerable staff energies are spent more on resource-mobilizing than on perfecting technical excellence.	FAL should not be 'projectised' although aspects of it can be piloted. A professionally facilitated meeting should be organised to address this matter. DFID, EAI, NOVIB and UNESCO and other potential partners should participate. Staff roles should be differentiated so that some staff focus on resource mobilization while others are freed to concentrate more on technical excellence.
Adult literacy in conflict situations	There are early indications that LABE is effectively using adult literacy to transform lives and situation in conflict situations in northern Uganda	Testimonies of adult literacy learners and instructors	Adult literacy could be used to transform the lives persons, particularly women in conflict situations	LABE programmes in northern Uganda in the context of the human rights defense should be fully supported and carefully followed to assess this potential. LABE should draw on lessons from similar work for principles and practices in linking literacy with peace-building.
HIV/AIDS and adult literacy	HIV/AIDS is contributing to attrition of literacy instructors in the context of high drop out rates due to other factors. It also affects literacy learners.	Reports and interviews	Will aggravate the situation if not addressed.	LABE should more intentionally and systematically integrate HIV/AIDS work in its adult literacy work and 'tap' into funding and policy influence that focuses on HIV/AIDS in the context of literacy
Management of change within	There are on-going and Planned change in	The shifts offer LABE new the opportunity to renew	Shifts good for the long-term of LABE's work as	Shifts should be reflected on more intentionally and

LABE's institutional and programmatic setup	institutional management and programming.	its leadership, introduce gender balance at senior leadership level and increase its potential to scale up its work.	long as they are managed to minimize potential destabilizing effects.	widely using a set of guiding questions to determine future direction and mission. Transition of the current Director should be openly and flexibly managed in a way that limits disruption to LABE's programmes, resource base and strategic directions.
Exit strategies, building capacity, institutions and sustainability	In fragile local level partner institutions and programme outcomes, exit/phase out strategies sometimes not well timed due to resource constraints	Illustrated by the case of MTCEA in Iganga district and that of Madi in West Nile where LABE was not able to maintain links with local action, even though such links inform policy and base for further capacity development.	Good initiatives and innovations suffer even when exit is seeking to respond to changing government policy and or is influenced by new opportunities. The problem of what capacities institutions need to sustain literacy and how best they might be build remains outstanding.	Literacy institutions and policy makers should grapple with this problem to try and create 'rounded' institutional capacity that includes planning, execution, evaluation, analysis and lesson-learning skills.
Certification for Literacy Trainers, Learners and Literacy Agencies	There is no formal certification	Interviews, LABE staff and MTCEA case. The request by MTCEA for some certificate of long-term involvement in adult literacy could enhance access to resources for such an organisation.	Reduces moral for trainers and partner organisations. Reduced the chance to take some opportunities for which a certificate would give a person or organisation	LABE should take this matter to its logical conclusion.
Participation of men in the programme	Male participation is extremely low	Interviews with Local Government officials, literacy learners and instructors, LABE staff and various records	Could eventually reduce impact of the programme on the household and community level	LABE should explore ways to re-dress this. Separation of classes has been proposed.
The role of external volunteers	LABE uses international volunteers sourced through VSO. Volunteers making significant technical contribution to LABE's work and to its organisational learning and development. There are issues relating to their roles, contribution and sourcing; cultural differences and management styles.	Staff and volunteer interviews. Staff very clear about the value of volunteers to the technical work and organisational learning which are real value for the small money it costs LABE to host them.	The issues surrounding LABE's use of international volunteers, if not resolved to the satisfaction of all stakeholders – the board, the donors and others, this initiative could impact negatively on its work.	The contribution of the volunteers, in terms of technical expertise and organisational learning is tremendous. It should be documented and publicised. LABE should not limit itself to a single source for the volunteers. Their role should not include management but be supportive.
New opportunities for scaling up and contributing more to literacy education in Uganda and beyond	The work of LABE is outstanding. Its capacity for flexible adaptation to changing national scene and for outright innovation in a difficult, complex and resource-constrained environment is extraordinary.	LABE's work has been recognized as outstanding domestically and more than once internationally. In particular Government both at local; and central level has expressed appreciation for the way LABE fits into local structures and supports Government programmes.	LABE would need to designate someone to explore these opportunities more critically.	LABE should document how it has achieved this extraordinary success. To multiply impact, and make it a "beacon for quality literacy work in Uganda, Eastern Africa and beyond", its success stories, methods and approaches need to be documented and shared widely. LABE should leverage its excellent professional track record and enhance its international visibility to attract more resources and influence on international

				literacy policy. Locally LABE should broaden its work with other ‘user’ ministries such as Health, Agriculture at national and district level. To contribute more to enhancing capacities for efficient and effective Community Driven initiatives, LABE should consider engaging more formally with training institutions to offer courses that link theory with practical experiences
Coordination with other CSOs active in Adult Literacy	There is no or limited coordination with other CSOs providing literacy services	NALSIP, findings from the field (mainly Jinja)	Improved coordination will increase effectiveness of LABE work	LitNet should improve its coordination role and with its members, lobby Government to undertake better coordination
Relations with LitNet	There are two views regarding the close association between LitNet and LABE. LABE has a clear road map.	Interviews with LitNet, LABE and partners in the field	Delayed resolution could harm the prospects of both LitNet and LABE. A rushed decision could ‘kill’ LitNet and what it stands for	LitNet needs a strong coordinator to mobilize member participation and inspire donor confidence. A professionally facilitated meeting should be organised for members to address the future.
Managing relations with Government	<p>Since the interdiction of the FAL ‘Champion’ that was LABE’s main contact at the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development, LABE has not been able to establish as strong a working relationship with the other officers responsible for FAL.</p> <p>Some LABE programmes fall between two line ministries.</p> <p>The operational positioning of LABE vis-à-vis Government is unusual for an advocacy NGO.</p>	<p>Interviews with LABE staff.</p> <p>It seems obvious that LABE’s approach to adult literacy, and the way it has chosen to relate with Government, is already the perfect fit for what Government and LABE partners envisage and are attempting to engender.</p> <p>FABE falls between MGLSD and MES. FABE donors have different emphases between parents and children</p>	<p>The strong relations LABE had with the Ministry could suffer if not enough is done to grow/strengthen these relationships</p> <p>LABE faces the challenge of “standing” between and trying to balance these interests and emphases</p> <p>Because of its positioning vis-à-vis Government, LABE is sometimes unable or unwilling to support advocacy positions it considers too critical of Government.</p>	<p>LABE should move fast to identify and grow strong links with a ‘champion’ in the ministry and to ensure that there are other champions in the other ministries with which LABE works.</p> <p>LABE should work with government to ensure that in the long-run government acquires the expertise in its institutions needed for sustain literacy environment.</p> <p>There is need for all players to discuss and harmonize the emphases and not leave LABE to have to do a balancing act alone.</p> <p>LABE must guard against becoming compromised by its closeness to Government.</p>
The role of LABE’s international partners	LABE has limited staff that specialize in resource mobilization without compromising the technical excellence of its work	To generate adequate resources LABE needs to spend more time to generate proposals for repeated requests for resources.	Working together LABE and its international can raise LABE visibility and mobilize more resources to support its excellent work	LABE should invest more in building broader partnerships (e.g. with EAI and others) that can support it with more effective resource mobilization capacities.

	<p>LABE needs to mobilize more resources or run the risk of cutting back its operations.</p>	<p>It also need to link with international networks and leverage its track record</p>	<p>There is need to devote staff, time and resources to communication, paper writing, extensive international travel</p>	<p>EAI and other international partners should work with LABE to identify new entry points into international /global networks where LABE can leverage its track record including the international prizes for visibility and broadening of experience.</p>
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PART TWO: Family Basic Education in Uganda (FABE)

Section 1: Background

1.1 About LABE, FABE and the Concept Family Learning

FABE, short for Family Basic Education, is a programme of LABE, short for Literacy and Adult Education, a leading Ugandan NGO in the field of basic education; and its partners. FABE has been operational in Bugiri district, Eastern Uganda since 2000, where it began as a mini-pilot. **The goal of FABE is “improved and increased parents’ ability to support improved educational performance of primary school children”.**

The concept of adults and children learning together, thus tackling education from an inter-generational perspective, sometimes classified as “Family Learning”, is relatively new, having been piloted in only a few countries in the last decade or two. However, there is increased recognition of the value of such an initiative.

LABE first took interest in the possibility of family education projects in the mid 1990s and as a new dimension of its adult literacy work in the region, prior to this phase of the project with some support from World Learning, a USA-based organisation but largely using its own resources, LABE piloted a 12 month mini-project in 3 schools in Bugiri district in Eastern Uganda in 2000/2001. As parents tasted the value of literacy, they wanted to but increasingly felt inadequate to support their children in their school work. In response to this felt need and the to community education plans initiated by local schools management committees, concerned parents and local government and district education officials, particularly in respect of disadvantaged locations of the pilot project, LABE negotiated a project with Comic relief through Education Action International to expand the coverage of the pilot project from 3 to 18 schools but in the same district of Bugiri. This has since attracted other partners such as UNICEF (through the district) and UPHOLD.

1.2 Background to the FABE Evaluation

Uganda’s long-term goal to provide quality basic education for all its citizens is translated into reality through two Government of Uganda policy commitments. The country’s policy of Universal Primary Education (UPE) which was launched in 1997 and has since moved the country rapidly towards the goal of achieving education for all as the number of children enrolling in primary schools has more than doubled, greatly increasing the access of girls and the poor to education opportunity is the first one. However, Ugandan population which is literate still averages 65% while quality issues in UPE schools is resulting in many children enrolling but not effectively learning much.

Since 2002/3, the Uganda Government has put in place a second policy known as the National Adult Literacy Strategic Investment Plan (NALSIP). The introduction of the NALSIP is based on a new vision of literacy that recognises “that solutions for different education problems are inter-connected”. In particular, it recognised that “the growth of adult literacy, especially of women and female youth, is essential for universalising access to primary education and improving its quality and relevance” and makes specific reference to FABE project in this regard. One of NALSIP’s

national outputs is that by 2007 “at least 85% of proficient learners support their children’s primary schooling”.

NALSIP further recognises that there is a role adult literacy can play in addressing non-attendance and drop-out factors as they relate to low parent participation in motivating children or informed active role in primary school affairs. NALSIP also recognises the fact that “the regions of low education grade attainment coincide with regions of high illiteracy rates and ... adult literacy can help redress some of these glaring education imbalances within and between generations, especially women and girls” (*NALSIP document pages 3-4*). Through FABE, LABE is right at the centre of the problem of addressing the problem the gap between adult literacy and low primary school grade attainment by introducing family learning where adults and children learn together. The choice of Bugiri district is also pertinent. Bugiri is one of the poorest districts in Uganda (15th out of 56) and its primary schools are placed well below the national average in performance. Furthermore, its adult literacy rates are also among the worst in the country, especially for women. FABE seeks to break the cycle of illiteracy by piloting, family learning, an innovative approach to literacy instruction, in order to improve both adult literacy rates and the educational performance of children in lower primary in Bugiri.

LABE’s undertaking of FABE was designed to address the challenges raised by the UPE and the National Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) Programmes by attempting to break the cycle of poor school performance resulting in low adult literacy.

