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# Walden University

College of Education

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Mathilde Shihako

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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the review committee have been made.

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Walden University
2020

Abstract

Tupumenu Women’s Persistence in Namibia's National Adult Literacy Program

by

Mathilde Shihako

MEd, Rhodes University, 2005

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

July 2020

## Abstract

The Ministry of Education implemented the Namibia National Adult Literacy Program (NNALP) in 1992 to provide adults with the skills necessary for earning a living through employment or self-employment in Namibia's modern economy. There has been growing concern that women in Namibia's Tupumenu district were dropping out of the otherwise successful national literacy program. The study investigated how NNALP alumni overcame such barriers as of lack of time, husband refusing to allow their wives to work outside of the home, and the death of male breadwinners to avoid dropping out of the program. A qualitative phenomenological research design drew data from in-depth structured interviews of program participants concerning first-hand experiences pursuant to the research questions. Eleven out of 30 NNALP alumni women in the Kavango East Region were selected using homogenous sampling to participate in this study. Four themes emerged based on the conceptual framework from Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule: voice as a communication tool to strengthen individual identity, significance of the value of the literacy, inspiration to meet the challenges to persist, and dialog to improve their personal circumstances. The study offered insights that are potentially useful in curriculum reform to improve the skill levels achieved by graduates, whether they are job seekers or are already working within their regional economy. The findings of this study also hold implications for other interventions to improve adult literacy in Namibia.

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# Dedication

I dedicate my Project Study to my posthumously parents Ms. Elfriede Nangura Kudumo and Mr. Frans Schaffer Kambongi. I started this journey while my mother was still alive. She left me halfway when her journey ended in this world. I honor them for the type of person I am today. Thank you for being such wonderful parents. We shall meet again.

# Acknowledgments

I express my profound appreciation to all of those who supported me through this Project Study process and my entire graduate journey.

Firstly, I would like to thank my Committee Chair Dr. Katherine Garlough and Dr. Shannon Decker, the second committee member, for all the work encouragement and support. Dr. Garlough, a special thank you for always believing that I could do more and guiding me through this process. Dr. Decker, thank you for your constructive critique, which helped me to grow to ensure that the standard was always kept. Without this committee, I would not have this work of which I am so proud.

A very special thank you to my children and my grandson. Thank you for being patient to endure the loneliness at home. Your love has given me the strength and confidence to carry on with my dream. Thank you to my colleagues at work who encouraged me to push and forge ahead and never give up. Your encouragement kept me going. Thank you to my special friend Marina, for being a true friend and the right person I needed in my life through this. Thank you to my sister, brother, and all my cousins and aunts, for the extra support you have given me. Finally, I would like to acknowledge the person who has always believed in me and known that I was capable of doing this even when I doubted myself, God, the Almighty, without the protection and guidance from the Holy Spirit, I would not have done it.

Thank you to all my research participants and to the Directorate of Adult Education, Kavango East Regional staff. The work you all have done was marvelous, and your dedication inspirational.

Table of Contents

List of Tables ..... v

Section 1: The Problem ..... 1

The Local Problem ..... 1

Table 1 ..... 2

Rationale ..... 4

Definition of Terms ..... 12

Significance of the Study ..... 14

Research Question ..... 18

Review of the Literature ..... 18

Conceptual Framework ..... 18

Review of the Broader Problem ..... 24

The Marginalization of Women ..... 25

Repression of Women in Africa ..... 28

Literacy in Africa ..... 30

Women and Literacy ..... 32

Women, Literacy, and Development ..... 36

Implications ..... 40

Summary ..... 42

Section 2: The Methodology ..... 43

Research Design and Approach ..... 43

Participants ..... 45

Access to Participants ..... 47

Researcher-Participant Relationship ..... 48

Participant Protection and Participants' Rights ..... 50

Data Collection ..... 51

Method of Analysis ..... 55

Limitations ..... 58

Evidence of Trustworthiness ..... 60

Data Analysis Results ..... 61

Research Setting ..... 62

Protection of Participants ..... 62

Collection ..... 63

Interviews ..... 63

Participant Profile ..... 65

Participants' Responses to the Interview Questions ..... 65

Interview Questions ..... 66

Themes ..... 79

Voice 80

Significance ..... 81

Inspiration ..... 83

Dialog 85

Summary of Outcomes to the Literature ..... 87

Project Deliverable in Terms of the Results ..... 91

Section 3: The Project ..... 93

Introduction....93
The Goal of the White Paper....95
Rationale....95
Review of the Literature....96
Best Practices in African Literacy Programs....97
Improvement of Adult Literacy Policies and Programs....97
Women's Involvement in Programs....98
Skills and Entrepreneurship Training....99
Integration of Literacy Skills and Training with Basic Education....100
Empowering Women....101
Lifelong Learning....102
Adult Literacy Student Support in Africa....103
Building Capacity by Introducing Variety of Adult Literacy Programs....103
Building Women's Capacity Through Skills Acquisition Programs....104
Loan Support....105
Program Reform in African Literacy Programs....107
Appropriate Solutions Through Action Research....108
Strengthen the Provision of Learning Environment....110
Encouraging and Promoting the Practical Usage of Libraries by Adult Literacy Learners....111
Literacy Viewed as a Fundamental Right for Citizens....112
Project Description....113

Project Implications ..... 117
Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions ..... 119
Project Strengths and Limitations ..... 119
Recommendations for Alternative Approaches ..... 119
Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change ..... 120
Reflection on the Importance of the Work ..... 123
Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research ..... 123
Conclusion ..... 125
References ..... 126
Appendix A: The Project ..... 148
Appendix B: Interview Questions ..... 169
Appendix C: Interview Questions (Translated in Rumanyo) ..... 172
Appendix D: Letter of Approval from Stakeholder ..... 176
Appendix E: Member Checking Interview Summaries and Responses ..... 178
Appendix F: Experiences of Adult Women Alumni ..... 241

List of Tables

Table 1. Regions With a High Retention Rate Versus a Low Retention Rate.....2

Section 1: The Problem

## The Local Problem

Women in the literacy program in the Tupumenu district of Namibia were dropping out of a highly successful national literacy program at regional levels such as in the Khomas Region, Ohangwena Region, Oshana Region, and Kavango East Region in Namibia (Ministry of Education Quarterly Report, 2016). Although the Namibia National Adult Literacy Program (NNALP) was implemented nationwide, the program might not have transferred the skills needed for upward mobility to adult women at the local site. The uncertainty of perceiving benefits to literacy made it essential to investigate to determine whether the NNALP equipped female learners with skills to earn a living in modern society. Retention in the adult literacy program in the Tupumenu District of the Kavango East Region in 2016 was at a rate of 83.3% women expected to complete the program (Ministry of Education Quarterly Report, 2016). Conversely, the retention rate of the program in the Kavango East Region was at 95%, with 1,457 women who registered in February 2016 and 1,378 continuing in March 2016. Thus, a total of 79 women dropped out of the program before completion. The retention rate of the program at the Namibia national level was 87%, with 9,897 women who registered in February 2016 and 8,572 women continued in March 2016. A total of 1,325 women dropped out of the program (Ministry of Basic Education, Sport & Culture, Quarterly Report, 2016). Table 1 provides a summary of these results.

**Table 1**

*Regions with a High Retention Rate Versus a Low Retention Rate*

| Program level | Registered women | Retained women | Retention rate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tupumenu District | 36 | 30 | 83.3 |
| Kavango East Region | 1,457 | 1, 444 | 95.0 |
| Khomas | 466 | 345 | 74.0 |
| Omusati | 746 | 369 | 49.5 |
| Oshana | 312 | 264 | 85.0 |
| Ohangwena Region | 444 | 444 | 100.0 |
| Namibia national | 9, 898 | 8,572 | 87.0 |

The case of the Tupumenu district was selected because it was in one of the regions with a relatively enough women who persistently were retained in the program compared to other regions in the national literacy program in Namibia. In terms of traveling cost implications, the Tupumenu district was nearer than other possible research sites, such as Omusati. Secondly, time constraints had to be taken into consideration. For these reasons, the study was limited to one area, namely, the Tupumenu district in the Kavango East Region of Namibia.

According to the Ministry of Education (2014), for Namibian women, the challenge of acquiring skills needed for employment is compounded by the resistance of husbands and male employers to the idea of these women working outside their homes.

Furthermore, there was disparity selecting between men and women acquiring skills needed for employment, so differences in the educational background—below Grade 7 for women—affect the employment of women negatively (Ministry of Education, 2014). The NNALP participants were predominantly women. Men in the community have greater opportunities to access education than do women. Not remarkably, the level of adult literacy in men and women in Namibia differs. The National Planning Commission (NPC; 2014) showed similar gender role differences regarding access to education. In this study, which focuses on the Tupumenu district in Namibia, the participants were predominately women because of the difficulties associated with having both men and women together in the classroom.

Ordinarily, in Namibia, prejudicial factors can lead to men avoiding programs that integrate women. To substantiate this argument, Lee (2012) contended that men generally do not feel secure participating in activities where comparisons of their achievements and those of women would be inevitable. Thus, when a Namibian woman becomes literate, gaining access to information that qualifies her to question the decisions of men, many of her male family members, neighbors, and colleagues will regard her as a threat to their own social position. The experience of the Namibian women alumni of the NNALP in the Tupumenu district was that, despite attaining literacy skills, they could not make their own decisions and challenge male dominance (personal communication, March 7, 2015). While many believe that male dominance is an issue for gaining literacy, the women in the program were asked about their decisions to stay in the program and complete it. A dropout rate from the existing program is a need for concern. The dropout rate triggered

an inquiry about women in the adult literacy program. The dropout rate of 17% for the women in the Tupumenu district compared to the 5% dropout rate nationally was noteworthy. However, the data did not explain the reason for dropout rate and, therefore, has prompted the importance of exploring the problems related to women dropping out of the program

## Rationale

Life is generally difficult for women living in rural areas, as women lack the skills necessary to compete in the labor sector. According to the Kavango 2011 Census Regional Profile (2014), 60% of people live below the poverty line, 35% are illiterate, and only 3% of people living in Kavango have access to the formal instruction that could result in improving their economic condition. The Kavango 2011 Census Regional Profile revealed that roughly 300,000 people lacked basic literacy and numeracy skills at the time of the study. According to the National Planning Commission, (NPC, 2014), 35% of all people lacking basic literacy skills are women; the remainder are men. This deficit has seriously constrained the active participation in the social and economic development of Namibia, as literacy is viewed as a human right and the basis for lifelong learning. Individuals, families, and communities become empowered by improving their quality of life United Nations Educational Scientific Organization (UNESCO, 2015). UNESCO's research has shown that literacy helps to eradicate poverty, reduce child mortality, curb population growth, achieve gender equality, and ensure sustainable development, peace, and democratic forms of government.

Despite a lack of skills to function effectively in the local economy, most women become heads of households for two reasons. One reason is the refusal of fathers to accept parental responsibilities (Kavango Census Regional Profile, 2014). As a result of the perception that men are breadwinners, women thus are compelled to accept responsibility for looking after children and are confined in a responsibility assigned as the result of their gender. Second, the death of a male breadwinner compels women to take care of the households by themselves (Kavango Census Regional Profile, 2014). Smith-Greenaway (2015) showed that gaining skills is an important factor in empowering women in society to push for more opportunities. Creating better opportunities often demands better education for women, and this could become a factor in minimizing gender differences in society.

Gender differences in terms of employment are common, regardless of education. The rate of unemployment in Namibia for workers of both genders was reported to be around 44.6% for men and 54.4% for women in the Kavango Region (Namibia National Census of 2011, 2014).Due to increased educational opportunities for men, men became more employable than women in this context. According to UNESCO (2015), disparities in literacy affect exposure to different opportunities. The female alumni of the NNALP find it challenging to secure employment or achieve successful self-employment in the market economy, as reported by Lee (2012), Seyoun and Basha (2017), and Ojogwu & Ebubedike (2018).Lee asserted that a shortage of employment prospects has disheartened some learners, particularly women because most of them seemed to prefer working for an employer other than themselves. Women alumni faced challenges when they tried to

integrate themselves into the economic mainstream of the country, as the skills they gained from the NNALP were not sufficient. The NNALP curriculum was not relevant; hence, the curriculum could not achieve the objectives for which the adult literacy program was created in the first place.

