

RWANDA: LEARNING TO READ MEANS LEARNING TO LIVE BETTER

Supporting adult learners in Rwanda to improve their life skills

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What's the problem?

In a country where only a third of adults have completed primary school and nearly a third cannot read or write a short note, delivery of adult literacy classes depends heavily on untrained community tutors, many of whom have only completed primary school-level education.

Literacy centres in Rwanda are generally located in churches, but some are also held in the open. Most are poorly equipped and lack basic learning resources. As a result, few adult literacy learners develop skills that would enable them to have them greater autonomy and create a problem-solving mindset. Without these, individuals cannot secure better employment, often feel marginalised within their communities, and rely on day farm labouring or subsistence farming to survive.

What did we do about it?

Researchers recognised the value of SPA (Social Practises Approach) and used this approach to build capacity at the University of Rwanda by training five established academic staff members, enabling the University to provide pre-service and in-service teacher training, both in delivering adult literacy classes and in training community literacies tutors.



Who was involved?

Applied education research led by Professor Pamela Abbott, Dr Aileen Ackland, and Dr Peter Mtika from the University of Aberdeen, combined expertise in adult literacies education with an in-depth knowledge of Rwandan everyday social practices.

What's happening next?

The project has enabled the University of Rwanda and teacher training colleges to implement a new model for training community literacies tutors and has contributed to the Rwandan government's mission to improve adult literacy levels and enhance wellbeing in the country.

Besides reading, writing, and counting, learners and community tutors point to improved knowledge and skills of planning and cooking a balanced diet, strategies to prevent HIV/ AIDS, family planning strategies, health management and sanitation, environmental protection and crop management, and financial management.



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