1.3 Objectives of the FABE 2005 Evaluation

This evaluation, in addition to being a technical assessment of the accomplishments of the project, is a critical review of the family learning methodology as developed and implemented by LABE in Bugiri district. It is also intended to inform the development of similar future initiatives by LABE and its partners. As such the evaluation objectives have a two-pronged focus; the primary focus being to review progress of the programme, its successes and impact on beneficiaries and the challenges it has faced. The other is to focus on strategy and how it FABE as a concept might be applied beyond this project, and governance in respect of LABE’s relationships with other stakeholders in and around the project.

Section 2: Findings of the evaluation

2.1 The four concepts/assumptions underpinning FABE

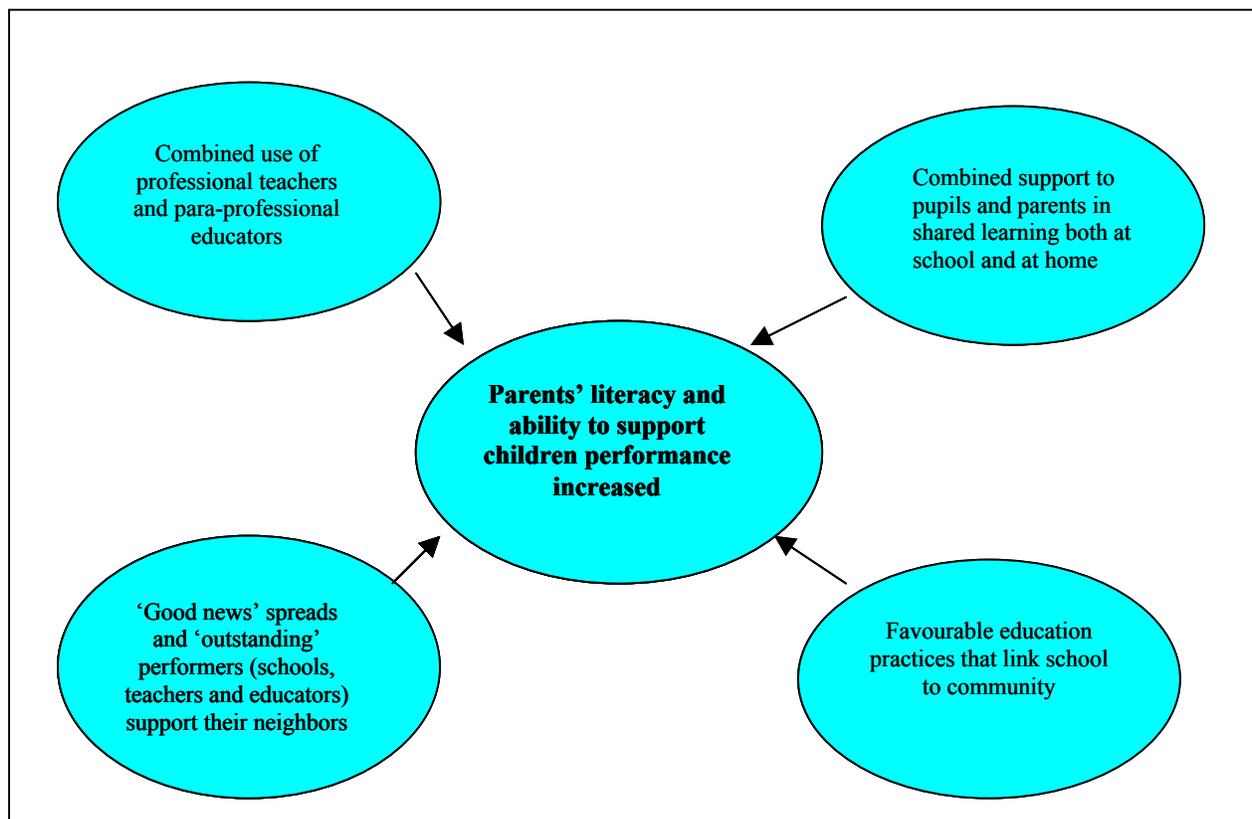
To assess the extent to which FABE has implemented the objectives of the project, it is necessary to first understand the concepts and assumptions underpinning the family learning methodology as it has been applied in this project. For, in assessing the extent to which the project has achieved its objectives, we are, in essence, ‘testing’, interrogating and challenging these very concepts and assumptions and how well they have held. The core of the concept of family learning is the combining of support to primary school pupils and their parents based on the assumption that if a sub-group of parents within a year-group of a particular school is targeted, its ability to support educational performance of their lower-level primary school children is improved and that that in turn this improves both adult literacy rates and the educational performance of the pupils. That is to say, shared learning benefits both the parent and the child.

The second is the model of using ‘para-professionals’ alongside professional teachers to enhance adult learning and child education. Here the assumption is that there is a lot of value-addition in using both an adult literacy educator (para-professional) and a primary school teacher (professional) in the joint parent-child sessions and the adult only sessions with benefits to the adult and child learners, the professional teacher and para-professional adult educator.

The third is that good innovations are self-perpetuating; that ‘good news’ is ‘contagious/infectious’ and ‘supply’ of a good product generates additional demand for it. In terms of this project, there is an underlying assumption that once in the programme, schools would continue and sustain the core concept of FABE themselves without external support. Related to this, it is further assumed that, not only will schools sustain the basic elements of the programme, but “outstanding schools, teachers, literacy instructors will extend technical support to their neighbours”.

The fourth relates to the assumption that if parents, children and indeed schools adopt and continuously practice favourable education practices that link the school to the community the environment created ensures increased support for children’s learning especially at the formative stages of pre-primary. In addition such an environment creates effective learning opportunities that go a long way to increase not only parents’ literacy and ability to support children’s performance but also raise their own literacy levels. The concept can be summarised as in the diagramme below.

FABE core concepts of family learning



2.2 Methodological elements of FABE

Basic elements of the family learning methodology as developed and applied by LABE are:

- FABE learning techniques include adult basic literacy and numeracy sessions for parents only and joint parent-child sessions structured towards building shared learning and promoting home learning activities which complement school learning;
- Basing the adult literacy sessions mainly on the school curriculum but structured for parents' consumption;
- The 'together' approach where in joint parent-child learning sessions, parents and children do activities together, including playing games together, telling and writing stories together;
- Home learning activities designed to extend school learning into homes where stories, folklore and other activities are further used to reinforce school learning;
- Creating 'favourable educational practices' that encourage a link between school learning and community indigenous knowledge, practices and cultural heritage; and involving various stakeholders in the planning, implementation, monitoring and shaping what goes on at school;
- Transforming such 'ordinary' events or facilities as class visits, school open days, school compounds and the like into effective learning opportunities.

To this methodology has since been added elements of two other concepts of 'child Friendly Schools' (CFS) and 'Break through Literacy' (BTL) promoted by UNICEF. The latter is designed to equip both teachers and literacy instructors with enhanced skills of teaching reading¹⁰. The former is designed to encourage schools to adopt the six pillars of CFS, namely, children's rights-based schools, gender-sensitivity, protective school environments, community linkages, health-based schools and schools that communicate effectively and is now implemented in most schools in Uganda.

2.3 FABE's specific objectives

The goal of FABE is "improved and increased parents' ability to support improved educational performance of primary school children". It has four specific objectives:

1. To build the capacity of teachers, adult educators, management committees and administration in 18 primary schools to deliver family related literacy, numeracy and language skills to 1080 parents and 2880 pupils (the 18 schools include the 3 which participated in the original mini-pilot).
2. To equip six local sub-county authorities (level three local councils) with the skills to plan, financially support and sustain family-related basic education programmes within their area.
3. To produce basic literacy and numeracy bilingual learning materials in Lusoga, the local language, and in Basic English plus a draft generic guide for school teachers and adult literacy workers.
4. To advocate at national level for the incorporation of family basic education activities in government-aided primary schools and the national government adult literacy programme.

¹⁰ The aspect of Break-Through Literacy (BTL) adopted by FABE is the use of picture method to teach reading and writing (using a picture chart to generate sentences)

2.4 Overall performance

This section deals with the details of the evaluation findings which are organised with reference to the specific project objectives. Technical accomplishments of the project to-date can be summarised in a matrix as follows:

Summary of the overall performance

Objective	Targets	Accomplishments	Comments
<p>Build capacity of teachers, adult educators, school management committees and administration to deliver family related literacy, numeracy and language skills.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of teachers and educators • Sensitisation meetings for various stakeholders • Training school management committees • Adult literacy classes 	<p>18 primary schools</p> <p>1080 parents</p> <p>2880 pupils</p> <p>4 Workshops for 72 Teachers and 36 adult educators</p> <p>1 –day sensitisation Workshop for 150 parents</p> <p>18 one-day planning workshops for stakeholders</p> <p>Training workshop for 6 CCTs</p>	<p>Coverage is in 18 schools, including the 3 in the mini-pilot.</p> <p>1462 parents enrolled (o/w 920 were mothers) to participate in project activities</p> <p>3341 pupils involved o/w 1755 are girls</p> <p>3 CCTs trained</p>	<p>Set targets have been met. Only one school (Kasaala) has been temporarily dropped from the programme since the middle of 2005</p> <p>Target surpassed by 35.4%</p> <p>Target met</p> <p>The reality of the overload that CCTs work with meant that the trained team were not able to offer the degree of continuity of support supervision expected for the FABE activities. The project had to innate the utilisation of the expertise of a retired teacher.</p> <p>These sessions have become the identity of FABE in the 18 schools. There is a lot of enthusiasm among the parents and their children that makes them very active participants in the</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint classes • Joint teaching • Home learning • Home visits 	<p>2 parent-child joint sessions in each school once a week.</p>	<p>Regular weekly joint parent –child sessions have been held in all the 17 schools.</p>	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School interaction activities 		<p>End of year school open days held in 12 of the 18 schools.</p> <p>FABE provided support for education week activities in 3 schools.</p> <p>All schools</p>	<p>participants in the joint sessions. A majority of the parent only sessions have turned into joint sessions. These have increased parents confidence in talking to both their children and teachers and teachers working together with the adult education.</p> <p>Conventional school open days are usually dominated by speeches FABE diligently supported modified versions of school open days with emphasis on activities that engage teachers, parents and children in constructive interactions.</p>
<p>Equip 6 sub-county authorities (LC3) with skills to plan, financially support and sustain FABE-related education programmes</p>	<p>Three 3-day workshops for LC3 and SMCs.</p> <p>Community action plans reflected in the sub-county development plans</p> <p>18 SMCs trained</p>	<p>3 pilot schools have their FABE plans incorporated in the sub-county 3 year development plans.</p> <p>6 SMCs trained and active in school planning activities</p>	<p>It is observed that the existing bureaucracy within local government and the fear for splitting the limited financial resources with a programme like FABE explains the low achievement of this objective.</p> <p>The lack of a training manual for SMCs has stifled the training of SMCs. This is also coupled with the changes in members of the SMCs in most schools. It therefore calls for systematic training for this group of stakeholders.</p>