Whether the NNALP improved participants' lives remains elusive due to a gap in the literature. In this study, I aimed to fill this gap in the research with regards to the barriers, such as a lack of time, husbands refusing to allow their wives to work outside of the home, and the death of male breadwinners to which the dropout rate is attributed. There is a need to understand factors such as dropout rates from the NNALP and why they occur. Although Likando (2015) reported on the curriculum content of the NNALP, no researcher has proposed reasons why women drop out.Few researchers have attempted to investigate the impact of the NNALP on participants' lives and why the program has failed to achieve its goal. The investigation of the significance of the NNALP is crucial for the proper evaluation and delivery of the program. This study helps to fill this gap of how NNALP alumni overcame such barriers as of lack of time, husband refusing to allow their wives to work outside of the home, and the death of male breadwinners to avoid dropping out of the program.

There is a need for quality education to equip individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the job market. The NNALP does not meet this need (Ministry of Education, 2014). Although the commitment of the Namibia government to ensure equal education opportunities to all citizens cannot be challenged, concerns have been raised regarding the significance of the NNALP in the participant's lives. Filling the

gap can help to reveal a better understanding of factors that contribute to high dropout rates.

The program does not focus on the life skills that can help participants to function effectively in society. Individuals who successfully complete the program face challenges in competing equally for jobs in the labor market (Ministry of Education National Quarterly Report, 2013).The findings indicated that the curriculum was insufficient to equip participants with functional skills because those completing the program and declared literate faced problems in securing a job. The NNALP does not equip participants with the fundamental relevant skills needed to survive in the world.

Kavango Region's total population is in rural areas, with a 71.3% female majority. A low level of literacy among women creates a barrier in achieving equality in the labor sector. Smith-Greenaway (2015) asserted that the failure of the NNALP to equip adult learners with literacy skills has affected women disproportionately. Women settle for low-skilled paid employment, such as cleaners. This means that the jobs that Namibian women are sometimes able to find cannot provide sufficient income to support themselves and their children. Only superior educational attainment can provide women with the competitive advantage they need to compete against men for well-paid jobs in education, government, and other sectors where skilled and knowledgeable workers are needed.

Women's literacy lags in some of the developing countries like Nigeria, South Africa, Botswana, and Namibia. The main contributing factors are the cultural and social barriers women face, such as early marriage, low mobility, son preference, girls'

responsibilities of sibling care and domestic work, and low motivation of women themselves coupled with poverty (Ghose & Mullick, 2015).The barriers make it extremely difficult for women, especially those from marginalized groups, to access literacy. However, women's groups have criticized overemphasizing cultural aspects while neglecting to consider structural and institutional factors. The focus of this study was to investigate such barriers as lack of time, husbands who refuse to allow their wives to work outside of the home, and the death of male breadwinners that contribute to the dropout rate.

Historically, developing countries have lacked adequate public education during colonial periods. Like many developing countries, Namibia lacked adequate education before it gained independence. During the colonial regime, and illiterate adults were not offered opportunities to learn literacy skills (Ministry of Education, 2014). Furthermore, most citizens were marginalized and neglected with respect to their education. Therefore, after independence, Namibia established a new Ministry of Education and Culture that employed various efforts to address the issue of inadequate education. The ministry developed a Directorate of Adult Basic Education to provide people aged 15 years and above with basic education. In 1992, the Directorate of Adult Basic Education established the NNALP to provide literacy in both English and Rumanyo (an indigenous language). The fundamental objective of this literacy program was to provide adults with literacy skills—writing, reading, numeracy, and the computer skills necessary to earn a living in a modern economy. The NNALP's main goal was to achieve 80% adult literacy by the year 2000 (Ministry of Education, 2014). However, research does not exist concerning the

dropping out of adult literacy female of the otherwise successful national literacy program. According to the Education Officer, the learners might have had broader expectations than what the program currently offers.

Although the government of Namibia established the NNALP as a high priority nationwide effort, according to (Lee, (2012), Seyoun and Basha (2017), and Ojorgwu & Ebubedike (2018), the program had not significantly improved the literacy level of the participants to enable them to improve their lives due to the attrition rate of the women in the Sambyu district. Adult upper primary education (AUPE) has a curriculum that includes general knowledge in addition to numeracy and language. According to Likando, Matengu, and Shihako (2016), the context of the texts covered in the NNALP was complicated for the learners. The course was beyond adult learners' comprehension, and this lowered the retention rate, particularly among women. Due to their inability to comprehend the content, learners, particularly women, had a negative perception towards the NNALP, which in turn led to high dropout and the relative absence of adult women in the competitive job market.

The curriculum guidelines for the AUPE defines five core areas in which curriculum design should respond to the broad social and economic needs of learners: (a) personal and social development, (b) development and work-related skills, (c) competencies and attitudes, (d) social integration and nation-building, and (e) quality of life improvements (Ministry of Education, 2014). Although the AUPE integrated the goal of developing basic literacy and numeracy skills in individuals with broader concerns for their development as workers, household leaders, and citizens, it offered no guidance as

to how a curriculum might affect such integration. Without it, investment in adult education could easily fail to reap any real social gains.

A program that does not consider learners' needs may not improve literacy levels. According to Likando, Matengu, and Shihako, (2016), the NNALP did not take into consideration the settings, economic activities, and community needs. The results suggested that the NNALP had failed to meet its goals of offering writing, reading, numeracy, and computer skills to all adults. Furthermore, the NNALP alumni showed no increase in the rate of employment relative to adults who had not received the training (Ebubedike, 2018; Lee, 2012; Seyoun & Bashe, 2017.The findings suggested that adults who chose to participate in the NNALP did not gain employment benefits. While the program's most fundamental objective is to provide adults with the skills necessary for earning a living, many of its female participants completed it with a frustrating feeling that the skills they had been taught did not prepare them adequately for the needs in their lives (Lee, 2012). Jonas (2013) evaluated the role of the NNALP in the daily lives of adult learners with hearing impairments in Khomas, Ohangwena, and Omusati Regions. Jonas found that participants were willing to become functionally literate, but the program did not assist them in acquiring significant literacy skills to assist them in their lives.

In this study, I investigated how the NNALP alumni overcame such barriers as of lack of time, husband refusing to allow their wives to work outside of the home, and the death of male breadwinners to avoid dropping out of the program.Based on the results, the study provides recommendations on how the curriculum can be reformed to produce

more positive social results. Global studies such as Mkhize and Zondi (2015), Manyonganise (2015), Olomukoro and Adelore (2015), Ojogwu (2013), Hallows (2013), Jinadu and Kaur (2014), Smith-Greenaway (2015), and Salmenniemi and Adamson (2014), emphasized the significance of adult education, although none of them were in the context of Namibia. Furthermore, the effectiveness of the NNALP in improving participants' lives has not been thoroughly examined. Few researchers have attempted to investigate the impact of the NNALP on participants' lives and why the program has failed to achieve its goals. The investigation of the significance of the women in the NNALP is crucial to improve their lives.

While the NNALP was designed to help qualify unemployed and low-income earners in the workforce to raise their standard of living, there is evidence showing that its alumni have not always come out with sufficient skills to start profitable businesses of their own or to be able to meet the specific requirements of jobs made available by others (Ebubedike, 2018; Lee, 2012; Seyoun & Bashe, 2017).Through the testimony of a sample population of women who completed the NNALP program, I present insights that gave them a voice in processes that were intended for the improvement of their livelihoods. Reforming the NNALP will ensure that the program can produce positive social outcomes effectively.

The study was conceived with the goal of discovering why many of the adult literacy women felt the need to drop out of the program.The study sheds more light on the NNALP and creates new knowledge.The purpose of this study was to investigate how NNALP alumni overcame such barriers as of lack of time, husband refusing to allow

their wives to work outside of the home, and the death of male breadwinners to avoid dropping out of the program. This study provides teachers and curriculum developers in the NNALP with insights derived from actual adult learners' experience. These insights could help guide their efforts to addressing the needs of the adult women by improving women's low participation in the adult program

## Definition of Terms

*Adult learning*: This term refers to the engagement of adults in purposeful and relevant learning experiences that lead to a change in attitude, beliefs, or behavior and that takes place over extended, or sustained, periods of time. Adult learning is about the acquisition of knowledge and skills, not merely attendance at a training or workshop (Rothwell, 2008).

*Adult literacy*: This term refers to the ability of an adult to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts (UNESCO Report, 2014). Flynn, Brown, Johnson, & Rodger, 2011) also viewed literacy as the ability to understand and use printed information in daily activities at home, at work, and in the community to achieve one's goals and to develop one's knowledge and potential.

*Development*: In this study, the term development refers to a process of helping people change and equipping them with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to conceive, plan, design, and implement their own self-development (Indabawa & Mpofu, 2006). In the context of this study, development can be seen as an agent for general improvement in all spheres of society in terms of reduction of poverty, discrimination,

inequality, unfairness, and dominations in adult learning (United Nations Development Program (UNDP), 2001).

*Functional literacy skills*: In this study, such skills are the skills that allow the adult learners to engage in social, political, and economic activities effectively and activities in which literacy is normally assumed in their culture or group as life-orientation skills that literacy programs have to offer to adult learners in order for them to use these skills for the sustainability of their living conditions (Openjuru, 2004).

*Fundamental relevant skills*: These skills are skills that enhance the quality of women's life (Ministry of Education, 2014).

*Development*: This term refers to a process of helping people change and equipping them with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to conceive, plan, design, and implement their own self-development (Indabawa & Mpofu, 2006). In this study, it can be seen as an agent for general improvement in all spheres of society in terms of reduction of poverty, discrimination, inequality, unfairness, and domination in adult learning (see UNDP, 2001).

*Namibia' National Adult Literacy Program (NNALP)*: Refers to the adult literacy program countrywide aimed at improving the literacy skills of the Namibian people (Ministry of Education, 2014).

*Positive social outcome*: Such an outcome refers to the attributes women showed after attending the program, which is the capability to read and write on their own and being capable of using their own self-monitoring and self-correction strategies to make meaning from and with print (Stromquist, 2015, p. 180).

*Upward social mobility*: This phrase refers to the movement of individuals, families, households, or other categories of people within or between social strata in a society. It can also be defined as a change in status relative to one's current position within a given society (Higginbotham, 1992).

*Women's empowerment*: This process is one through which structures of power can be identified, negotiated, and transformed, and literacy and education are regarded as critical means through which such processes could be unleashed (Ghose & Mullick, 2015).

## Significance of the Study

The current study provides evidence from a sample population of women who completed the literacy program.The study may be useful to the local education setting because I investigated how the NNALP alumni overcame such barriers to complete the program such as of lack of time, husband refusing to allow their wives to work outside of the home, and the death of male breadwinners to avoid dropping out of the program.The study plays an important role in understanding women's attitudes towards the NNALP. Research by the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (2015) revealed a positive correlation between education and the requirements of parents, mainly those of mothers, and their children's educational participation and attainment. Gaining confidence in their abilities through participation in adult literacy programs can help women build the self-esteem they need in order to overcome the challenges they face in a modern economy and to see themselves as part of a future that is different from the world in which they live (Flynn, Brown, & Rodger, 2011). However, this can only occur where women have

sufficient access to effective literacy training. The significance of this study is its investigation into how the NNALP alumni overcame such barriers as of lack of time, husband refusing to allow their wives to work outside of the home, and the death of male breadwinners to avoid dropping out of the program.This study is important in understanding, for example, the reasons for enrolment for improve their livelihood. In addition, I explored the perceptions of people on the NNALP.