<p>Produce basic literacy and numeracy learning materials in Lusoga and Basic English.</p> <p>Produce a draft generic guide for school teachers and adult literacy workers.</p>	<p>A teachers' guide developed for use by teachers and adult educators.</p> <p>Four 5-day workshops and Two 5-day refresher workshops for 72 teachers (including guest teachers from other districts) and 36 adult educators</p> <p>4 workshops for 72 teachers (with some from other districts such as Gulu) and 36 adult educators on making schemes of work and lesson planning.</p>	<p>Draft modular guide developed</p> <p>64 teachers and 36 adult educators trained in the development of instructional materials and preparation of schemes and lesson plans. (Some of the teachers trained left the project area mainly through transfers to other schools)</p>	<p>Guide successfully pre-tested. There is need to move this guide forward to the level of finalisation so as to have it used and followed by the teachers and adult educators.</p> <p>A variety of Instructional and learning materials have been developed for use by P1&2 teachers, adult educators, children and parents. There is adequate support provided to parents-child teams during home learning events to develop simple learning materials for use at home and at school.</p>
<p>Advocate at national level for the incorporation of FABE-type activities in government-aided primary schools and the national adult literacy programme</p>	<p>Preparation of FABE exhibition stands (International literacy day).</p> <p>Presentation of Project reviews at the biannual ESR workshops of MoES and NALSIP of MGLSD</p> <p>Develop and distribute a Biannual newsletter.</p> <p>Articles, features and pullouts in education supplements. (English and Local news papers.</p> <p>Production of 30 minute informational video on FABE</p>	<p>Exhibitions done at the UPE National conference and PAN-African reading Conference</p> <p>One issue developed and distributed</p> <p>Several articles have been published in the daily English news papers.</p> <p>12 minute video produced and a draft manuscript for the second video.</p>	<p>FABE has made laudable attempts in advocating for the project. There is certainly a lot that still needs to be done in this area so that the activities of FABE can be mainstreamed into government structures or at least recognised and provided support to extend this very wonderful work.</p>

Source: Constructed from LABE/FABE Project and M&E reports

2.5 Detailed assessment of FABE performance

2.5.1 Objective 1: Building Capacity to deliver family learning in literacy, numeracy and language skills

FABE performance on this objective can be summarized as follows:

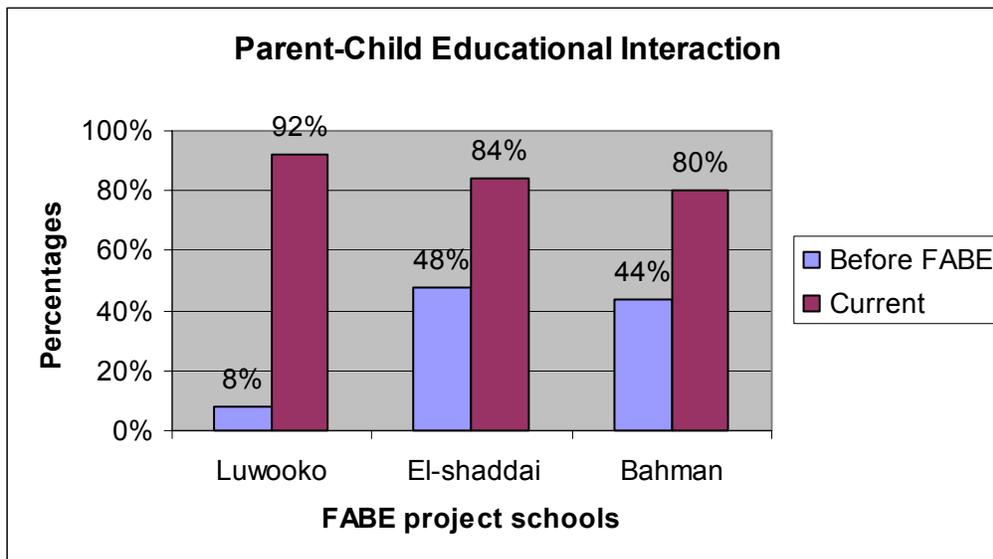
Aspect of education	Performance
Enriching the abilities of teachers and adult educators in child/adult teaching/learning methods	Teachers/adult educators feel that FABE has helped them to improve their teaching skills through various training programmes, provision of instructional/learning materials and training in their use, regular supervision and payment of some allowances. Many schools have created 'talking school compounds', classrooms have lots of wall charts and other interesting instructional materials on display for children, parents and visitors to learn. Para-professionals have been selected with community involvement and deployed. However, reports indicate that some instructors fail to meet FABE expectations and don't cope with the demands of the task. Those who don't cope and fail to respond positively to remedial action are discontinued, leaving only the most competent and motivated to continue. This means that in future, FABE must make the selection process, even when highly participatory for the community, very rigorous and training changed to support those who may not initially be up to the required level.
Strengthening parental support for children's educational needs and equipping parents with basic knowledge on school learning methods	The adult literacy sessions are mainly based on the P1 & 2 school curriculum, modified for the parents. The joint parent-child learning sessions help parents to participate with their children, increasing their ability and confidence to help the children. Home learning helps parents to give children on-going support. Parents have improved their listening skill, as one parent put it, "I now listen to my child more carefully". More significantly, fathers are spending more time with their children. Evidence shows a very strong correlation between parents and children attendance at school and performance in class (ranging between 0.67 and 0.92). More interestingly there is clear correlation between father's participation in FABE and daughters performance in class. Therefore their participation is increasing the life chances of the girl-child to complete the primary school cycle and an advocacy point of the UPE programme.
Increasing parents' inter-communication skills while interacting with children and teachers	Parents' confidence in dealing with teachers and community members has been enhanced considerably. They dialogue better with teachers on their own learning and that of their children. Parents find it easier to get involved in decision-making on school matters. School issues are discussed at community social gatherings – meaning that school has become a central feature of the life of the community. At least three of the 18 schools have had Local councils including FABE-type activities in their local government budgets at LC 3 level.
Developing parenting skills	Parents report that FABE has built their 'social capital'. A large number reported better relationships with their children and children's schools as a result of participation in FABE activities. There is increased confidence in dealing with other members of the community such as local councilors, nurses at the health unit and the like. Many homes of FABE participants have learning areas at home. Fathers realise the value of spending time with their children at home and at school. They have reduced the number and extent of some household chores to allow them study more at home and get to school in time all the time. (See also 'what parents and children say'). In FABE, parents are also learning hygiene, sanitation and life skills.
Schools motivated to conduct meetings with parents and communities, such as open days	"Before the FABE project, less than one quarter of parents attended school meetings. Now, when parents are invited they turn up in such numbers that we have to hold meetings under trees for lack of big enough room". Remarkd a Chairperson of a school management committee. "Nowadays parents know that school is theirs too. They do not wait to be summoned to come to school. They come willingly" A teacher. "For us in Makoma, we have started harvesting the fruits of FABE... through increased interaction with parents we have received a wonderful contribution of school feeding from parents. They resolved to grow cassava in the school gardens. A group of parents planted, weeded and harvested it..."
Improving pupil attendance and	Reports indicate more regular school attendance. Children do not miss school, unless they are ill or for a few days in a very busy agricultural season. This is because attendance is

retention in schools	encouraged by parents, with some even escorting children to school and walking to school to report their children's illness. Fabe children are role models for other children. As one parent put it, "we parents have taken it upon ourselves to monitor attendance and fight absenteeism because we now appreciate the value of education and want our children to succeed".
Activating the School management committees to perform more effectively	"We really had challenges in mobilising parents and the school community in general even just to attend school meetings. Today the parents respond very quickly because they know that they have a big role to play in their children's education." This statement was evidence of the confidence with which the SMCs of schools participating in Fabe activities express their work with parents and the schools they manage. There is evidence of collaboration between SMCs and the school administration in all issues of management and parents' participation in school activities. There is ownership of the school as expressed by both head teachers and the SMCs. " I am a volunteer but I feel that the school is mine and I must support all its work because I know what to do"(SMC member Itakaibulo P/S) "For the many years I have been a head teacher my greatest challenge has been working with the SMC and the parents but now Fabe has taught me how to cooperate and coordinate the two groups without conflict" (Head teacher – Nakoma P/S)
Creating awareness of family learning	The level at which Fabe activities have been supported by schools, parents and communities including government officials indicates that awareness on family learning as an approach has been created and participation solicited with great success. Fabe is no doubt a household name in the district of Bugiri. All stakeholders talked to during the evaluation exercise recognise that it is not only possible but also very productive for parents to learn alongside their children. Through Fabe parents listen to, take time to talk to, and play with their children. The common perspective held by all stakeholders is that Fabe has cultivated an atmosphere of free and productive interaction between parents and their children, their children's teachers and their children's schools.
Increasing the educational performance of primary 1 and 2 pupils	In Fabe classes children receive direct and on-going support from three sources: their teachers, adult educators and parents who are themselves receiving training and other forms of on-going support. In Luwooko, parent-child interaction has increased from 8% to 92% while in El-Shaddai and Bahman, it has doubled from below 50% to more than 80% (see bar-chart below). The same goes for parent-teacher interaction (see bar chart below). Evidence across most schools shows that parents view benefits of Fabe more in terms of what it can do for the children than for themselves. Children have access to low cost home-made learning materials which increases availability and access. As a result, analysis of Labe monthly monitoring reports shows a dramatic improvement in performance for reading, writing and numeracy. (See case study '...if it was not...'). According to school heads, uplifting the standard of reading, writing and numeracy is one of the major roles that Fabe plays in participating schools.

Source: Constructed from Labe reports and the Fabe Evaluator's field notes

Increasing Parent-Child Educational Interaction

One of the ways to enhance parent and child learning together is to increase parent-child educational interaction. In a sample of three schools that have been in the programme longest (they were in the mini-pilot) it is clear as shown in the bar-chart below that Fabe has succeeded to increase parent-child educational interaction dramatically. According to the project coordinator, with such schools, there is greater creativity. For example home to home visits by parents started in Luwooko primary school, one of the three schools that participated in the mini-pilot. "Everyone is so much more confident. Teachers are much more creative in the way they prepare and teach their lessons and in the use of interactive methods. There is much more patience and tolerance and they are more adventurous in trying new things out such as teaching basic English to parents that demand it. Above all, experienced teachers and instructors know how to motivate parents, unlike newer entrants, such as Kasaala, which has temporarily been dropped out of the programme".



Source: LABE

Why Kasaala dropped out of the programme

Kasaala was initially a community school. Teachers were not paid properly and on time leading to high turn over of staff. Then it became a government-aided school. The headmaster and some teachers were transferred constantly and of those posted there, some never reported. So, one of the FABE classes became dependent on an instructor who was himself quite unreliable. The second instructor could not cope with his work, such as proper lesson preparation, because he received no support from the trained teacher. As a result of all this parents lost morale and the FABE was forced to suspend the programme. This has demonstrated the importance and criticality of a stable and committed school management to the success of family learning.

How parents support their children

In an impact assessment report by LABE, parents and children tell what parents do for the children at home to enhance their educational learning. Among other things, parents say that they check children's books, practice reading and writing with them, ask children to read to them aloud, collect local learning materials like bottle tops for use in counting, tell children stories and give them breakfast before they leave for school.

On their part, children say that parents help them with homework exercises, tell them stories, play educative games with them like counting while skipping with ropes!. They collect soda tops, provide them exercise books and pencils and read stories to them. They also say that parents visit school and talk to their teachers. This was corroborated by the Evaluator during the field visit. When asked what they do with their children at home, parents list such activities as "check the children books", "read them stories" and the like.