The value of this study is that it provides literacy curriculum designers and teachers with an understanding that is based upon the real and detailed experiences and views of adult literacy learners. The information from this study could help them gain an understanding of the implementation of the NNALP on women's persistence in and completion of the program until graduation. Such success can lead to greater rates of learning output and an increase in the number of NNALP graduates with adequate skills in the local setting.

Based on the results, the study provided recommendations on how the NNALP alumni overcame such barriers as of lack of time, husband refusing to allow their wives to work outside of the home, and the death of male breadwinners to avoid dropping out of the program.The curriculum can be reformed to produce increased positive social results. Global studies such as those by Moruatona (2020), McKay (2018), Morakinyo, Nzima, and Kapueja (2018), Mkhize and Zondi (2015), Manyonganise (2015), Olomukoro and Adelore (2015), Ojogwu (2013), Hallows (2013), Jinadu and Kaur (2014), Smith-Greenaway (2015), and Salmenniemi and Adamson (2014) emphasized the significance of adult education, although none of them were in the context of Namibia. Furthermore,

the effectiveness of the NNALP in improving participants' lives has not been thoroughly examined. Few researchers have attempted to investigate how the NNALP alumni overcame such barriers as of lack of time, husband refusing to allow their wives to work outside of the home, and the death of male breadwinners to avoid dropping out of the program.The investigation of the significance of the women in the NNALP is crucial to improving women's lives. The study helps to fill this gap and creates knowledge on how the literacy needs of female adult learners are addressed by the NNALP

While the NNALP was designed to help qualify unemployed and low-income earners in the workforce raise their standard of living, there is evidence that its alumni have not always come out with sufficient skills to start profitable businesses of their own or to be able to meet the specific requirements of jobs made available by others (Lee, 2012).Through testimony by a sample population of women who completed the NNALP and those who dropped out of the program, this study offers insights that allow them a voice in processes that were intended for the improvement of their livelihoods. The study provides useful information that illuminates how to reform the curriculum to better provide its graduates with skills that help them find jobs and as workers in their regional economies. Reforming the NNALP should ensure that the program produces positive social outcomes effectively.

The study contributes to the improvement of the lives of the women, particularly in rural areas, by providing adult literacy providers and policymakers with insight into areas that the NNALP needs to revise. I expect the results of this study to benefit adult learners in various ways. First, the findings of these studies are useful and most

significant in providing lessons on the socioeconomic impact of global literacy. They shed light on how Namibian women in rural areas could be assisted in terms of literacy in facing various socioeconomic challenges. Second, the results show policymakers the importance of revising the existing practices and policies to ensure that the NNALP is beneficial to learners. Third, this study might be useful to the Directorate of Adult Education in Namibia in evaluating the effectiveness of the NNALP and making it more relevant to adult learners. Lastly, the results of this study contribute to the existing local and global literature related to the views and attitudes regarding adult literacy. The intention is that it adds to a new and better understanding of how adult learners perceive the NNALP and its influence on a disadvantaged community, such as adult women in Namibia. The study is, therefore, useful in understanding the perceptions of women who have successfully completed the NNALP. In short, this study produces information that is useful to the design and administration of future adult literacy programs.

The current study offers recommendations on how to improve literacy training for Namibian women and offers insights on how to encourage men to participate in the adult literacy program by empowering them in ways that would alleviate the fears women have of being dominated in the workplace and as breadwinners in the home. For Namibia to have a workforce that can thrive in local economies that are increasingly linked to both the national and global economies, workers of both genders should maintain their sense of dignity. According to the regional chief adult education officer, this study is significant because it offers insights that prove useful in responding to the needs of the adult.

## Research Question

The purpose of this study was to investigate how the NNALP alumni overcame such barriers as of lack of time, husband refusing to allow their wives to work outside of the home, and the death of male breadwinners to avoid dropping out of the program. By exploring and reporting on the real experiences of alumni women in the NNALP, I gathered information that had influenced the adult literacy curriculum. The study consisted of one research question.

RQ: How did NNALP women alumni overcome barriers to avoid dropping out of the program?

## Review of the Literature

### Conceptual Framework

I used a conceptual framework from Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule (1986), which was a phenomenological qualitative study that explained how women know what they know with a specific emphasis on active learning. The essence of adopting a conceptual framework, as explained by Maxwell (1992), is to recognize and communicate what the researcher thinks regarding the issue being studied. I specify the background, planned to study, expresses views and prior research findings that inform the research, and summarize the literature that provides an understanding of the issues involved.

In this qualitative phenomenological study, I investigated barriers such as lack of time, husbands refusing to allow their wives to work outside of the home, and the death of male breadwinners that contribute to the dropout rate in the Kavango East Region in

terms of the NNALP study filtered through a framework established by Belenky et al. (1986).In their epistemological study of women's beliefs, which they described as "women's ways of knowing," Belenky et al. were interested in "how women know what they know" (p. 106).The researchers recognized certain notions of meaningful learning that women nurtured and appreciated, and these emerged from the reports of the participants. According to the researchers, the environment has more influence on the learning outcomes than without the learning environment (Belenky et al., 1986), implying that learning can occur in many places, such as in public gatherings, households, church gatherings, as well as in more recognized educational settings. Furthermore, they showed that education happens in every setting where women live.

Women in Namibia are different from women in developed countries in terms of access to opportunities (Ojogwu and Ebubedike (2018); Manyonganise, 2015). In Namibia, women do not get access to attend education without the approval of their husband. The role of women is to be a household helper, taking care of the children while men go out to "real-world" work. In developed countries, most women are educated, which helps them to have a voice in society. Women's voices emphasized in this study signified the authority that women have to be recognized in society. Manyonganise (2015) remarked that the voice is a communication tool and is a means of linking with other people. It also assists in developing one's identity and personal strength. Women can become more aware of the collaborative nature of their construction of knowledge and use of their potential to communicate effectively in meetings when necessary.

Improvement of adult literacy requires joint efforts to deal with factors that lead to gaps (Barakat, 2016). There are many existing barriers that need collaboration if they are to be dealt with. As noted earlier, gender roles in society lead to challenges for women in adult literacy programs.Individual women need to be inwardly motivated to promote change that can be sustained because women are the source that organizes and sustain society. According to Olomukoro and Adelore (2015), women need to develop a sense of self-esteem as individuals and become more self-confident, self-reliant, cooperative, and tolerant of others in order to achieve personal growth. Olomukoro and Adelore further stated that people develop self-esteem by becoming aware of their shortfalls, as well as by recognizing the ability they see in themselves, which develops their self-confidence. The findings imply that one has the ability to examine thoughts and feelings and to be understood by others.Women in the grassroots may fail to understand the significance of education and literacy, leading to the possibility of dropping out of adult literacy programs such as the NNALP in Namibia. Social movements play an important role in making the voices of women heard, for example, in the efforts of Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) to improve adult literacy levels.

Recognizing a woman's voice is a powerful tool in someone's life. Mkhize and Zondi (2015) asserted that when a person tries to be recognized, they cease to feel like a "thing" and begin to feel like an important person. For some people, this transition can take a long time. In addition, when women are seen as objects of trade, their appearance signifies that they are passive and do not speak because they believe and respect the culture that views women as only listeners and implementers of decisions made in the

first instance by men (Manyonganise. 2015). As a result, these types of women will not openly share their opinions due to embarrassment. Lack of knowledge makes them a weak link in the family because they cannot speak or make decisions for themselves. In other words, in order to strengthen women's self-confidence, these women need to participate in activities and learn from each other.

Inspiration is inspired by group activities when women collectively support one another. According to Dimici (2015), the tie that is created among women can be their defence mechanism. However, women withdraw easily from the group when they do not feel comfortable. Ghazivakili et al. (2014) supported the view that critical thinking helps people to reason analytically, and discussions can help women communicate effectively. At the same time, women have a weakness in moving away from the group because they are strongly connected to them. Realizing their potential and using it optimally can help women gain maximum benefits from groups.

Every woman has the potential of looking favourably at circumstances. Dialog helps a woman to be able to raise her opinions about a specific circumstance that defines a woman's relevance in society (Manyonganise, 2015). According to Belenky et al. (1986), this can only be possible if women use relevant tools, such as support systems, which help them to become more aware of themselves and collective truths. Onweazu and Olutoyi (2014) observed that there exist provisions of law that address the issues, but the structure of the society must be changed to shift women's mind sets and help them utilize these opportunities. The result implies that sustainable human development cannot be effective if women remain ignorant, marginalized, and subject to discrimination.

Women are receivers of knowledge. However, women should rise and show that they are not only receivers of knowledge but equal contributors to society.

Women who do not participate more in dialog activities lack confidence. According to Belenky et al. (1986), females learn by listening to others instead of participating in the dialog, and they believe more in what others say than in themselves and their ideas. Although women learn quickly from their peers, the reality revealed that they lack confidence in the capability to communicate. Olomukoro and Adelore (2015) concurred that women lack the confidence to express their feelings openly. Furthermore, the authors suggested that opportunities should be created for women to listen, to participate in conversations, and to put the learned skills into practice (Olomukoro & Adelore, 2015).In addition, creating opportunities for women has the advantage of giving them problem-solving skills and helping them realize their potential. Olomukoro and Adelore showed the influence of culture on exposure to opportunities. Culturally-developed gender identities influence how women access different opportunities in society.

In contrast, men do not dominate women who restructure their lives to form new perceptions. They should be aware that their counterpart authority is more dominant, which is referred to as the process of broadening a person's working abilities to function effectively (Olomukoro & Adelore, 2015; Oztunc, Oo, & Serin (2015). Belenky et al. (1986) posited that bias could be a move that goes with more experience of internal power, self-value, selfishness, and hopefulness. Olomukoro and Adelore (2015), in a study on the political empowerment of women through literacy education programs in

Edo, and Delta States in Nigeria, stated that the purpose was to change women's lives by producing a variety of opportunities in which they could partake. However, such women in Nigeria may in general feel that they are academically and passionately isolated from others and may reflect on the previous and current contributions and better plan. Thus, women who are empowered differentiate themselves from being illiterate. In other words, uneducated women are only considered as contributors to producing babies and future generations, while literate women are considered as generating future generations' education (Olomukoro & Adelore, 2015). Nonetheless, empowerment contributes to literacy and enhances confidence in someone's personal growth. In expressing the voices of women, a possible challenge that came up was a lack of confidence. Women have been identified as lacking self-esteem. Belenky et al.'s (1986) conceptual framework, however, showed how women could use their voices to liberate themselves.

The liberation of women can be achieved by empowering them through literacy education (Bayeh, 2016). The global need for high-quality education created a demand for formal education that requires society to acquire literacy skills. High-quality education plays a crucial role in eradicating poverty and achieving gender equality to ensure sustainable development (Bayeh, 2016). High-quality education can increase women's confidence to voice their ideas. Solomon and Hubbard (2018) showed that there was no single organization that spoke for the women in Namibia. Rather, there were different NGOs and even governmental organizations that were concerned with the well-being of Namibian women. The position of women in society is greatly influenced by cultural factors.

**Review of the Broader Problem**

The following review of the literature provides a background for this study, which describes the participants' perceptions of the literacy program's effect on their social mobility. The literature review reveals the foundation of the topic under investigation (Merriam, 2009). Literacy is the cornerstone of advancing education and improving people's lives (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2013). The primary search engine included Education Research Complete, Education Resource Information Centre (ERIC), Google Scholar, ProQuest, and Sage Premier. The following terms were used to conduct the search: *adult learning, adult education, functional literacy, literacy development, skills and knowledge, women and adult learning, rural women, rural development, literacy, literacy skills, literacy in developing countries, flexibility and adaptability, initiative and self-direction, social and cross-cultural skills, productivity and accountability,* and *leadership and responsibility*. The literature review addressed primary research associated with these terms within the past 5 years.