The contribution of mothers and fathers to children's educational advancement

Central to the family learning methodology is the use of parent-child joint sessions. To attain this, parents have to be enrolled into the programme and prepared to play the supportive role to their children as they also learn reading, writing and numeracy.

Adult-only sessions:

Once a week usually on Tuesdays or Wednesdays, parents and fellow adult learners meet at the school for adult-only classes. These sessions are handled by the literacy instructor, supported by the teacher. The session follows the school curriculum for P.1 and P.2 but is adapted to suit parents for reading, writing and learning numbers, using a topic that will be taught to children in their class. It also includes aspects that parents can do at home. As Sarah Musana, one of the parents of Kyauku Primary School explained, for a children's topic on 'our money', parents use such items as matchboxes, bananas and the like and given money to practice buying and selling to learn counting. Back at home, parents may then give children some money to go and buy some item at the local shop and check whether the child counted properly. These sessions precede joint sessions as parents have to be taken through what will be taught at the joint sessions to enable them support their children. In addition to preparing for joint parent-child sessions, adult-only sessions focus on the needs and issues of parents for their own learning in their own rights as adults.

Shared learning:

On an afternoon of another day of the same week, usually Thursdays or Fridays, parents of P.1 and P.2 pupils join their children in class for joint sessions. These sessions are facilitated by the regular teachers supported by the adult educators. The session then focus on the topic for the children with parent participation and support to their children. The topic is further discussed by the parent and child at home. Any challenges, weaknesses and particular interests of the child are discussed with the teachers when they go on home visits.

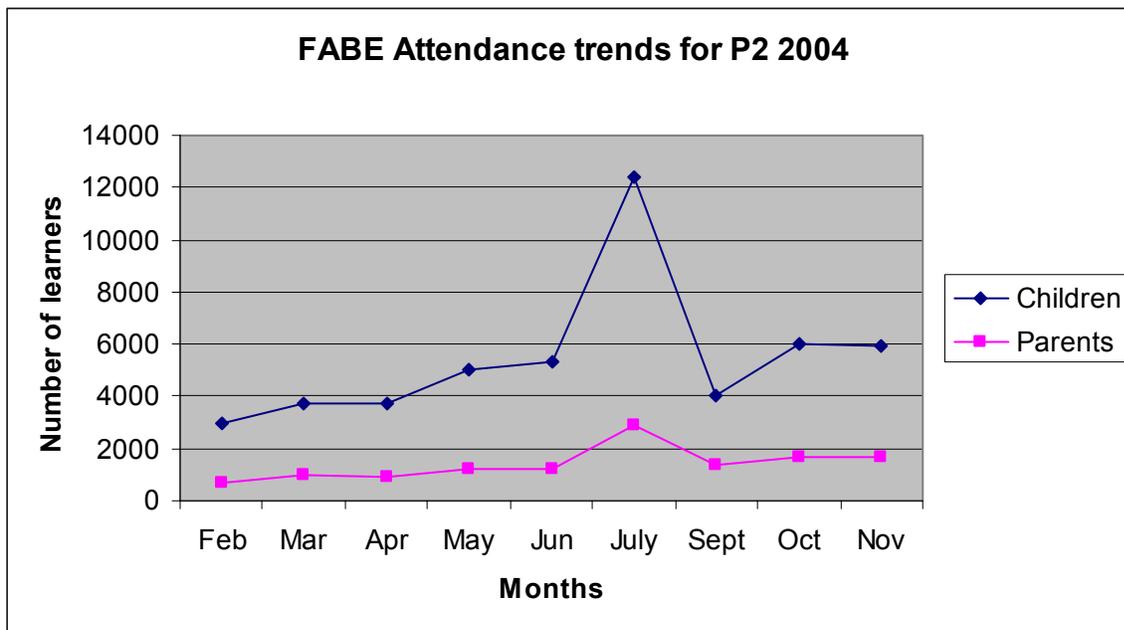
However, it was observed that joint sessions have become very popular with both the parents and the children, with the latter acting as "letters" to invite their parents to attend these sessions. According to one of the teachers interviewed, "Sometimes children may fail to come to school for their usual classes but turn up for joint sessions with their parents". According to some of the teachers and instructors interviewed, joint sessions are so popular that "they have been invaded by the children" due to the level of interest by the parents as well as the children.

In each of the schools joint learning sessions have been held on a regular basis for P1 and P2 parents. During the evaluation exercise one joint session was observed. It was evident from the attendance that the joint learning sessions are the most preferred among the learning activities in the FABE programme. This was also confirmed by looking into past attendance registers.

To increase further parent-child educational interactions for **shared learning** that benefits both parents and children, FABE has taken interest in the contribution that individual parents (fathers or mothers) make an aspect of retention in school literacy and numeracy levels. In one of the internal project researches done in 2004, FABE found out that there is a strong correlation between fathers' participation in parent-child joint learning activities and girls' school attendance. This brings to light one such contribution that fathers can make on the retention of the girl-child in school which

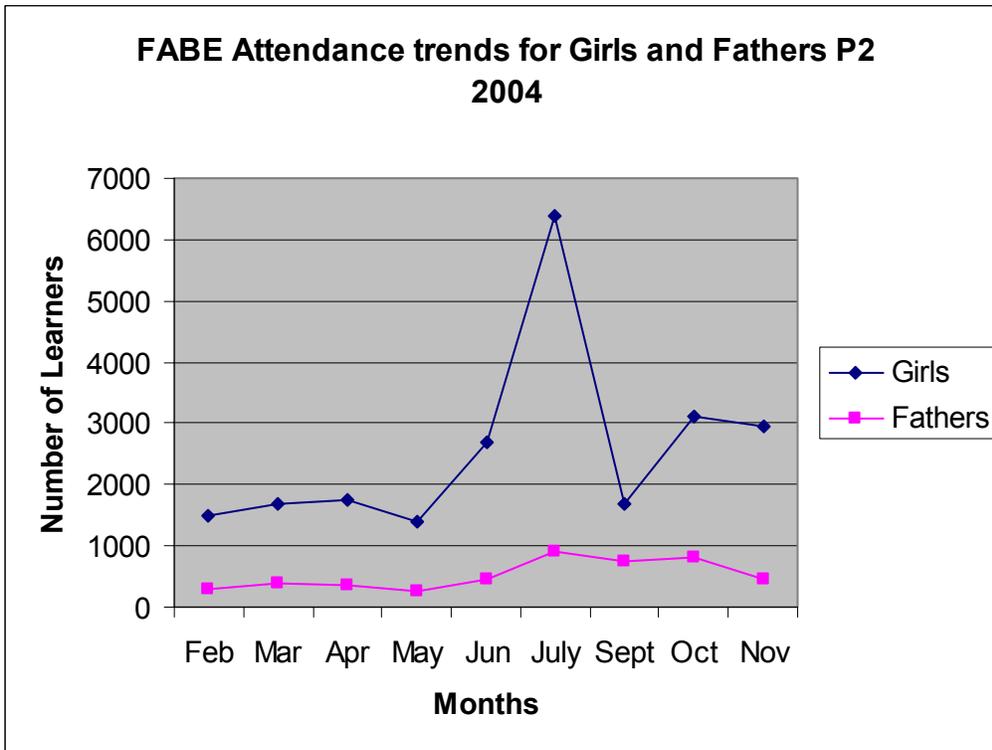
is in line with one of the major objectives of the national UPE programme of making education equitable in order to eliminate disparities and inequalities¹¹.

In the same study girls' numeracy and writing scores improved with the mothers corresponding scores in the same subjects and a similar pattern was observed in father's numeracy levels and boys' scores in maths with a father stronger relationship identified between fathers' improvement in reading skills and girls' scores in reading. This evidence illustrates FABE's commendable level of achievement of its objective on developing a learning programme that promotes parental ability to support their children's learning by acquiring literacy and numeracy skills. It should be noted at this point that activities planned and implemented by the FABE project draw from and build on each other therefore make cumulative contributions to the achievement of all the project objectives.



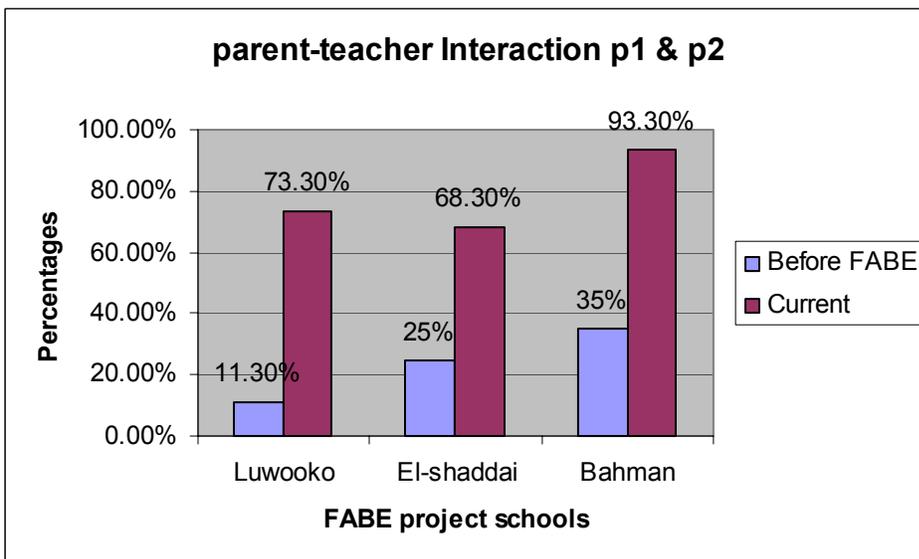
Source: LABE

¹¹ UPE Stakeholders handbook – Policy objective No. (V)



Source: LABE

In both graphs above, the kink in July stands out. Apparently, July, being a dry season, is the time of least activity in the community. So parents and children are most available to participate.



This methodology of family learning is considered very effective. According to Isabirye, a teacher at Nsono Primary School, there is marked improvement in children's performance. "When parents participate, they are determined to support their children when they see that they are not active in

class, for example, if they are not putting up their hands to answer questions or if they are getting most answers wrong”.

Case study: ‘...if it was not...’

If it was not for the grandmother I would not have come to FABE. You see, she had a grandson studying at a FABE school and when he passed to go to primary three, she wanted to take him to Iganga Boys Primary School, a town school because town schools are considered better than rural schools. She thought that her grandson would be made to go back to primary one because he would not cope. To her surprise, when interviewed, the boy answered more confidently and gave correct answers. “Our children in FABE schools are far better than the town ones. You should see them in class!” Mother of a Primary 2 boy in Nankoma Primary School

According to Isabirye, “this is the right educational approach”. “If I were to meet the Minister of Education in charge of primary schools, I would say to her, ‘FABE methodology is infinitely better than the conventional teaching methodology’”. “I do not wish to return to the conventional system”. According to him, while children who leave P.2 retain FABE skills, such as how to make learning materials, how to use learning spaces at home, how to share with parents and fellow pupils, their performance tends to decline when they no longer have that ‘direct’ support.

How FABE builds multiple capacities

The FABE project undertook to build the capacity of its various stakeholders through a combination of activities that involved the parents, teachers, literacy instructors and the children themselves. This also included direct training on skills needed to implement project activities and on-job practice to enhance the development of the desired capacity. How then did FABE go about building these multiple capacities?

Teachers and Literacy Instructors (Adult Educators)

In its implementation FABE considered teachers as the driving force of professionals whose skills were leveraged to mentor the adult educators on appropriate teaching methods. Activities designed to prepare teachers included training workshops. The workshops were not only intended to equip the teachers with skills needed to deliver their own teaching of reading, writing and number well but also to enable them support the adult educators to deliver meaningful lessons to their adult learners. In addition the training workshops focused on enabling the adult educators to make schemes of work and lesson plans for their literacy and numeracy lessons. This in itself was addressing the need for improved capacity to deliver family learning literacy and numeracy. It should be noted that in addition to their literacy instruction and ‘joint teaching’ role, adult educators mobilise parents to take their children to school; help make teaching aids, keep order in class; assist with marking books and act as interim teachers in the absence of the actual teacher, roles they play effectively and are appreciated by head-teachers, teachers, pupils and parents. “They are invaluable”, said one head-teacher. “The project is creating a cadre of local teachers through systematic training of the adult educators”.

Project records indicate that the adult educators are identified from within the communities. A proportion of those recruited were serving as Functional Adult Literacy instructors (a national programme for adult literacy under the ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development -

MGLSD) while others were recruited jointly by the parents and community leaders. The FABE project through its planned workshops has trained the adult educators in making schemes and lesson plans, materials making and teaching of participatory lessons. This has built their capacity to deliver family learning lessons more effectively. However, some of the community-selected instructors were found to be below standard and those who could not be brought to the required level were discontinued. For example those that could not cope with essentials like lesson planning, adapting the curriculum for adult learning or those that failed to work with the teachers or could not cope with school rules of conduct, like not coming to school drunk or too shabbily dressed, and who when talked to “got very annoyed” were discontinued. However, it was noted that these cases are few and far between. On the whole drop-out rates on the part of instructors are very low, much lower than in the conventional adult literacy programmes.

Workshops for Parents and Community leaders

FABE planned for 18 sensitisation workshops for selecting/enrolling the adult learners (parents of P1 and P2 children from the selected schools) and discussing their roles on the performance of their children. The achievement in this area surpassed the set target, which was to enrol 60 parents (30 in each class P1 and P2), in each of the 18 schools. Instead an average enrolment across the schools came to 81 adult learners. This indicated that the sensitisation workshops were very effective. However the high attendance in the first 9 schools created a challenge of funding the remaining 9 sensitisation workshops. The project therefore strategically focused on sensitising the local leaders who in turn guided the enrolment of parents for the remaining 9 schools. On the whole FABE successfully carried out this with a result of 35.4% above the set target achieving a total of 1462 parents enrolled (920 mothers and 542 fathers) as against the targeted 1080 parents.

With FABE’s input, the teachers’ ability to plan for and deliver interesting and captivating reading and writing lessons for both children and their parents is laudable. The literacy instructors are able to do lesson schemes, co-teach, organise classrooms, make teaching and learning materials and follow-up progress on literacy and numeracy during home visits with both children and the adult learners. This was attested to during discussions with a group of adult educators. Head teachers (school management) on their part said that through the training workshops they have been supported to develop the skills to involve as well as sustain parental and community participation not only in activities that support children’s learning but also activities that parents need to perform to improve school management and organisation.

School management Committees (SMCs)

School Management Committees on the other hand have been trained and their level of sensitising and mobilising parents to participate in school activities has improved. This was clearly revealed to the evaluator when talking to Head-teachers and SMCs who indicated that this has resulted in greater ownership of FABE activities by all the stakeholders. This was apparent in many ways as observed during the field visit. In terms of building the capacity of School Management Committees, parents and community leaders to deliver family learning, sensitisation and school level planning, workshops have been used to pursue this objective. FABE conducted 18 one-day workshops aimed at involving stakeholders to plan for the project at school level. The workshops were all conducted at school level. These workshops were crucial to the introduction of the project in each of the 18 selected project schools. Each of these workshops yielded FABE school-based annual work plans which guided each school to implement FABE activities. In the three year

period, a number of schools have developed more than one annual plan while others focused on refining and improving the quality of activities of their initial plan.

FABE has made considerable efforts towards the participation of the district education officers by keeping them abreast of and involved in the FABE activities.

From the foregoing, it is correct to deduce that at all levels stakeholders participating in FABE activities report that the project has contributed towards building their capacity. In particular it has become apparent that FABE is contributing to building social capital, particularly that of parents. Because of the skills acquired through FABE interventions, a large number of parents indicated that they had a better relationship with their children and children's school. For some parents this capacity has extended into increased level of confidence in dealing with other members of the community such as the local council and nurses at the health centres as was articulated by at least two parents during FGDs.

The school

There is marked evidence to show that FABE's achievements are not only limited to improved communication between parents and teachers but also the increase of the level of involvement by parents in school activities. The schools now have an organised learning environment that promotes reading, writing and numeracy through use of a variety of learning corners. For example, in Makoma and Nakoma Primary Schools, the evaluator observed that teachers and instructors had mounted topical displays that encourage children to freely interact with learning materials. It was established that this happens routinely. Parents have also acquired the practice of material making, story telling/folklore, playing games and helping their children to do home work.

One of the special features of FABE schools, especially the Child Friendly ones like Muterere, Bulidha and Nankoma is that of **'talking compounds'**. Parents and pupils participate in improving the environment by planting trees, flowers and making paths. Then the compounds are decorated with posters that convey crucial messages, such as "leave school girls to grow. Defilement is a crime punishable by death". "I am still young; I need education"; "There is no trespass, give education a chance"; "If boys can do it, girls can do it even better". These posters are placed in strategic positions around the compound so that the message is not missed.

The creation of learning areas at home is also another strong component that shows the achievement of the objective addressing the building of capacity to deliver family learning. This is affirmed by the teachers and head teachers. In a Focus Group Discussion with 4 of the 17 Head-teachers they all indicated that they value the FABE approach especially because of a number of positive trends including

- the *"increased level of interest and involvement in children's education by the parents"*;
- *"parents' involvement in decision making on schools matters"*;
- *"children's ability to speak up to their parents about their school needs"*
- *and the general improvement in communication flow between the school, parents and the community.*

School open days

FABE in its implementation also supported the selected schools to organise school interaction activities referred to as 'functional school open days'. These promote discussions between parents,

teachers and children on the children's educational progress. As a shift of focus from the conventional boring speeches school open days carried out in many other schools, the FABE project schools hold open days that emphasise active engagement of teachers, parents and children. During these days parents and the various subject teachers identify and discuss ways of supporting children's learning. This has proved to be an opportunity for parents to recognise the cumulative effect of their support to their children's learning throughout the year. From the internal surveys conducted by the project, the open days have become popular and have registered good participation by the parents. They are characterised by the mornings being spent in discussions over exhibitions mounted by the children, teachers with the support of parents and the afternoons for cultural activities. Evidence suggests that the capacity of parents, teachers and school managers (SMCs and Head-teachers) to collaborate with each other to provide supportive family learning experiences has been greatly enhanced. Specifically parents cited that they:

- *Are now respected by teachers,*
- *Are confident in coming to school and discussing issues with teachers about their children*
- *Have acquired skills such as effective listening, problem solving, long-term planning and the like.*

Home visits and 'learning areas':

By running a flexible programme FABE has allowed initiatives by parents and schools to emerge that promote parental support to children's learning at the same time encourage learning for the parents themselves. As an extension of the joint parent-child learning sessions, take-home learning activities have been designed for parents and children to continue doing as home work. This has with time evolved into an aspect of home visits by both the literacy instructors and the classroom teachers. It has further led to most of the homes in which parents are encouraged to physically create room for home learning. One such home was visited during the field visit and evidence of space for a 'learning area', as well as materials made by the parents and children with support of the teachers and instructors was evident.

Through the discussions with parents during the joint session most highlighted that they have created such space at home and allow time for their children to do their homework. Some use local mats while other have made huts for use as learning spaces. Those who cannot afford have their learning space under a tree or near the fire. This resonates well with the emphasis of the UPE programme on the need for parents/guardians to provide a supportive and safe home environment for learning¹² and scheduling the children's home responsibilities in such a manner as not to interfere with school responsibilities.¹³ Some have found creative ways to help children learn even as they do home chores. For example, as a child gets on with his/her home tasks, the parent will ask, "what did you learn at school today?" or "what is that colour?"

Being a learning programme that enhances the literacy and numeracy skills of both the children and their parents, the home visits have also expanded into "home to home" visits organised by the parents themselves. These developed from the recognition that among the parents they identified 'good practices' of providing support to their children. Groups of parents have therefore formed their own groups and scheduled their own home visits to build each other's parenting skills. During the visits, parents have engaged in making learning charts (*one parent taking the lead to teach others*) and teaching children basic numbers concepts as Jerome shares his experience: "...I

¹² UPE. Stakeholders handbook 4.3.12 Parent/Guardians responsibility subsection (ii) b and c

¹³ UPE. Stakeholders handbook 4.3.12 Parent/Guardians responsibility subsection (ii) f

feel more confident helping the P1 and P2 pupils especially in numbers; ... the other classes are really difficult for me ...aha, in fact those children could be better than me!". (Jerome had 3 years of formal schooling). Other parents also send their children to one home (usually the better off one in terms of charts, space, and the like) or create children groupings that sometimes extend to school. This initiative is evidence of positive effects of the FAFE programme.

2.6.2 Objective 2: Equip local authorities with skills to plan, provide financial support and sustain family related basic education programmes.

FAFE's effort to achieve this objective was through continued advocacy and involvement of the Local Councils and sub-county chiefs in the implementation of the FAFE project, using among other strategies SMCs for lobbying LCs on behalf of their schools.

Three out of the 18 schools (about 17%) have successfully had their plans incorporated into the sub-county local government 3-year development plans. This is a very low number. In the sub-county visited during the field visit, the sub-county chief reported that a total of Sh.600,000 (Uganda shillings six hundred thousand) has been earmarked to support FAFE activities in the sub-county. This amount is very small indeed, considering that each adult educator and FAFE class teacher each gets paid Sh.30,000 a month as facilitation. The project notes that bureaucracies within the government and its frequently changing priorities together with the sporadic cuts of the central government financial support to the districts have been the major bottleneck to the achievement of this objective. The sub-county chief revealed that originally a higher amount had been budgeted but due to stringent financial situation, this had to be reduced drastically. It was clear that this is not for lack of good will. On the contrary, it was evident that the local authorities have goodwill and good intent for the project. But they are constrained by limited resources and competing demands. Therefore the level at which the project activities will be sustained very much depends on the increased availability of funds and the level of advocacy within the local councils to continue prioritising FAFE aspects of education. It should be noted that FAFE interventions are not necessarily resource-heavy, the facilitation to adult educators and their counterparts being the biggest additional financial requirement beyond what the system is already footing. However, it seems that, as much as it is a very good intervention, equipping local authorities with the skills to plan, on its own, will not increase the financial support required to sustain family learning initiatives.