The literature review is organized into several parts, namely, cultural perspectives about women, repression of women in Africa, literacy in developing countries, and women, literacy, and development. The literature seems to suggest that it is universally accepted that there is a relationship between literacy and marginalization of women at all levels of society. The results of the literature form an initial stage in understanding the significance of adult literacy in the lives of the participants under study.

**The Marginalization of Women**

In most developing countries, particularly in Africa, a woman's primary function is determined by cultural values. According to Olomukoro and Adelore (2015), African culture emphasizes the primary roles of women as wives and homemakers. The culture continues to influence women's participation in the workforce due to the belief that women should remain at home to look after their children. However, women play active roles in both social and economic activities. In developed nations, women contribute significantly to the lives of their families and the growth of the economy. Both men and women work to meet their household needs. Nevertheless, socially defined gender roles create a challenge for women because women's employment could be disrespectful towards their husbands when they join their husbands in employment. Thus, to respond to culturally acceptable norms, women remain at home.

Subordination of women is embedded in the legal and customary constraints that impede success in the public world. Osita-Njoku and Princewill (2015) noted that although customary and legal constraints impede their success, women themselves are the solution to achieving equality, development, and progress. In other words, custom and legal laws favor men because men regulate the structures of employment and the laws (Osita-Njoku & Princewill, 2015). Women are forced to find a way to unlock their capacity for sustainable development and how to alleviate poverty. Education is an enriching opportunity that has proven formative in creating access to gender-balanced life.

Many men, who fought for Namibian freedom, felt that this freedom did not include women, although women contributed actively to the liberation struggle. The voices of women were not recorded anywhere to show that society valued them due to cultural values and beliefs. The culture of Namibia does not allow women to be acknowledged in politics (Osita-Njoku & Princewill, 2015). According to United Nations 66th General Assembly (2017) and Akello, Lutwama-Rukundo, and Musiimenta (2017), empowerment of women is an important step to take in ensuring progress towards the millennium development goals (MDGs). This empowerment involves the improvement of literacy levels.

Societies in many African countries still regulate the traditional norms and conditions for women. However, regardless of sociocultural issues, the status of women is improving. Roomi (2011) reported that many women can overcome these social obstacles and contribute financially to successful business activities. Roomi further stated that women's involvement in domestic and other family affairs is traditionally considered to be a social responsibility rather than a profitable contribution. The state has shown improvement due to globalization and social progress. Roomi declared that women are performing an increasingly vigorous role in the economy and are now competing for employment and struggling for income-oriented jobs in an attempt to become self-governing members of society, recognized like men. Stell (2017) and Chib and Wardoyo (2018) showed that social mobility involves movement between tiers. Access to an income-oriented job minimizes challenges that women face on social mobility.

Women face the challenge of educating society on equitable gender roles. In these gender roles, women are suppressed by society in both developing and developed countries. Kalam (2014) and Weymann (2018) claimed that cultural norms impede women's development. Traditions and religious values strictly prohibit women from going against cultural norms. Stefanovici (2011) said that cultural history dictates that a man is superior to a woman. Women are suppressed by cultural norms and need to be emancipated. The fact that a man is different from a woman in terms of sex does not make a woman inferior to a man.

Gender differences in society affect the opportunities available for men and women (Anad, 2014). Anad asserted that men and women are different human beings; in life, they need one another to have fulfilling lives. This can only materialize when both recognize the inner potential that they have by agreeing to utilize what they have through mutual respect (Smith-Greenaway, 2015). In addition, women should be treated as individual human beings and with dignity because they participate in society, which qualifies them to be fully integrated and not discriminated against in any sense. Women who form strong bonds and support each other can create social change. In a study that focused on sub-Saharan Africa, Smith-Greenaway showed that there had been an expansion of school participation in recent years.

Learning is viewed from on-site activities exhibited by workers and is shared through experiences. Lloyd (2012) described this social-cultural context as a doable perspective. Wang, Bruce, and Hughes (2011), supported the notion that knowing is a practical activity and emphasized that context determines what is to be practiced,

interacted, and sociocultural affirmed with the environment. They further stated that in planning and reaping the maximum benefit from information literacy programs, the context and sociocultural influences should be considered as crucial factors in determining success, and learning should be practiced in the home environment. However, the lack of environments that creates opportunities for practice leads to communities that do not participate. When women do not have enough chances to showcase their skills, they will not participate, and their voices will not be heard in their communities.

**Repression of Women in Africa**

Women in the African context are not expected to contribute positively to economic development. According to Burgess (2011), Lee and Kim (2018), Lee (2017), Benson (2018), and Bradburg (2018), women are generally considered inferior to men. The main aim of most women is to get married, and their characteristics are rooted in known relationships where they remain at home, argued Burgess (2011). Burgess asserted that in the case of Ethiopia, women and girls are responsible for household chores and have fewer opportunities for education. Burgess (2011) further stated that women who allow suffering and abuse are often economically reliant on their husbands, who have power over finances and property. The research showed that little is known empirically about the effect of democracy on implementing the strategies meant to protect women's rights, particularly in Africa. Democracy will have an impact on women when policy implementation creates strategies such as laws that are meant to protect women's rights. In Namibia, the rights of women are guaranteed in the Namibian

constitution. However, women lack an understanding of these rights, and men manipulate this opportunity.

The democratic politics in Ethiopia gave women opportunities to create civil society organizations. Burgess (2011) asserted that women's rights activists in Ethiopia, referred to as Ethiopia Women Lawyers Association (EWLA), believed that women that are empowered could change formal state law, which would advocate women's human rights, including a first step towards addressing violence against women. The EWLA has three important areas of activities: research and law reform advocacy, legal aid services, and public education. (Burgess, 2011; Higginbotham, 1992). Burgess further stated that these were realized as not working if the following barriers were not addressed. Firstly, "The problem of women is created by the use of a formal justice system. The second is ensuring that the formal legal system that sits alongside informal customary systems protects women. The third barrier that needs to be addressed is the nature of the emerging politics in Ethiopia and repression of the civil society" (Burgess, 2011, 161). Addressing the legal system was found to be useful to enhance awareness among women and the state and to reduce the gap that results from a disparity between the two and breaking the silence that is observed as a stigma in women. This implies that the EWLA assists women in recognizing their rights because women's rights are unlikely to be on the political agenda of the state. Women are supposed to be represented at all decision-making levels to avoid men neglecting their needs as traditional culture dictates.

Marriage is valued more than education in southern Africa. According to Higgs (2011), getting married was normal for a South African woman because the groom would

offer *lobola* (money paid by the groom to the bride's family). Higgs (2011) explained that women are required to bear and raise children. Higgs further stated that Catholic African Sisters were influenced by a culture that continued to be part of their biological family. The Catholic African Sisters' voices were silenced in the community. For example, Sr. Immaculata Ngubane, a Zulu and an Oakford Dominican, experienced the disapproval of her three brothers. She joined the Oakford Dominicans in 1961 as a legal adult at the age of twenty-one, where she enjoyed freedom as a religious member that she could not have been given had she entered a Zulu marriage as demanded by her brothers (Higgs, 2011). In this silenced community, only the better-educated young people became activists. Higgs stated that class divisions occurred between those with better education and those without education. This means that culture controlled women, especially uneducated women (Higgs, 2011; Ho & Na, 2013; Jackson & Higginbotham, 1992). Educated women found freedom by joining religious organizations. Religious women's horizons were broadened by education in the church and in the community. Thus, religious values play a crucial role in women's empowerment.

**Literacy in Africa**

There are different factors that affect the educational attainment of different groups in society. Mlachila, Tapsoba, and Tapsoba (2014), Gove Brunette, Bulat, Carrot, Henry, Macon, Nderu, & Sitabbkhan, (2017), and Trudell and Cheffy (2017) showed that literacy rates are lower in African countries compared to developed countries. Limited access to educational opportunities impacts a great number of societies in Africa. According to Ngwaru (2012) and Jones (2018), lack of educational opportunities in the

past has affected 774 million adults who do not have basic literacy skills, of which about two-thirds are women. UNESCO's Institute for Lifelong Learning (2015, 2017) stated that in sub-Saharan Africa, adult literacy rates are below the developing country average of 79 %. UNESCO further stated that these imbalances must be addressed to ensure improved living conditions. Haeran (2014) asserted that investing in resources to support the education of women is important because women with improved education can enhance their life opportunities and standards of living. Educated women are more likely to be employed and able to engage in self-employment (Jones, 2018; Qwiny, 2017; Shabalala, 2018; Stromquist, 2015). Women who advance in occupational social status actively participate in education and have better access to information and knowledge, all of which increases their chances of upward social mobility.

In Africa, underdevelopment goes hand in hand with a high population of illiterate adults. A study conducted by Ojogwu and Ebubedike, (2018) used Nigeria as a case study and revealed that the country's policy on adult literacy motivates all forms of functional education provided to the youths and adults outside the formal school system. According to Ojogwu and Ebubedike (2018), this was done because the nation realized the importance of having an educated society for accelerating the pace of national development. Illiteracy hampers women's ability to actively participate in economic and political arenas. Women are politically, economically, and socially backward due to their low literacy level. Over the last three decades, there has been an awareness of the need to empower women to increase political, economic, and social equality (Stromquist, 2015).

A country cannot achieve sustainable development without female empowerment to achieve gender equality in different areas.

The adult illiteracy rate is high in Africa; therefore, attention should be paid to the education of those adults who constitute the greatest number of leaders of today and who make crucial decisions and choices to change the future. According to Ojogwu (2013) and Ebubedike (2018), women's literacy levels and their understanding of the value of education will determine whether to send their children to school. Furthermore, good-paying jobs and political positions are reserved for educated men in society. In addition, children of educated parents seem to get better chances in education and upward social mobility than those of uneducated parents (Pfeffer & Hertel, 2015). Educated parents have a better understanding of the economy and create many opportunities for their children to explore. For the illiterate population, the larger the group, the more difficulties individuals face in finding jobs in the labor market. Increasing women's voices and raising their awareness when they realize that being empowered helps them to find jobs.

**Women and Literacy**

Literacy is understood as a human right and the origin of lifelong learning. According to Velghe (2014) and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (2017), learning is an important part of life because it involves who we are, what we do, whom we want to connect with, and what we aspire to become. Individual families and communities get empowered by improving their quality of life. According to Flynn, Brown, Johnson, and Rodger (2011), when society is empowered, it creates peace, which opens opportunities for development and makes equity possible. This implies that literacy

helps to reduce poverty and childhood mortality. Literacy also helps to curb population growth, to attain gender equality, and to ensure sustainable development, peace, and democracy. Connecting literacy to the development of life skills in poor rural and semi-urban communities for the enhancement of the communal subsistence economy, its integration into the mainstream national cash economy, and for the improvement of its people is important. If literacy is viewed as a human right, then women should equally enjoy its benefits. When women are literate, the entire community gains from literacy. In other words, literate women will positively influence the way in which their children will be nurtured.

Women's lack of education can affect their understanding of issues, and, consequently, this can affect their wish to participate meaningfully. When women have relevant skills and can understand issues, it helps them to deliberate on important matters (Bradburg & Mashigo, 2018; Chib & Wardoyo, 2018; Moyo, 2014; North, 2017). Literacy enhances women's participation in developmental activities. It stimulates and transforms individual initiatives. Education helps bring out the productive potential in rural women that enables them to participate equitably in the economic development of the country.

For public service, including education, the position looks somewhat different. The advancement achieves the Education for All (EFA) goals, and the MDGs by 2015 are multi-faceted. According to the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (2013, 2017), there continued to be many obstacles in reducing poverty, improving mothers' health, curbing child mortality, supporting gender quality, and safeguarding

environmental protection. Acharya and Robinson-Pant (2017) emphasized that literacy has an influence on other things, for example, health. UNESCO further stated that the primary focus of meeting these goals is to create values of respect and protect the right of all to quality fundamental education. Quality basic education will likely help women to achieve social mobility and the ability to transfer the learned skills to their children.