Future FAFE projects should build financial sustainability into the interventions. This could be through either more parent and community contributions or getting family learning fully integrated in the FAL and special education programmes of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and that of Education and Sport respectively, or a combination of both. (See further discussion of this in the strategic recommendations section). We realise that this is likely to be very difficult as FAFE interventions are likely to target resource poor and constrained parents and local councils and districts. Nevertheless it has to be addressed squarely. We further recognise that in the early stages of piloting the family learning initiative, it would have been difficult to 'market' the need for greater financial contribution by participating parents and communities as well as local authorities as there was no proven product to support this. Now that there is a very attractive product that has generated a lot of interest and good will by parents, community, schools, local councils, district authorities and central government, future interventions should be easier to 'sell'.

2.5.3 Objective 3: Produce basic literacy and numeracy learning materials in Lusoga and Basic English

The project has invested a lot into the production of appropriate basic literacy and numeracy learning materials both in terms of training and provision of the raw materials for material making. The project has provided to each participating school a package of materials including; lesson preparation books, manila cards, glue, masking-tape, sand-paper, markers, blackboards, rulers, pens, duplicating paper, chalk and class registers. During the field visit it was evident that these materials have been put to good use in the schools by the teachers and adult instructors. It was observable that each participating classroom had good displays mounted and in learning corners there was a variety of easy to use packs of reading and writing picture-cards both locally and machine made. The materials were seen in use by the teachers and instructors for explanations during the lessons in group activity, revision and daily practice. These materials are also taken home and or copied by the parents for use in the home learning areas.

It was evident that the use of materials during the joint parent-child session drew a lot of excitement and interaction between the parents and the children. However, it was also clear that even if the teachers and instructors took extra care in making the materials, the quality of raw materials used would render especially the small reading picture-word cards damaged after a few times of handling by the learners. It would therefore be appropriate if harder raw materials were used for the cut-out cards and perhaps locally laminated or protected using easily available materials such as polythene sachets so that they may last longer and save the teachers and instructors from duplicating the materials. An available alternative is to explore the use of card-board material in place of manila card which is likely to be less expensive and is more durable.

To enhance the production of materials and to guide the project delivery, FAFE undertook to develop a teacher's guide for use by the adult educators and teachers. This document is in draft and has been pre-tested with positive results. It should be finalised and made available to adult educators for immediate use. During the evaluation, it appeared like the adults-only sessions are being subsumed by the extremely popular joint learning sessions. While the beneficiaries of these materials acknowledge having learnt to write and read, only a few parents could identify skills like letter writing and keeping record of simple business transactions. The progressive levels of the basic reading and writing skills for the adults need to be defined outside the P1/P2 primary school curriculum that they are currently following. The current approach of using the picture chart to teach literacy has been good but needs to be developed beyond the picture charts that the teachers and adult educators are using to draw out sentences, words and syllables for the reading exercises.

2.7.4 Objective 4: Advocacy for Incorporation to National Programme

To achieve this objective FAFE set out to liaise with both the Education and Social Development Departments at the district with the intention of establishing a strong working partnership. This was designed with the understanding that the FAFE project approach combines adult learning (non-formal) which is under the Social Development Department and the lower primary education under the Education Department. Among the implementation activities, the training of Coordinating Centre Tutors (CCTs) was focused on getting the existing government systems to work alongside FAFE project staff. (CCTs are located in schools from which they are supposed to provide technical support, supervision and mentoring to a cluster of surrounding schools). Out of the 6 CCTs planned for, only 3 were trained in the FAFE methodology. This effort, however, did

not yield as much technical support as was expected because the CCTs are too committed to be available as and when needed by FABE. To remedy this, a retired teacher was hired to augment FABE staff efforts. He has been very instrumental in supporting the FABE activities, particularly mentoring the teachers and adult educators in his area of operation.

In addition and beyond the district, the programme had identified activities such as presentation of FABE project reviews at the bi-annual Education Sector Review (ESR) workshops; development and distribution of a FABE newsletter and contribution of articles and features through the national newspapers. Presentations at the Education Sector Reviews are an opportunity for FABE to be understood, supported and mainstreamed. It is a forum in which FABE would be able to influence or at least be recognised by the Education Funding Agency (EFAG) group who are the supporters of the Education Sector-wide approach (SWAP) for education funding.

In the 3 year period one issue of a 4-page FABE newsletter was developed in Lusoga (local language) and distributed to the local communities. This issue described the FABE project; addressed issues of how parents and their children can learn together; and what parents say about the benefit of FABE. More issues should have been produced. In addition, an informative 12-minute video was developed and produced on the project and a script for a second video drafted.

In the view of the evaluators, this is not enough. FABE needs to do more in capturing and telling the considerable success stories from the project in a variety of ways including well-documented case studies which can be used as a tool to disseminate the family learning experience and to advocate for the methodology at all levels (from communities through to national and international).

Interviews with all FABE staff indicate that there has been close partnership and good working relationship with the Education Department at the district. This was also confirmed by the District Education Officer (DEO) and one Inspector of Schools (IS) in an interview during the evaluation field visit to the district. The two officers made the following remarks on what they perceived as their role in the implementation of FABE;

“FABE is playing a complimentary role to what we do and is a partner in development. We make schools available for all who promote the education policy and ask schools to include (FABE) activities on the timetable. We also encourage School Management Committees and others to cooperate”. (DEO)

“We do monitoring of what learning is taking place”. (Inspector of schools (IS))

Asked what significant benefits they have observed of the programme, the education officers said,
“FABE provides an opportunity for implementation of the UPE government policy. For example, parents are mobilised to provide uniform and food, there is improved punctuality, retention and good daily attendance in FABE schools”. (DEO)

“It has helped push the UPE message in a very vivid manner”. (DIS)

On what contribution the department has made to match what FABE offers, the team highlighted the provision of office space for FABE staff. They also emphasised that the will to support all FABE’s field activities is there but reduced local revenue collections within the decentralised system makes it difficult to contribute to the successful innovation that FABE has started let alone sustain it after the project. On the part of the Social Development Department the earlier effort of

involving the Community Development Workers were futile as they were extremely busy to give adequate support to FAFE activities, just like the CCTs.

These scenarios describe the complexity in which FAFE is attempting to incorporate its activity into the existing government programmes. A methodology blending adult learning and children's learning has successfully been piloted and demonstrated to have positive results. Yet, while government officials are quick to applaud it and its value to promoting literacy and in universalising of UPE, demonstrating ownership on the part of government is still less apparent. However, what has been achieved by FAFE is sufficient reason for causing a high level roundtable discussion bringing together the two ministries of Education and Sports and Gender, Labour and Social Development. Advocacy for FAFE initiatives needs to be intensified at the highest levels of policy-making with a clearly defined strategy of making the policy makers understand and appreciate what the FAFE initiative is and outlining the specific areas for each ministry to consider.

Section 3: Summary of the achievements of FAFE and policy implications

The success of FAFE can be discussed at two levels. The first level is the technical one – the extent to which it has carried out the planned activities. The other is the strategic level where the efficacy of the concepts and the underlying assumptions are assessed and the wider significance of family learning and the implications of the success of a piloted initiative such as FAFE raised.

3.1 The technical level

At the technical level, there are at least two levels of achievements. At one level, LAFE is effectively delivering the deliverables it planned for family learning - reading, writing and counting for children and their parents at school and at home. It is getting children, many of them from poor families, to school and keeping them there in an environment where drop out rates are high. It has successfully piloted combining the use of professional teacher and para-professional adult educators to deliver parent-child learning sessions, parents-only sessions and to conduct home visits. It has stimulated parents to initiate their own home to home visits. Parents make low-cost home-made teaching materials. In conjunction with CFSs initiative, FAFE has transformed such ordinary things like school compounds and open days into extra-ordinary learning opportunities. It has revitalised school management committees.

At another level, the impact of these achievements is enormous. Children's learning has been enhanced by the participation of their parents. Fathers are getting involved in the life of the children, both boys and girls and equality of girls with boys is becoming evident in participating families. The initiative is producing confident parents and confident children. Parenting skills are enhanced. Parents are more effectively involved in the management of their schools. The school is becoming an integral part of community life. Parents have increased their skills to deal with other community situations like interaction with LCs and health units, contribution in meetings, and the like.

Issues and challenges

At the technical level

In addition to the excellent performance of the FABE pilot, there are issues that are outstanding and which need to be addressed.

The first is the need to support parents of the children who ‘graduate’ P.2 who still need ‘grounding’.

The second has to do with parents’ articulation of their gains from the programme. From the bar charts below, it is clear that, according to the literacy instructors, some aspects of the project, though perhaps equally successful, are not being as well articulated as the others. While reading and numeracy stand out as successful skills transferred, parenting skills stand out as being the least successful in being transferred. Likewise, parents-only and parent-children joint sessions stand out as being the most successful aspect of the project, while home learning activities are the weakest.

Also it has emerged that most parents view benefits more for the children than for themselves. They are largely motivated by the desire for their children to succeed. It may also be due to the fact that FABE’s main activities are school-related and school authorities consider FABE a way of “parents and teachers educating children together”, as put by one of the deputy head-teachers in one of the FABE schools, instead of “adults and children learning together”. There is need to factor this rational response into the design of future programmes.

However, it is also important to note that in their responses when asked what they have benefited from FABE programme parents pointed to parenting skills. All parents recognise hygiene, sanitation and other life skills as being real benefits from participation in the FABE project. Other parenting skills frequently mentioned include talking to and listening more to their children, modifying home chores to enable the girl-child do her home-work, and the like. As one mother said, “FABE gives chance to clean myself and my child before we go to school. Because I am clean, my child can confidently say that I am his mother and I can say he is my son”. “I like the way we work together with the children” – a father.

It should also be noted that parents are benefiting as learners in their own right. For example, at levels three and four of writing and reading (where a learner can read, write and understand short sentences, can read texts observing punctuation and be able to read passages with some fluency), parents consistently out-perform their children. Says a mother in Nsono village, “I could not write at all but I can now write my name”. This means that parents are benefiting more than they recognise or may be willing to admit. As one head-teacher put it, “FABE has given parents an opportunity for remedial studies”.

Challenges:

Challenges facing FABE can be articulated at a technical and strategic level. At the technical level, a number of challenges have been raised. They include:

- The allowance paid to teachers and instructors is inadequate.
- Instructors need to be accredited so that they can use their skills even out side FABE project. As one instructor who has been with the programme since inception in 2000 put it, “In FABE, I have been trained as a teacher. I know each and everything yet my skills are

not recognised beyond FABE”. The FABE Coordinator concurs, “If anyone saw her teach, they would be left with no doubt about her ability to teach. But without being seen she has no way of proving that she can teach as well as or better than a ‘recognised’ teacher of a similar class”.

- Some parents have to traverse long distances to school and other homes and need assistance with bicycles.
- Some parents have poor eye-sight which limits their participation in some project activities.
- It clear from LABE reports and the evaluator’s own assessment that the department of education at the district is more involved in FABE activities than is the Social Development Department. This is in contrast to the latter’s involvement in FAL activities, for example. This raises an important question of the fate initiatives that cut across two ministries suffer, which is discussed further in strategic issues below.

3.3 Achievements at the Strategic level

At the strategic level, the greatest achievement of FABE is in successfully conceiving, testing and implementing an innovative approach to family learning as one of the first of its kind in Africa and turning it into a household name in less than five years. While there was no control sample for comparative purposes, FABE success is best adduced from the reception and demand it has received from central and local government officials, parents and communities and the immediate beneficiaries themselves – the children, teachers, head-teachers and para-professionals.

Family Learning: a perspective from current practitioners

“In developing countries, family learning is closing the gap of ignorance about the benefits of education. It enables parents to see the long term benefits of education against the immediate benefits of putting their child in employment”. Noyona Chanda, London Language and Literacy Unit

“Family learning is about building the confidence of parents to think about education as something relevant for them and important for their children. It opens their minds to possibilities they considered closed, and overcomes their own negative memories of school.” Alison Ticher, Workers’ Educational Association

FABE is a witness to the above perspectives being realised in a resource constrained environment. It is a witness to the way the vision of the National Adult Literacy Plan that the growth of adult literacy is essential for universalising access to primary education and improving its quality and relevance can be realised. It addresses non-attendance, drop-out and low pupil performance relating to low parent participation in motivating children or informed active role in primary school affairs. It has demonstrated that it can cure key impediments to children’s learning such as school feeding and lack of learning materials. If the NALSIP output of “at least 85% of proficient learners support their children’s primary schooling” is to be realised, FABE demonstrates how to produce “proficient learners” who are motivated to “support their children” in primary schooling. FABE is building social capital critical to poverty reduction.

“When I have an idea, I can explain it to others. I don’t fear to learn new things” Parent and Adult Learner in FABE project (interview).

“I am not a teacher by profession, but you should see how FABE as a concept excites me”. Simon Kisira, LABE’s Monitoring and Evaluation Coordinator (interview)

According to teacher Isabirye, “this is the right educational approach”. “If I were to meet the Minister of Education in charge of primary schools, I would say to her, ‘FABE methodology is infinitely better than the conventional teaching methodology’”. “I do not wish to return to the conventional system (of teaching infants)”.

These achievements are central to promoting the present UPE policy that states that; it is the responsibility of the parents and/or guardians to develop relationship with the teacher(s) that focuses on pupil performance¹⁴. It therefore points out that FABE has scored highly in addressing strategic issues of national priority. This is commendable for a project working with a majority of parents being the rural poor.

Section 4: Issues, challenges and the way forward:

At the strategic level, a number of issues that pose serious challenges to family learning emerge. The first and perhaps the most pertinent is what happens next. Clearly FABE is a success. As Ms. Resty Muziribi a senior Education Officer Pre-primary section of the MoES commented during her visit to FABE, “The Ministry is currently emphasising more direct participation of parents in their children’s education... We came to see what is being done so that we can see how to take it further”. While she urged participating parents to mobilise the other parents to participate in the FABE activities; and offered to advocate for it with others in the MoES; and while this goodwill is shared by other Government officials at local and central level, the real challenge is “how to take it forward”.

Logically it should be replicated in more schools in more districts in Uganda and possibly beyond. Eventually it should be mainstreamed. However, its main problem seems to be that it is perceived as a means of encouraging parents to participate in their children’s education, which is to say, it is a normal primary school programme which is having enhanced parent participation. As such it may be difficult for MoES to put in more funds just to increase parent participation. And because it is part of the mainstream primary education, it is not clear what ‘mainstreaming FABE’ would mean in practical terms.

Likewise, FABE is not a typical non-formal programme because it follows a formal mainstream school system, unlike ABEK, COPE, BEUPA, or CHANCE. Nor is it a typical FAL programme, because it is pupil-focused. Therefore to “take it forward”, LABE/FABE should aggressively undertake advocacy presented by such forums as the bi-annual Education Sector Reviews to influence policy on family learning. Similarly, it should engage with the MGLSD to secure its greater participation.

In the meantime, LABE should aggressively market FABE as a successful model of family learning that must be replicated. Already, LABE is poised to replication FABE in Yumbe district,

¹⁴ UPE. Stakeholders handbook 4.3.12 Parent/Guardians responsibility subsection iv) b.

West Nile region – subject to availability of funds. A modified version is also beginning in Gulu district with the support of NOVIB. LABE should do more marketing of FAFE for other low income and poor African countries to adapt it.

At the current project level, we strongly recommend an extension of FAFE as follows:

Duration: 5 years with the following basic components:

- FAFE extends horizontally to cover all streams in the current classes of P1 and P2 for the 18 schools.
- Consider moving into the middle primary, starting with next year's P.3.
- Encourage outstanding performing schools and communities to cost share with LABE at 50-80% of the main cost budget items such as facilitation for teachers and adult educators.
- LABE's advanced plans to replicate FAFE in Yumbe district, West Nile region should be pushed through

Now that LABE has a successful 'product' it should seek to use it to gain community ownership and maximise the chances for long-term sustainability by establishing agreements on willingness to mobilise resources. FAFE in its initial stages of entry into working with selected schools should establish an understanding of what financial role the parents, school community and FAFE would play. This should culminate into making a simple agreement for which failure to meet the given responsibility would entail withdrawal of LABE support. The communities / parents should be made to know the limits of the project and the method of withdrawal or how each school will be 'weaned off' LABE support. In this process it is recommended that FAFE establish a 'seed fund' that each school community should multiply so as to plough back into the programme and expand within each school.

One way to do this is to make Income Generating Activities (IGAs) an integral part of the FAFE programme especially for the parents and literacy instructors. FAFE should carry out a focused study on what IGAs can be sustainable in the area. If well instituted IGAs could be one way to get the adult learners to make contributions towards the payment of adult educators. They currently get a monthly token of Ush.30,000. FAFE could start by targeting that each class of adult learners (parents) contributes 50% while FAFE contributes the other 50%.

FAFE should focus on balancing and leveraging the opportunities available within the community and the local government system structures as the first pot of call to sustain the programme. LABE should also continue working with integrating FAFE activities into the existing local government system as an attempt to assure sustainability. Such efforts as those of Nankoma sub-county should be encouraged and emulated.

Summary of recommendations:

1. The methodology used in this highly successful component of FABE should be well documented and more widely and effectively disseminated beyond what has been done so far.
2. Parents should be supported to better articulate the benefits to them from FABE interventions as learners as well as they articulate the benefits to children.
3. The balance between adult learning and child learning, the core of the family learning concept, should be maintained and where it has tipped over against parent learning, the balance should be restored. However, future designs of programmes of this nature should take cognisance of the fact that parents are motivated largely by the rational desire for their children to succeed and break the poverty cycle.
4. LABE should lobby to ensure that the seeming imbalance between the participation/involvement of the Ministries and departments of Education and Sports and that of Social Development is restored.
5. The lessons from the Kasaala experience should be well documented and preventative strategies for avoiding a repeat built into future programme designs
6. LABE should work with communities and school management to limit the number of low quality instructors being recruited
7. Future interventions should be designed with in-built financial sustainability. In addition to equipping local councils with planning skills, these skills and the accompanying goodwill will need to be augmented by other sources of financial support for the intervention.
8. FABE should focus on balancing and leveraging the opportunities available within the community and the local government system structures as the first port of call to sustain the programme. LABE should also continue working with integrating FABE activities into the existing local government system as an attempt to assure sustainability.
9. The FABE 'product' should be marketed more aggressively to government and partners as a successful model of family learning that must be replicated and mainstreamed. Already, LABE is poised to replicate FABE in Yumbe district, West Nile region. Partners should support this with the needed funds.
10. LABE should do more to market FABE in other low income and poor African countries where illiteracy may still be a factor, to adapt it.
11. Rather than start from scratch to find readers that both adults learners and the children can read, it is recommended that FABE utilises its current collection of story charts to document story lines gradually and develop them into big books from which the learners can read. The books can be made out of folded manila with children's and parents' illustrations accompanied by narratives developed during the picture discussions and written down by the teachers/adult educators.
12. It is recommended that LABE invests in the development of relevant and appropriate quality instructional materials for instructors use with the adult learners. The materials for parents need to be packaged in stages according to designed milestones with which progress of both literacy and numeracy skills development can be identified by both the instructors and the adult learners.
13. With the need to cater for both the adult learners and their children, FABE should maintain the parent-only sessions relatively free of children and focus on a designed progressive curriculum for both reading and writing to include the basic milestone skills for literacy and numeracy to be achieved in a given time. This should go beyond the P1&2 curriculum, although it is necessary to maintain the link.

14. Although FABE seems not to fit into the category of the Non-formal Education programmes already recognised by the MoES like ABEK, BEUPA, CHANCE and COPE, LABE should lobby for it to be treated as a successful special education initiative on Family Learning that the MoES should adopt, replicate and scale up in close collaboration with the MGLSD. In particular, LABE/FABE should utilise the opportunity for advocacy presented by the bi-annual Sector Reviews to influence policy on family learning.

Section 5: Conclusion:

Given the positive achievements realized in this phase of the project an extension is strongly recommended to enable FABE cover all streams of P1 and P2 within the schools that it has so far generated a lot of enthusiasm in. The project should also look to moving on to other lower primary and new schools with a well defined approach to sustainability. It is important to note that programmes can only be sustainable at the community level if they are fully owned by the participating communities / beneficiaries¹⁵. This includes full involvement and substantial investments of resources from the beneficiaries' side. In order to obtain commitment from local communities, implementation approaches must reflect local priorities, financial resources and integrate local traditions, knowledge and other cultural assets.

The backbone to sustainability of a programme is also in setting up sustainable systems and structures that would ensure that new components introduced in the programme would be valued sustained by the stakeholders. It is for this reason that a lot of time and resources should continue to be invested in community capacity building with a view to empowering the communities to manage the programme within a firmly set up and sustainable system.

Finally, experience of FABE has shown that family learning is an effective methodology in addressing the improvement of both adult literacy rates and the educational performance of primary school children. LABE should work with its partners to lobby the MoES and MGLSD to adopt family learning as one of the officially recognised and supported approaches for enhancing education and functional literacy. Furthermore, LABE and its international partners should disseminate documentation on FABE to other countries and encourage them to adapt it.

LABE partners, including government and development partners need to move from strong endorsement of LABE's initiatives to effective and sustained action in literacy learning and in sustaining the literate environment by providing LABE with additional resources, availed in a more predictable manner to complement those opportunities available in the community and local governments and through LABE's sale of its professional services.

⁹ Critical stakeholders at the lower level of primary school education as defined in the MoES UPE handbook – Guidelines on Policy, roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in the implementation of Universal Primary Education (UPE), (1998)

Appendix 1: LABE Partnerships in Action



Source: LABE brochure

Appendix 3

Selected fundamental parameters (By Clinton Robinson)

LABE is:

- It is a specialist organisation in a clearly defined field of literacy;
- It has a highly committed, well, trained but small team of professionals;
- It has a strong vision and well-articulated concern for the Ugandan situation;
- It has a high reputation nationally and internationally although it is yet to result in high visibility;
- It has taken a large number of initiatives and it is stretched thin;
- Its fundamental principle of work is partnership;
- It has adopted advocacy as an integral part of its work, alongside its service delivery;
- It has a strong commitment to working with government and has good relations in some areas; nationally, government has responded with similar commitment;
- It is committed to working with and strengthening the literacy NGOs in Uganda, but has had difficulty developing equal partnerships;
- It contributes beyond Uganda in the region, although this does not seem to be part of its core programming;
- It has well-established partnerships with a few international NGOs such as EAI and NOBIB and enjoys their positive support;
- Its financing is project-based and (relatively) short term;
- Its in-country funding is weak.
-

With regard to the operating context:

- The development needs of Uganda are enormous;
- Uganda is seen internationally as a good place for aid agencies to invest (because of moves to universal schooling, success in the fight against HIV/AIDS, etc);
- Literacy is part of government policy, although its commitment to implementation is ambivalent;
- Government capacity for literacy work is fairly weak, in terms of focused institutions and in terms of capacity;
- Literacy work currently reaches only a small percentage of the illiterate population;
- A fairly large number of NGOs, CBOs, etc, engage in literacy work, though to different degrees and with wide disparities in professionalism;
- Budget support and basket funding (sector-wide support) do not (yet) give possibilities for funding work through NGOs.