The current situation facing the social mobility of adult women and the ability to transfer learned skills to their children is not only affected by economic challenges, but also by several other challenges that affect adult learning and education. According to UNESCO's Institute for Lifelong Learning (2015, 2017), disease, hunger, war, environmental degradation, unemployment, and political instability continue to influence the lives of millions of people. Similarly, many people are still segregated and marginalized, and the trend is perpetuated to new generations, which means that although education does not claim to offer a solution to many of these problems, it helps the community have a strong foundation for learning (Benson, 2018; Ojogwu and Ebubedike (2018); Ghose & Mullick, 2015). When adults understand education, they become active and productive citizens in society.

Citizens who contribute positively to the development of a country become assets of the society. Mobility within communities and countrywide borders provide opportunities for individuals and communities to understand and learn about other peoples' cultures, and languages, as observed by UNESCO's Institute for Lifelong Learning, (2015; 2017). Different knowledge is available through new information and communication technologies to those who have Internet access. Ghose and Mullick

(2015) and Eldred et al. (2014) noted that although literacy and education to some may not change the social and political structures in which we find ourselves, they are important to create better understanding and for women to negotiate the structures. This implies that when women negotiate the structures, it shows that they have self-confidence, which translates to empowerment. Inadequate resources limit opportunities, which impact the quality of education. That, in turn, reduces learning outcomes.

Internationally, the growing demand and scarcity of resources have been observed in the United States of America. As a report stated, "36 million American adults need literacy help. Only 3 million of them will be lucky enough to get it" (The National Assessment of Adult literacy, 2012, p. 3). At the same time, funding for literacy programs has decreased in recent years, while the need for programs has increased (The National Assessment of Adult Literacy, 2012).The growth of interest in education has increased but is hampered by limited access to educational opportunities and funding, which impacts access to education for adult women.

A life of purpose gives meaning to an empowered person. Empowerment is observed to be an essential supporter of health in someone's life. The absence of control over one's future can be a contributing factor that creates risk for disease (Eldred et al., 2014; Nabi, 2014; Stromquist, 2015). Education provides an opportunity to enhance one's ability to exercise the authority where it was denied before. Education becomes important as a vehicle of social change (Ojogwu and Ebubedike (2018); McKay, 2018; North, 2017; Sharma & Monteiro, 2016). However, women who lack education become marginalized and vulnerable in society because illiterate women have limited knowledge

and skills to understand the world they live in and act accordingly. It is important to understand that illiteracy is connected to poverty due to a lack of skills and capabilities to adapt to changes in the world and an unpredictable future.

Poverty is associated with gender inequality that impacts on education and the well-being of women. Stromquist (2015) asserted that the connection between poverty, education, gender equality, and the well-being of women and children is evident. Furthermore, the well-being of women and the many roles they play—being a mother, an individual, a family member, and a citizen in society—are key to uplifting a community. Moreover, a woman in a society where she is not liberated and subject to the unfairness related to job opportunities and pay hinders her and her family's well-being. The cultural norms and values are contributing factors for the segregation of women in society, a situation that men manipulate to increase their control over women.

**Women, Literacy, and Development**

Literate women have positive effects on socio-economic development. According to, there is a relationship between a women's level of educational achievement and employment (as well as income generation; Akello et al., 2017; Johnson, 2018; McKay, 2018; Taeko, 2014; Weymann, 2018). In other words, literacy has social and cultural practices, which involves reading and writing in different settings. Life experiences and existing knowledge are used through signs and pictures. To small-scale businesses, the application of literacy and numeracy in everyday matters more than formal literacy. However, the point is not that illiterate people should be functionally literate to gain the basic ability to obtain employment. Rather, the problem is that the level of

unemployment in developing countries needs to be reduced. One way of doing this is through literacy skills that will improve women's understanding so they will be able to create their own jobs.

Literate women contribute positively to developmental challenges like helping with their children's schoolwork compared to illiterate women. Eldred et al. (2014) noted that women are the largest group of people that have either no or low literacy skills, and they are on the side-lines most of the time for making crucial decisions. Furthermore, because of this, they cannot develop themselves to fulfil their personal capabilities. Females feel less important than their counterparts in society because they are less equipped to manage their own health and that of their families. This makes them confined in tradition. Literacy will empower women to contribute to developmental challenges positively.

Literacy is a vehicle that can empower women to liberate themselves; it is more than simply the teaching and learning of some skills. Literacy can be difficult and have many realities. For example, many women have no land rights, and their fathers, husbands, and brothers determine who they are. Many have argued (Akello et al., 2018; Chib & Wardoyo, 2018; Jabeen & Jabeen, 2013; Johnson, 2018; McKay, 2018; Qwiny, 2017) that women's education can lead to socioeconomic development and can empower them about their rights and what they ought to be. In other words, women can be empowered to participate in the development of society and make informed decisions related to matters that affect their livelihoods. Empowered women have the authority to decide their destiny rather than to try to fulfil what other people want.

Meaningful empowerment is important because it helps to transform women from cultural bondage. Active participation of the rural women is paramount if sustainable transformation is to be achieved (Akello et al., 2018; Chib & Wardoyo, 2018; Jabeen & Jabeen, 2013; Johnson, 2018; McKay, 2018; Qwiny, 2017). Furthermore, the government has policies that address equality and discrimination. The challenge is how to implement those measures fully to improve the standard of living of the poor, especially women and children. Although provision is provided by the government to alleviate the situation, culture, and traditions have a strong influence on the participation of women in developmental activities. Chigbu (2015), Hailat (2017), and Chib and Wardoyo (2018) argued that cultural norms had perpetuated the image of women to see themselves as inferior human beings in society. Cultural norms have a negative effect on the participation of women in developmental matters in society. How society views them has an influence on how they see themselves. Functional literacy contributes to the active participation of women in developmental activities.

Functional literacy alone cannot achieve gender-sensitivity and greater equality. Robinson-Pant (2014) argued that life is not about paid employment with a better education. Neither is it about gaining empowerment and higher status in society. Life is how to counteract the current thinking of associating literacy programs only with women. These are often seen as poor short-term programs that depend on volunteer teaching to deliver one-size-fits-all subjects. Furthermore, he suggested a new holistic approach called the social practice to develop a more responsive and comprehensive education program. In other words, the issue is more than literacy for women. The issue is about

household matters that involve not only women but also men. The environment allows women to be recognized as active participants who can make informed decisions. Literacy creates opportunities for women to be treated as equal partners in the community, although it will take time for this approach to bear fruit.

Learning takes time, and the impact of functional literacy will take time to show change. Nabi (2014) concurred that women do not value functional literacy due to developmental funders who anticipate quick unrealistic results of literacy learning activities. For example, women do not realize that the literacy intervention they participated in has contributed slowly to their personal development. However, after some years, women had gained confidence through testimonies that indicated that they were now seen by all as human beings that are trusted, respected, and motivated. Therefore, adult literacy programs introduced should respond to the needs of society to address the social transformation of the community.

The challenge facing literacy programs is that of sustaining the program by improving the quality of both the services offered and the learning environment itself. According to Lee (2012), Lee (2017), and Lee and Kim (2018), the shortage of funding in Namibia in the National Literacy Program has been observed to be the cause of not being able to sustain the program or to improve the quality of the amenities and the learning setting (UNESCO, 2015, 2017). Lee (2012) asserted that the field of adult education in Namibia is disjointed; advocacy efforts are diluted across a diversity of fronts, and the political trustworthiness of adult literacy women is weakened. Lee further stated that there is a need to combine disjointed bits of law and policy that relate to adult education

and that should be considered for the program to reach the preferred results. Lee explained that these are observed through insufficient funding and access to information technology and the Internet. Lack of libraries in the rural areas where most of the youth and adult women literacy learners live continues to affect the extent of education of these groups (Lee, 2012). If adults are recognized and considered to contribute to the national economy, literacy should be a means to empower individuals and collectives.

Women's education and empowerment are a continuous challenge in developing countries, whereas, in other countries, societies have been transformed because they understood the dynamics of the global village. In Africa, many women are not recognized as being able to do a job outside the home. In contrast, women in developed countries adapted due to industrialization and better education that created opportunities for women to participate effectively like men in economic and political activities (Gudova & Rakipova, 2010; Jackson, Ho, & Na, 2013; Salmenniemi & Adamson, 2014; Stefanovici, 2011). However, there are still women in developed countries who face challenges. The trend in developed countries shows continuous efforts to achieve recognition of their rights. Information-literate women can make a meaningful contribution to society by locating, analyzing, and using information effectively when required.

## Implications

Education empowers women. Educated females enhance their skills and knowledge to compete in the economy. This implies that females would gain the confidence to influence families and societies. Furthermore, females would actively participate in civic activities. The anticipated results for this study revealed how NNALP

alumni overcame such barriers as of lack of time, husband refusing to work outside of the home, the death of male breadwinners, to avoid dropping out of the program. The findings showed a positive impact on individual adult females, whose growth and self-esteem are important parts of both specific and group successes. The findings revealed how the barriers as of lack of time, husbands refusing to allow their wives to work outside of the home, the death of male breadwinners were overcome to avoid dropping out of the program, which ensured that the concept of women empowerment and self-reliance is not compromised. Females may gain skills that will help them contribute to the development of society to eliminate gender inequality and achieve sustainable development (Smith-Greenaway, 2015). In addition, a literacy program that creates more opportunities will motivate adult learners. Moreover, these effects absolutely support Namibia and its capability to promote adult learners' skills. The intended study added to the body of knowledge required to address the challenges by exploring the experiences of adult women to determine how to address the factors hindering women in completing the NNALP successfully.

The purpose of this study was to investigate how NNALP alumni overcame such barriers as of lack of time, husband refusing to allow their wives to work outside of the home, the death of male breadwinners, to avoid dropping out of the program. This may bring about the necessary changes that will lead to a focus on social mobility. The proposed project will use the data to develop a model designed with features of a manual for a specialized seminar. A copy of the manual for the specialized seminar is found in an appendix A of the final study.

## Summary

The study investigates the barriers of a lack of time, husbands refusing to allow their wives to work outside of the home, and the death of male breadwinners that contribute to the drop-out rate in the NNALP in the Kavango East Region. First, the research problem and the rationale are established, followed by the research definitions of terms, the significance of the study, the research question, and, then, the review of literature, implications, and the chapter summary.

In the next section, the methodology is presented and discussed. The major goals of the NNALP are to enable adults such that they can completely partake in the overall development of the country and in their individual advancement. The analysis of data collected through interviews is then examined.

Section 2: The Methodology

## Research Design and Approach

In this qualitative study, I investigated how the NNALP alumni overcame such barriers as a lack of time, husbands refusing to work outside of the home, and the death of male breadwinners to avoid dropping out of the program in the Kavango East Region. The decision to use a qualitative approach was motivated by the research problem, the purpose of the study, and the research questions. A review of relevant literature is an important part of the qualitative approach.

The methodology for the prospective research was an in-depth phenomenological exploration of the perceptions of adult literacy women alumni, a sample population consisting of 11. Phenomenological research recognizes that participants have different perspectives and that these perspectives attach different meanings to experiences (Skea, 2015). Phenomenological research was chosen because it allowed women to speak for themselves and because it allowed common themes, without interpretation, to become apparent. Such a research format can be a powerful one in revealing how people interpret and understand their human experiences (Skea., 2015). In contrast to studies whose findings are rooted in quantitatively derived behavioral outcomes, such as academic achievement scores, I aimed to discover how its participants generally feel about the effectiveness and usefulness of the training that they received (see Snelgrove, 2014).

The main qualitative feature of qualitative interviews is the active interaction itself that exists between the interviewer and the interviewee. The interviewer initiates power by directing the questioning process (Martin, 2015), but interviewees retain

authority throughout the process because of the knowledge they possess (Hoffmann, 2007). Published information related to the phenomenon I investigated was scarce, and, thus, my discoveries about what constitute issues that are important to the study's target population were based almost entirely on the data I collected and my processing of that data. Qualitative research methods enable researchers to understand patterns and trends related to the problem of the study. Qualitative studies do not directly seek to prove or invalidate claims or hypotheses (Stichler, 2016). Qualitative studies generally depend on the support from the research literature.

Quantitative methods employ numerical analyses. Mixed methods research involves a combination of qualitative and quantitative research. Quantitative research methods develop usable statistics from numerical data. In quantitative research, samples of a population are used in generalizing findings to the populations from which samples are selected. Differentiation of qualitative and quantitative research is done at different levels; for example, there are differences in the application of the research methods or differences in the research process (Martin, 2015). Qualitative research is generally an inductive process and leads to the formulation of theories, whereas quantitative research is a deductive approach involving the testing of the concepts, hypotheses, and constructs that make up a theory (Stichler, 2016). Qualitative research methods involve subjective analysis of data by the researcher in a way that opens the data to varying interpretations (Skea, 2015).

In contrast, the quantitative approach could have been used for the collection of data that could be generalized to a larger population, but generalized data to a larger

population aligns with quantitative research (Martin, 2015). This study was not intended to determine the relationships between variables (see Snelgrove, 2014), but to collect particularly rich, in-depth information from marginalized women. Phenomenological research allows us to gain insights into the meaning of individuals' experiences and to provide meaningful solutions to a practical understanding of the meaning (Snelgrove, 2014). Another qualitative approach is grounded theory. Grounded theory aims to create a theory that is grounded in facts. Grounded theory was not appropriate as I focused on the experience of women. My intent was not to generate theory but to study the experience from the perspective of women to better understand what it is like to be a woman struggling to be literate in Namibia. A qualitative phenomenological study was more appropriate for this research objective than a quantitative study. A qualitative approach was suitable in this case due to the kind of phenomenological method used, which was appropriate for the daily experiences of adult women alumni needed by the study.

## Participants

The participants responded to a predetermined set of open-ended questions. The participants were women selected subject to the following criteria: (a) alumni of the program and head of households, (b) over 18 years of age, (c) attended literacy classes, and (d) completed the adult literacy program. Eleven participants were selected homogenously from the 30 female alumni of the NNALP. Homogenous sampling is a test group technique in which the researcher purposefully selects individuals based on belonging to a subgroup that has defining characteristics (Martin, 2015). This study

required an in-depth exploration of the participants' perceptions and feelings; thus, a large sample was not practical. The purposeful sample was appropriate to do in-depth analysis of the participants' perceptions and feelings.

For qualitative research, Merriam (2009) stated that there is no set number of participants required for a study. What is required is an acceptable number of participants able to answer the research questions. (Snelgrove, 2014). A sample size of 11 out of 30 was large enough to answer the research questions and to reach data saturation (see Martin, 2015). The number of participants was kept small to make sure the approach yielded a greater degree of depth and to allow for a greater explanation of information. The approach was to use homogenous sampling with the help of the regional district officer to identify 11 adult women from various schools in the Kavango East Region who met the criteria for inclusion. As Martin, (2015) affirmed, the purpose is to ensure quality by selecting individuals who have experienced the phenomenon being studied. The use of a sample range of 11 in this study was effectively representative of the pool of 30.

The approach used in this study allowed me to achieve data saturation through data collected from 11alumni participants of the NNALP. Interviews were the tools used to collect face-to-face data from the participants. Interviews were conducted at the homes of the participants, providing the participants' homes were safe and secure for such dialogs. Phenomenological research relies heavily on the essence of the human experience and gains insights into that experience (Lodico et al., 2010). Two visits were undertaken to the sites per participant to gain insights that confirmed emerging issues and meanings from their experiences.

Institutional review board (IRB) approval for the study marked the date upon which data collection could start. Weekly visits were arranged with the participants to lay the groundwork for the participants to gain confidence in me as the researcher. The sites for the 11 interviews were at the participants' homes. Each participant was interviewed individually. The conduct of this study in an ethical manner required that I obtain certain permissions. I attained permission from the permanent secretary of MBEAC. The permanent secretary authorizes access to government institutions at the central level. Such access then cascades to the regional and local levels in that ministry to access the sites, take notes, audio record, and interview the participants. There was respect for the privacy and confidentiality of the participants and their data, and participants signed consent forms to give permission to being part of the study.

Language fluency was considered. Interviews were conducted in Rumanyo (mother tongue), and transcriptions were made in English. I first found themes in Rumanyo, in which I am fluent, to make the study authentic. In situations where translation was needed, my discretion determined the language in which to seek themes because I am fluent in both English and Rumanyo. The translation was an important consideration for this specific target group because none of the members were able to converse fluently in English. The English language, which was used for the interview transcriptions, is the version on which the data analysis for this study was based.

**Access to Participants**

The participants resided in the Tupumenu district of the Kavango East Region of Namibia. The participants were the adult literacy women alumni. The identification of the

adult literacy female alumni was not easy because some might have moved from their original places. I sought permission from the permanent secretary and the adult literacy regional coordinator to access the sites and interview participants upon receipt of IRB approval. The assistance from the Regional Directorate was needed to locate the homes of the participants. I made arrangements with the regional education officer in the Directorate of Adult Education to have access to individuals in the region. Face-to-face interviews were conducted. Circuit X (a pseudonym), which referred to demarcated areas like a district with several schools in the Kavango East Region, was chosen due to its rich number of NNALP alumni. Safeguarding the district and participants in the research required that the district use a pseudonym, which was "Circuit X."

**Researcher-Participant Relationship**

I worked with the alumni of the NNALP in a respectful and professional way by complying with IRB ethical standards. There were consent forms used for the participants. I cleared issues about assumptions and biases that could influence the study. Marthin (2015) stated that openness on the part of the researcher is useful and positive, where a researcher must be aware of how biases can shape the understanding of the speaker's reality. My professional career and values were stated, as I was aware that it could influence the findings of the study. As a practitioner, I am a lecturer at a local unit of the University of Namibia, which trains teachers in schools in the Kavango East Region and throughout the whole country. Even though I am from the same Kavango East Region as the participants, the values and practices in which I was raised and currently practice do not reflect those of the rural areas. Having worked for many years as

a teacher in general education, I was careful to be aware that I could identify to some extent with women living in this context.

The researcher should work with the alumni of the NNALP in a respectful and professional way (see Merriam, 2009). Interviews included attentive listening with participants and allowing participants to finish their thoughts on a topic that promoted dialog and social understanding. Participants were free to talk to me, and I aimed to keep the rapport professional at all times. According to Lodico et al. (2010), the main aim of research is to discover cultural knowledge and understanding from the perspectives of the participants. As the researcher, I knew my role and how this could have been interpreted by the interviewees.

The essential feature of qualitative phenomenological interviews is that participants do most of the talking. Although two-way interaction is essential in qualitative interviews, in this phenomenological study, the participants did most of the talking. In qualitative research, interviewers create authority by using the instructing questioning procedure (Glesne, 2011). It was important for me to be aware of the authority I had as the interviewer and to give participants the chance to guide me through their knowledge of cultural values, especially because the participants represented a marginalized group. On the other hand, interviewees also maintain their influence throughout the process as a result of the knowledge they possess (Hoffmann, 2007). These dynamics presented a give-and-take of authority throughout the interview process. This dynamic also enabled me to be more sensitive and mindful of the power shift throughout the interview process that encouraged dialog and a shared process. The

relationship was one of mutual respect with the participants. I was more of a researcher-listener. Not being an alumna myself, I did not have a relationship with the participants or an employee of the Ministry of Education Arts and Culture. However, it is worth mentioning that I reside in the same Kavango East Region as the participants. I created a nonthreatening environment by being calm, by being respectful as I listened intently, and by making sure that participants were not interrupted when talking. I also avoided being judgmental by being impartial and unbiased. Lastly, I showed gratefulness by expressing my appreciation for their participation and time.

**Participant Protection and Participants' Rights**

To participate in phenomenological research entails a certain amount of a challenge on the part of the participants, especially if the students are asked to share personal experiences. Castleberry & Nolen, (2018) asserted that anger could be more when the participant is part of the site being studied since it may be difficult for the researcher to keep total confidentiality when reporting the findings. In this study, careful attention was devoted to finding a balance between the participants' right to anonymity and privacy versus reporting enough of the information so that the research findings are credible.

Interviewees were accorded an opportunity to speak freely without any interference. Consent forms were signed by participants acknowledging that their participation was voluntary. The consent form included the policy for confidentiality and participants' rights to ask questions throughout the course of the study. Provisions were

made for participants to withdraw from the process at any time without penalty of any kind. The consent form helped to convey that there was no force to participate.

Participant protections were included for all data being identified by code only; no names appeared on any documentation other than the initial consent form. Documents, whether in hard copy or electronic format, were sealed and could only be opened to the researcher with an identification code. Data were coded, and no participants' names were mentioned anywhere in the final report.

I prepared a pre-IRB form for my proposal to ensure that my study was considered by the IRB. To safeguard participants' privacy, I proceeded as follows: I filled out an ethics review form, which allowed me to obtain permission from the IRB. I developed a research summary along with the consent form and distributed these items to participants. Participants were required to sign the consent form before the interviews took place. They were informed that they could withdraw from the process at any given time, end the interview at any time, or refuse to answer any of the questions. They were also informed to tell the truth when interviewed. Efforts were taken to ensure their privacy and confidentiality. There were 11 alternates in case some participants withdrew unexpectedly.

## Data Collection

The data gathering process used an interview protocol. I conducted the interviews personally with 11 participants from the Tupumenu district in the Kavango East Region of Namibia. I started gathering data after I received written approval from IRB. The data for the study consisted of interview responses (Appendix B) by members of its sample

population. Each interview session started with an opening statement read to the participant prior to the beginning of the interview. The purpose of the statement was to provide a standard way of beginning the interview and conveying its overall purpose. Each participant was interviewed separately to preserve confidentiality, eliminate interference, and avoid being bias. Each participant was encouraged to become a research participant on equal footing with me. The collected data included their digitally recorded responses to open-ended exploratory questions that I asked them during face-to-face interviews and notes that I took during and immediately following the interviews. I developed a set of questions to guide the interview process. Thereafter, I conducted and recorded a lengthy person-to-person interview that focused on the bracketed topic and questions. Follow-up interviews were not needed.

Prior to the in-depth interviews, I made site visits to identify participants. I was aware as a researcher of the tendency to color code the information being collected with the researcher's personal biases to move from individual codes to categories to eventual themes. To reduce that, I was conscious enough to observe and record everything in the setting. The focus was on the participants' literacy program experiences and practices. I took descriptive field notes and reflective field notes in all the interview sessions. Descriptive field notes cover a wide range of information; reflective field notes deal with feelings and thoughts of the researcher (Snelgrove, 2014).

I achieved consistency in my interviews by (a) a standard set of predetermined semi-structured questions and (b) individual participants' responses that I had in hand

while I conducted the interviews. The RQ) was the central question of the study, and its subquestions or Interview Questions (IQ) guided the interviews:

RQ: By what means have the NNALP women alumni overcame barriers to avoid dropping out of the program?

IQ1: What was your experience in completing the program?

IQ2: What did you like about the program? What did you not like about the program?

IQ2.1: What barriers to completion did you experience?

IQ2.2: How did you overcome those barriers?

IQ3.1: Describe the support of your spouse in your efforts to become literate.

IQ3.2: Describe the support of your family in your efforts to become literate.

IQ3.3: Describe the support of your community in your efforts to become literate.

IQ4.1: How do you perceive that the program could better equip adult learners to overcome barriers?

IQ4.2: How did the program impact your life, if at all?