Appendix 4: Documents referred to during the evaluation

Aanyu Dorothy-Angura (October 2005): Evaluation Report on Family Basic Education (FABE) in Uganda

Clinton Robinson (October 2005): Comments on the Final Evaluation of LABE's Programmes; Literacy and Continuing Education in Uganda and Family Basic Education in Uganda

Clinton Robinson and Anne Katahoire: Mid-Term Review of the Project March/May 2003

FABE Project Mid-Term Review report, FABE Brochures and Monthly and Activity Reports

FABE PESA study

Jinja District Administration: Sub-county plans and reports, class attendance registers and learners materials

LABE: Brochures, project documents, annual reports and Financial Statements

LABE: Strategic Plan 2005 – 2009

Margaret Kakande: What Policy-Makers expect from policy advocacy activists and organisations. A paper prepared for DRT and NGO Forum for the Training Programme on Policy Engagement, Nile Resort Jinja 14-20 August 2005.

Ministry of Education and Sports: UPE handbook – Guidelines on Policy, roles and responsibilities of stakeholders in the implementation of Universal Primary Education (UPE), (1998)

Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development: Poverty Eradication Action Plan 2004/5 – 2007/8

Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development: National Adult Literacy Strategic Plan 2002/3 – 2006/7

Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development: National Adult Literacy Strategic Plan 2002/3 – 2006/7

Oxford Policy Management: Evaluation Report for the Plan for the Modernisation of Agriculture August 5 2005 Draft

Uganda Joint Assistance Strategy (UJAS); June 23 2005 draft

The Manager; Management Strategies for Improving Health Services, Volume 11, Number 3 (2002).

Appendix 5: List of persons interviewed for the ‘Literacy and Continuing Education’ evaluation

Date (2005)	Organisation/Institution	Persons met
June 20	LABE	Patrick Kiirya (Director), Simon Kisira (M&E), Sarah Ellis (International Volunteer – Administrator), Dawn Burks (LitNet Advocacy Coordinator), Stella Tumwebaze (Regional Manager – Jinja and Kamuli). Humphrey Muhangi (Regional Manager – Northern)
July 11	Jinja District offices	Benon Rwanguha (District Community Development Officer); Stephen Bwayo (District Gender Officer); Eustace George Gakwandi (District Chief Administrative Office;
July 11	Jinja District – County and Sub-County Literacy Plan Review meeting	Sarah Kadama (Secretary for Education, Mafubira sub-county) Rashid Mugamba (Vice Chairman, Walukuba) Betty Aguti (Instructor, Walukuba) Peter Ayazika (Community Dev. Officer, Buyengo) Richard Gulume (Chairman LCIII, Mafubira) Michael Kasede (Chairman LCIII, Mpumude) Grace Nkutu Karabire (Sub-county Chief, Mafubira) Zaina Kayima Kirunda, Secretary for Education, Mpumude) Irene Musasizi Kaboggoza (Community Dev. Officer, Central Division) Jonathan Kisira (Chairperson LCIII, Buyengo Sub-county) Geoffrey Muzusa (Community Development Officer, Jinja Municipal Council)
July 11	Kakira Sugar Works (Private Sector partner)	Catherine Higwira Nabunya; Christine Nabirye
July 11	Kakira Sugar Works Adult Literacy Class – <i>Umoja ni Ngufu</i> – Unity is Strength Group)	Ahmed Adrabo, Norah Ajio, Dinah Mary Aanyu, Besi Nambuya, Suzan Candiru, Rose Andee, Belinda Tibagalika, Beartrice Obute
July 11	LABE Field staff	Stella Tumwebaze (Coordinator – Jinja, Kamuli); Joyce Nairuba (Coordiantor, Bugiri)
July 12	Jinja District – Office of the District Chairperson	Frederick Gume (District Chairperson – Political Head); Agnes Nabirye, Secretary for Education
July 12	Busoga Cultural Research Centre, Catholic Diocese of Jinja	Patrick Kuluba (Field Research Officer); Fr. Richard Kayaga Gonza (Director)
July 12	Multi-Purpose Training and Community Empowerment Association from Iganga District	Owor Peter Minor (Prog. Coordinator); Badru Balidawa (Administrative Secretary)
July 12	Budondo/Buwagi Sub-counties	Shiidah Mugude (student, St. Stephen, Budondo)

		Salimat Namulodi (student, Trinity College, Buwagi)
July 12	Butagaya Sub-county Literacy Instructors/CDO/CDW/Parish Chief	
July 12	Literacy Classes, Nabukosi	22 of the Level One Class (<i>Tugezeko</i> – Let’s try); 26 of Level Two Class (<i>Twenyweze</i> – Let’s tighten up)
July 14	LitNet Uganda	Dawn Burks (Coordinator)
July 14	LABE	Patrick Kiirya (Director); Godfrey Sentumbwe (Curriculum and Training Manager), Inez Sutton (International Volunteer)
July 25	Education Action International	Alice Shirley (Programme Officer)
July 25	LABE	Simon (M&E Officer)
August 8	LABE at a staff retreat	Patrick Kiirya (Director), Godfrey Sentumbwe (Curriculum and Training Manager), Humphry Muhangi (Regional Manager – Northern), Simon Kisira (Regional Manager – West Nile), Stella Kihangwe Tumwebaze (Regional Manager – Jinja and Kamuli), Karen Smith (Regional Manager – Bigiri), Inez Sutton (Training Officer), Oroma Joy (Project Officer – Northern Region), Monica Kawonaho (Project Officer), Acen Carolyn (Admin. Assistant – Yps), Sarah Smith (Administrator), Dawn Burks (LitNet Advocacy Coordinator), Busingye Nelly (Student Researcher), Lawrence Ddumba (Driver), Emma Adongo (Helper).
August 15	FABE Evaluator and LABE staff	Dorothy Aanyu Angura (FABE Evaluator), Monica Kawongolo, Joy Aroma, Simon Kisira
August 24	Feedback session with LABE staff	Simon Kisira, Humphrey Muhangi, Monica Kawongolo, Godfrey Sentumbwe, Patrick Kiirya, Inez Sutton, Saral Willis, Joy Oroma
September 5	Education Action	Sally Pritchard, International Programmes Manager

Appendix 6: List of persons interviewed - FABE project

Date (2005)	Organisation/Institution	Persons met
July 30th	LABE/FABE	Patrick Kiirya (Director) Simon Kisira (M&E) Monica
August 4	Bugiri district	Oundo Oguti D (D E O) Proscovia Biryeri – (Inspector of Schools –South Bugiri).
	FABE Bugiri – Field coordinator	Karen Smith
	Makoma Primary school	Olam Jerom (Headteacher Makoma P/S) Nabinje Madinah (Deputy H/tr Nakoma P/S) Kakuve B Mudoola (Itakaibolu C.O.U P/S. Adong Joy (Headteacher Nasanga P/S) School management/FABE committee members Kintu Wiberforce – Makoma P/s Obboth Paul – Makoma P/s Biso Joseph – Nakoma P/S Namukwana Nulu – Itakaibolu P/S Mangeni Robert – Nasanga P/S. Teachers Literacy Instructors/ Adult educators: Wangolo Gabriel Okongo
August 5	Bugiri district- Nakoma P/S Nankoma Sub-county	Arionget 9 Headteacher (Makoma P/S) Mukiibi Nathan (sub-county chief) Literacy Instructors/ Adult educators:
August 7	FABE field Coordinator	Joyce Nairuba (interview by phone)
Nov. 2	Parent learner	Sarah Musana
	Teacher, Nsono Primary school	Isabirye Samuel Patrick
	Literacy Instructor, El-Shaddai	Nabbandha Kekulina
	FABE Field Officer	Joyce Nairuba

List of Parents and Children met during the parent –Child joint session

P1 joint session

	Name of Parent	Name of Child
1	Ofwono John Bosco	Omala
2	Oketcho Francis	Otwani vincent
3	Awori Margaret	Byakatonda Maliamu
4	Byogero Kamuyati	Tibetenderwa Sumaya
5	Awori Florence	Nyiire Sesiriya
6	Athieno Rose	Bybons Annet
7	Wawuya Ateven	Musigoma Geofrey
8	Abbo Veronica	Adikini Jeniffer
9	Akello budesta	Olowo Geoffrey
10	Birungi Sarah	Anyindo Dorothy
11	Aremi Rosemary	Evalyne Nyamukola
12	Ongard Steven	Oboth Wilbeforce
13	Awori Margaret	Muzira Gedeon
14	Naigaga Florence	Mukisa Ibrahim
15	Akecth Jeniffer	Aneno Irene
16	Akware jane	Atwani Dorothy
17	Onyango Mathew	Achieng Florence
28	Kirabira Jane	Awori Jackline
19	Amunyeti Annet	Okethc Peter
20	Nabwire Monic	Ndibairawa Hagira
21	Amusugutu Sabina	Alakyai William
22	Bogere Christopher	Namubya malyamu

P2 Joint session:

1	Name of parent	Name of Child
2	Kintu Wilberfoce	Masumba Hahemba
3	Mugaba Adam	Khayemba Charles
4	Otyeng Michael	Mugaba habibu
5	Nekesa Elizabeth	Namulwa Aisha
6	Situma S	Kubiha Danes
7	Odworu G	Akware Scovia
8	Omwani B	Anyango Mary
9	Wagalwa S	Namujogo Baker
10	Okware J	Aketch sarah
11	OwereY	Ocheiti Benard
12	Ogutuyi M	Oketch Laston
13	Nyamwenge D	Agulasi Amase
14	Akongo Mary	Oboth Bendicto
15	Tugule William	Nandutu Agnes
16		Nafamba Ketula
17	Jiliman Benafasio	Esepeti Stephen
18	Awori Florence	Mukisa Fred

19	Akoth Mary	Baikatonda Joseph
20	Akoth Margaret	Owori John D
21	Ofumbi Yosia	Owori Amos
22	Nalwede Juliet	Inume Winnie
23	Onyango Godfrey	Oketcho Godfrey
24	Anyango Rita	Athieno Florence
25	Eya Patrick	Oroni Dismas
26	Nangobi Rose	Naigaga Milly
27	Babileka Rachael	Tumwebaze Fred
28	Gada Eunice	Mirembe Eva
29	Akongo Rose	Aloni Mugabi
30	Awori Rose	Muwaguzi Daniel
31	Achieng Rose	Kalimu Tabitha
32	Balidawa Christopher	Nahiumbwe Erine
33	Awori Christine	Awori Yonina
34	Okongo Mary	Andera Mary
35		Angwena Rose