All dialogs between participants and myself were tape-recorded and later transcribed into Microsoft Word documents. Member check was used to verify the typed transcriptions of each individual participant before becoming finalized. Participants were continuously encouraged to review and make changes or additions as were necessary. Provision was made for the participants to make final comments on their responses.

The interviews included listening to participants, allowing participants to finish their thoughts on the topic, and asked questions in a non-threatening way that encouraged

dialog and cultural understanding (Merriam, 2009). I listened with less talking until the interviews were over to create a shared and peaceful setting. This established a relaxing atmosphere during interview sessions that helped participants to elaborate when responding. However, I was mindful that some answers by participants led in unplanned directions. Participants were asked to make comments about their responses with respect to meaning and interpretation. Interview questions were tested with the peer reviewer, prior to conducting the interview.

At the end of data collection, a transcript was created for each participant. Debriefing was done to each participant. As a researcher during data collection, I did not play a role as a supervisor or evaluator. This helped me to avoid being biased during data collection. Data transcriptions were kept in a password-protected file that could be opened only by the researcher. The tape recorder was locked in a cupboard that was accessible only by the researcher. I also kept a notebook during the interview processes to collect information such as reactions, reflections, and unplanned directions.

Access to participants' home villages was obtained prior to starting the interview process through the Regional Directorate of Education in Kavango East Region. The Directorate of Education has a division of adult education. The District Adult Education Officer arranged for a Literacy Promoter (Instructor) on each site of the 11 women's homes for interviews on the request by the researcher. Access to the individual adult literacy cite was arranged based on participant schedules subject to the agreement of the District Adult Education Officer.

My role in this study was to access the feelings and thoughts of participants to understand the meaning that they ascribe to their experiences with NNALP. I maintained objectivity and minimized personal bias. My experience and views could affect the final data analysis and results. Therefore, I was more of a researcher listener.

## Method of Analysis

Over the course of multiple readings of the interview transcripts, interview notes, and a manual key phrase-based analysis, themes and categories were identified based upon their emergence from participant responses during the interviews. These emerging themes led to conclusions about the efficacy of the NNALP for its female students and the nature of their experience as participants. Crowe et al. (2011) suggested that when analyzing coded information, one should begin with clarifying and summarizing concepts and themes and search for patterns and linkages between the concepts and themes. Moustakas (1994) presented a technique suitable for a phenomenological data analysis that uses bracketing, which is when a researcher is looking and noticing and looking again to allow the process of reflection to occur. I organized the data through the method of horizontalizing by regarding every statement that was relevant to the topic. The themes were listed and clustered into common categories (themes), and overlapping and repetitive statements were removed. The clustered themes and meanings were used to develop the textural and structural descriptions of the adult literacy women alumni experience. Creswell (2007) posited that Moustakas modified the Stevick-Colaizzi-Keen data analysis steps:

Step 1 Epoch Bracketing: Describe personal experience with the phenomena

Step 2 Horizontalization*:* Develop a list of significant statements from the data (interviews) in relation to participants' experience (horizontalization) and a list of statements that were not repetitive or overlapping.

Step 3 Theme Cluster Meaning*:* Render group statements as themes.

Step 4 Textual Description: Describe in writing what participants experienced (textural description), including verbatim examples.

Step 5 Structural Description*:* Written description of how experience happened (structural description) and the context and setting the experience how it happened.

Step 6 Essence: Written composite description of the "essence" of the phenomena from the syntheses of the textual and structural descriptions of the phenomena. (p. 159)

I began the process of organizing and analyzing by reading the entire transcript to get a sense of the whole. While reading more slowly, I delineated each time that a transition in meaning was made. I eliminated redundancies and clarified and elaborated on the meaning of the theme by relating them to each other and to the sense of the whole. The data, which I read several times, helped me to reveal their structure, meaning, configuration, and coherence, and helped me determine the circumstances of their occurrence and clustering. I emphasized the configuration of meaning, which involved both the structure of meaning and how that meaning was created (Moustakas, 1994). Lastly, I synthesized and integrated the insights achieved into a consistent description of the structure of new knowledge on the adult literacy women alumni experiences.

Data analysis also involved member checking for trustworthiness and credibility. The transcribed interview information was provided to participants to determine whether

the results were precise. In order to reduce concerns regarding data analysis, the credibility of results was authenticated using feedback from participants. Member checks were important to the creation of meaning-making (Merriam, 2009). To make sure that the collected information was credible, I applied member checks, in which I asked participants to verify that I had interpreted in a sensible way. Member checking becomes valuable as a check on the reliability of the information regarding emerging themes and categories. Additionally, I employed a peer debriefing with a colleague with a doctoral degree in the field of adult literacy, and he verified my coding of the information collected from the interview transcripts and any findings that I derived from that process. Peer review offers a chance for individuals other than the researcher to provide insight into research outcomes (Creswell, 2009). A peer reviewer was useful for ensuring accuracy, completeness, and objectivity in coding the data in producing findings that correctly represented the themes and categories that I derived from that process (Creswell, 2012).

Because I investigated a phenomenon about which little was publicly known, my discoveries about what constituted important issues to the study's target population were based almost entirely on my collection and processing of data. Creswell (2009) recommended the use of numerous approaches to validate and add to the credibility of the results. Therefore, the use of numerous approaches in creating credibility—such as peer review, member checking, and rich, thick descriptions—added to the credibility of the findings. The rich, thick descriptions of data could help qualify the usefulness of my results for related situations and settings (Miles et al., 2014). I also explained my personal

expectations of the Sambyu culture. I was aware of my cultural values and how these guided and affected the research process.

There was some possibility that the data be inconsistent not to align with the narrative analysis. Inconsistencies in information were analyzed, and alternative explanations provided. I used a deviant case analysis to address discrepant cases. This involved searching for and discussing contradictions in the data to uncover participant's views or experiences that differed from the evidence. The analysis of these cases revised, broadened, and confirmed the pattern that emerged from the analysis of the data. This ensured I had accurately captured the culture according to participants' perspectives. Multiple tools were used, such as transcripts from in-depth interviews, descriptive field notes, and artefacts such as an audio tape recorder and observation notes. Data provided by the different sources were compared through triangulation to enhance their credibility and trustworthiness.

## Limitations

There were clear situations where the researcher's control was limited, as, for example, in restricting the scope of the study in terms of the number of regions included. Namibia has 14 geographical regions of which one was considered for this study, namely, the Kavango East Region. Very little research had been undertaken in this area. The lack of sufficient prior research, in this case, was a limitation but was also a delimitation since it provided the justification for undertaking the research.

Social factors in the lives of the participants could limit or restrict the participants' responses to the interview questions, including, for example, possible fears

of violating social norms merely by participating in the study. Women could also feel threatened because of the perceived difference in social status between the subject women and the researcher, who was seen in the light of representing a university. Women in the community could have fears about how to speak and open up to the researcher with her higher status (deputy director). However, the researcher took this possible circumstance into account and strived to make participants feel sufficiently comfortable to speak freely, openly, and honestly. As noted, the study focused on women from a single region who had participated in the NNALP. The ideal situation would have been to cover all 1iteracy programs in Namibia, but such ambitious extensions were not practical or economically feasible.

The study, conducted within the qualitative research paradigm, poses limitations on the generalizability of the research outcomes. Economic status and cultural diversity that limited generalization were taken into account. Although the results were not generalizable, no conditions were observed that would have argued against the applicability of the Kavango East Region results to women in other regions of Namibia.

The researcher was aware that there has to be ease and comfort in the environment for adult women to participate freely. This determined the level of my involvement in data collection. Therefore, I admitted to the adult literacy women alumni that my identity as an educated middle-class woman from an urban center invariably could have restricted my ability to acquire gender-specific insights through this study. Culturally, the social status of an educated woman has a very big impact on a less

educated woman in the rural areas of Namibia. This social status gap could cause fear, which could reduce the openness of women to speak freely.

## Evidence of Trustworthiness

The researcher exercised rapport of credibility by respecting, trusting, and showing honesty between the participants and researcher in this phenomenological qualitative research study. The researcher ensured that the participants were protected from any harm and treated them humanely at all times. Participants provided thick context-rich responses to the interview questions. Credibility was increased with the use of member checks throughout the interview process. At the end of data transcriptions, each participant verified the data to confirm the accuracy of the information. Furthermore, interviews, journal notes, and reflections established credibility. The interview process aimed at eliciting responses which detailed experienced by the participants. The detailed responses of the participants for this study were used to bring in the inferences. As a result, credibility was ensured.

Maintaining ongoing contact with participants throughout the process of data collection was done. I obtained consent from the research participants to stay in touch with them concerning the findings of the study transpired. Quality of the data was ensured by recording the data with the audio tape. Recording the interviews with the direct permission of the participants was achieved. Using the audio tape device recording verified dependability and confirmability. Consent forms approved by IRB ensured fairness and capability. Consent form provided credibility from the participants for recording what was intended as part of the study. The findings of this study provided

thick, rich descriptions that allow other researchers to assess the relevance of transferability to settings of their own (Miles, E.F.D. 2014).

Consistency was achieved by developing four interview questions which were assessed and approved by the committee and Walden University's IRB, to answer the central research question. To ensure that the Interview questions would be asked in the same order, an interview protocol guide was used during the interview. Member checking was used to check and critique the accuracy of the collected data. Accuracy, fairness, and credibility ensures data quality for further research Study. Debriefing was employed which was a significant aspect of verification of data. Debriefing was used to check the collected data that helped establish the truth of the study findings. This gave participants opportunities to provide additional information when warranted.

## Data Analysis Results

The purpose of this study was to investigate how NNALP alumni overcame such barriers as of lack of time, husband refusing to work outside of the home, the death of male breadwinners, to avoid dropping out of the program. The population chosen was the eleven women alumni of Namibia's NNALP. The research question (RQ) and the interview questions (IQ) were as follows:

RQ: By what means have the NNALP women alumni overcame barriers to avoid dropping out of the program?

IQ1: What was your experience in completing the program?

IQ2: What did you like about the program? What did you not like about the program?

IQ2.1: What barriers to completion did you experience?

IQ2.2: How did you overcome those barriers?

IQ3.1: Describe the support of your spouse in your efforts to become literate.

IQ3.2: Describe the support of your family in your efforts to become literate.

IQ3.3: Describe the support of your community in your efforts to become literate.

IQ4.1: How do you perceive that the program could better equip adult learners to overcome barriers?

IQ4.2: How did the program impact your life, if at all?

## Research Setting

The research setting for this study was face-to-face interviews. The researcher faced some difficulties in locating the women alumni in the Tupumenu area to participate in the study. One challenge was that national elections were taking place at the time. Women alumni were sceptical about agreeing to be interviewed due to politics. The adult education officer neutralized the spirit by explaining to the women that the study was being conducted solely for educational purposes. I realized during this time how important it was for me as a researcher to be flexible in recruiting participants for this study. Being cognizant of the bracketing helped me as a researcher to avoid personal and organizational conditions that could affect the interpretation of the study results.

## Protection of Participants

I took responsibility to protect the identity of the participants and the confidentiality of data collected. To ensure confidentiality, I created a unique identifier (see Table 2) for each participant that was used throughout the study. Participants'

identities were not disclosed. Participant identifier was used (a) 001, (b) 002, (c) 003, (d) 004, (e) 005, (f) 006, (g) 007, (h) 008, (i) 009, (j) 010, (k) 011.

**Collection**

The primary focus for this phenomenological research study is to bracket the researcher's presuppositions and expectations regarding the persistence of women in overcoming barriers to completion of their adult literacy program. I managed to make a conscious effort to set aside my experiences and biases to approach this study with a clear mind, as suggested by Moustakas (as cited in Creswell, 2007). I performed the process of recruitment between November 5 and November 26, 2019, by visiting prospective participants in their respective villages. Time was set for the interviews. The Regional Education Officer set the groundwork by explaining the purpose of this study in order to ease the fear among the participants. Eleven participants were recruited for this study. The interview took 15-25 minutes to complete with additional time for questions and clarifications on answers, while member checks were also done at the end of each interview session.

**Interviews**

Upon approval from the Walden University's IRB, and the Partner Organization, the recruitment of participants began. The likelihood of participants feeling threatened was reduced through the visitation to each participant by the Adult Education Officer, who explained the purpose of the study. Participants for this study came from the Tupumenu district in the Kavango East Region of Namibia.

Each participant signed the consent form voluntarily, and each one was informed that the interview would be audio recorded with her permission. So that the researcher could maintain the accuracy of data collected during the interview, member checks were used for each participant. All eleven participants recruited completed the interviews. However, the first two audio-recorded data disappeared. These two participants were then replaced with additional participants because the original participants could not be traced. An interview protocol was used (see Appendix B) to ensure that each participant's questions were in the same order. Member checks ensured the credibility of the data collected and analyzed. The main central research question aligned with the interview questions for this study.

According to Creswell, (2007), there are specific structured methods for data analysis using a phenomenological research study. I used Creswell's strategy, as outlined in the six steps stated above, for the data analysis process. Furthermore, I used hand coding to develop epoch bracketing, horizontalization, and themes. The process of data analysis began following the interview process by reading and rereading the participants' responses to interview questions to ensure that meaning was made from the data. This process helped to reduce the frustration that could come when the data became overwhelmed (Miles et al., 2014). I bracketed my personal beliefs (*see Appendix E*) about the persistence of women alumni overcoming barriers to avoid dropping out of the program as much as possible in order to understand the participants' experiences.

## Participant Profile

The purpose of this study was to investigate how NNALP alumni overcame such barriers as of lack of time, husband refusing to work outside of the home, the death of male breadwinners, to avoid dropping out of the program. Participants were homogeneous group composed of 11 adult literacy women alumni ranged from married, and widowed ones, from ages 26, PA-001 to 74 years old (PK-011). Participant A-001 was a 26-year-old female and was interviewed at an arranged school for convenience and quietness. Participant B-002 was a 43-year-old female who was interviewed at the school. Participant C-003 was a 43-year-old female who was interviewed at the school. Participant D-004 was a 29-year-old female who was interviewed at the school. Participant E-005 was a 29-year-old female who was interviewed at the school. Participant F-006 was a 47-year-old female who was interviewed at her homestead and was married with children. Participant G-007 was a 47-year-old female, who was widowed, and who was interviewed at her homestead. Participant H-008 was a 43-year-old female, who was married and who was interviewed at her homestead. Participant I-009 was a 59-year-old female, who was married and was interviewed at her homestead. Participant J-010 was a 51-year old female, who was married and was interviewed at her homestead. Participant K-011 was a 74-year-old female, who was widowed and was interviewed at her homestead.

## Participants' Responses to the Interview Questions

The purpose of this study was to investigate how NNALP alumni overcame such barriers as of lack of time, husband refusing to work outside of the home, the death of

male breadwinners, to avoid dropping out of the program. Illiterate women in the rural areas seek improved living standard for themselves and for their families. The Tupumenu district of the Kavango East Region in Namibia was an example of how women were determined to change their lives. Women joined the NNALP to better their lives. There were 11 in-depth qualitative interviews conducted with individual women. The details and analysis below provide some of the participants' experiences on how NNALP alumni overcame such barriers as of lack of time, husband refusing to work outside of the home, the death of male breadwinners, to avoid dropping out of the program. Data from interview questions IQ 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 4.1, and 4.2 formed the basis for answering RQ1: By what means have the NNALP women alumni overcame barriers to avoid dropping out of the program? Significant statements of participants derived from the research question and interview questions.

**Interview Questions**

IQ1: What was your experience in completing the program?

IQ2: What did you like about the program? What did you not like about the program?

IQ2.1: What barriers to completion did you experience?

IQ2.2: How did you overcome those barriers?

IQ3.1: Describe the support of your spouse in your efforts to become literate.

IQ3.2: Describe the support of your family in your efforts to become literate.

IQ3.3: Describe the support of your community in your efforts to become literate.

IQ4.1: How do you perceive that the program could better equip adult learners to overcome barriers?

IQ4.2: How did the program impact your life, if at all?

The overall results of this study were revealed through addressing the sub-questions individually. The data was supported by descriptive statements that enhanced the understanding of the experiences of adult literacy women alumni. Descriptive statements were chosen for their ability to make the data more meaningful. Statements that were more unrelated were avoided to not cover the data.

**Interview Question 1**

**Experience gained**. Responses to IQ 1.1 indicated that all eleven participants gained experiences such as able to communicate, know about financial matters, handle health records, and protect the environment. Participant G-007 stated that literacy helped her to understand when being gossiped in English. Participant K-011 stated, "Life generally improved from being a blind person to someone better. At least now, I am able to read my child's hospital passport." F-006 state, "Of course, I gained experience from adult literacy program," and when on to say,

I am able to read and write in English and mother tongues. I can sign documents on my own without asking anyone to assist me. I am able to count mathematic sums and cash money on my own. When I listen to English news, I do understand without asking someone to translate. I am able to read job advertisements in newspapers. Even for my children's hospital passports, I can read on my own. I am able to write text messages on

the mobile phones when I want to write to my children or anyone. I am able to write letters in both English and mother tongues too.

All 11 participants indicated that they gained variety of experiences. Participant A-010 stated, "I was like a blind person. Participant B-002 stated, "It has enabled me to write text messages to my family and friends without being assisted." Participant G-070 stated, "The experience I gained Is English. Even when someone speaks, I can hear not like in the past, when I could not hear. Now I can read and write. I can understand too."

**The likes about the program**. Women were asked what they liked about the adult literacy program. All eleven participants indicated liking the literacy program because it helped them to read and write in both English and mother tongues, advertisements, children's passports and being able to communicate when seeking for transport. Participant E-005 stated,

> I like to learn English. When I ask for water and how to communicate when hitchhiking is better." It has made me to be different from someone who did not go to school. I am on my own now. I can do my own things, without asking someone to help me translate because it is a foreign language. Now I know many things globally. At least I am counted as a useful person because when one depends on other people, you feel very useless. But now with the help of adult literacy program, many things have changed for the better.

The benefit of adult literacy program motivated women to share their experiences. Participant H-008 stated, "Knowing English has helped to improve life for the better like at the doctors no need to be translated." Although women shared fruitful experiences,

some women indicated things they did not like about the program as part of their life challenges.

**The dislikes about the program.** Women were asked to answer what they disliked about the program. To respond to this question, four out of eleven indicated that there is nothing one can dislike about literacy program because of the benefits they have gained. PH-008 stated,

> Is there anything one will dislike in literacy? No, literacy is things which should come because it is good even for us elderly. There are no dislikes; how can one hate education? Education is always important in someone's life. It can help one when travelling and you meet a person who do not understand your language, at least than you are able to communicate. When you ask where are you going? You are able to respond to the person. English is the first and most important language currently. Classes I attended for English was good. If we could have English Instructors, we could have gone far.

Although four women did not have anything to dislike about the program, seven out of 11 women indicated that they were disappointed when the English program was discontinued, which exacerbated the situation of becoming literate because of forgetting previously learned knowledge. Participant A-001 stated,

> I hated when one does not know how to read and write because the person you rely on can change words on your behalf. I dislike when one is educated without any fruitful outcomes. I see people walking in the streets doing nothing because they do not have anything to do. Stay at home make them become bored. I see

> adult literacy program as a waste of time because I do not get employment. When positions are advertised, they only consider those with grade 10. Our program is not equivalent to grade 10. I am left out without knowing what to do. This make to think, it is like a waste of time.

Some women disliked the program when the English Instructors were removed and transferred somewhere else (PC-003). Some felt disappointed when the English program was discontinued (PK-011).

**Interview Question 2**

**Program barriers.** Women were asked to respond to barriers that hindered their completion of the program. Four participants out of eleven indicated that they experienced difficulty of losing their English instructor which resulted in the program to be discontinued. Participant I-009 stated,

> I was disappointed when our English Instructor was removed and transferred to another place. I was not informed why she was removed. It was sad indeed. Her absence created for the English program to be discontinued. This affected me badly because I forgot what I learnt before. I want to advance with English for me to speak not only to hear. This was like going backward for me. I was doing well when the English Instructor was teaching. I wanted her to help us advance to a better higher level. Now everything was shattered.

Some women experienced difficulties of not meeting their expectations of their goals from the program. These women requested to introduce new programs on how to improve on agricultural production through new strategies as participant E-005 stated,

> I experienced difficulty of wanting to know something about projects. Projects I mean like handwork, where one use more of the practical skills because I am limited with education. Another practical skill can be on agriculture. Currently, people use new methods and strategies of planting seeds. I need to know these things because I rely more on agriculture for survival. When one learns new things, it help your production. Literacy can help us to connect with handwork

A number of women experienced discouragement and shame from their spouses, family members and community. Participant A-001 stated,

> I remained focused and persevered when people laughed at me, even my own husband. People talked bad that there are those who completed before you, what did they achieved, nothing. Do you think you are the one who will change things? You are wasting your time. You are even older to attend school. Where have you been that you are struggling now with school? I told myself, I know what I want. I remained focused and ignored what people said. I know they were just yellows because they wanted me to remain backwards like them. I persevered.

Participant J-010 stated, "The issue of officers' not visiting villages to hear the challenges the communities are facing and to see who those who want to study are." The experience these women went through helped them to be strong and not to drop-out from the program because women were determined to change their livelihood.

**Solutions to barriers**. Women were asked to provide solutions to the difficulties they experienced. In response to IQ 2.2**,** four participants responded on the issue of losing their instructor that they used different approaches such as asking the Adult Education

Officers for the way forward, but no positive response, learned to be patient, and sometimes asked themselves questions whether this program will ever continue again. However, they had a challenge of not knowing how to reach them. Asked themselves questions whether the program will ever continue again. Participant A-001 stated,

> I became worried about losing the English Instructor. I spoke to the fellow adult literacy women to seek assistance of contacting the Adult Education Officers on the issue. I had difficulty of knowing where the Regional office of education was. This made things more difficult and I did not get any positive respond. At the end, I learnt to be patient and quiet. At times, I asked myself whether this program will ever continue again. Now that I am seeing you, can I send you to inform the Adult Education Officers about our situation?

Participant C-003, who had been laughed at, stated,

> I was persistent with my goal and ignored what people were talking about. People talk, but I knew what I wanted. I remained focused. If one listen to what people were talking about, one can easily drop-out of the program. Some people do not want others to progress and get good things. Their talk did not deter me from my education. Education is very important in someone's life. It opens your eyes to see things in better way.

Participant H-008 stated, "How should I correct it? Are you at the offices to make sure that you find an English Instructor? Us—we do not have a problem, if we get an instructor, we can start the program." Participant E-050 stated,

> When I realized agriculture and hand work were not taught. I continued on my own to do planting on small scale. Agriculture is my source of income because when I get the fresh produce, I sell it to get income to buy bread and maize for my children. At least that helped to put food on the table for the children not to sleep on an empty stomach. However, what can do with these small produce? One needs to expand and grow on a large scale. This is limited because I lack knowledge how to do it better.

Participant K-011 stated, "What I did is to ignore and to persevere with the literacy program to improve my study."

**Interview Question 3**

**Spousal support.** In response to this interview question, six participants who were married, only two were supported by their spouses, while four participants indicated not to receive support at all. Participant stated that she was married to someone illiterate and older than herself. Participant A-001 stated,

> I am married to someone who did not attend school. What can you expect him to support you, nothing? It is difficult to expect him to support me because he is illiterate. It is difficult because he does not know too. The only thing he will tell you, is to discourage you, so that he does not feel inferior. You should know that he is still the boss in the house. All these feelings come because the two of you are different. However, I always respect my husband, he should know that.

There were four discrepant cases of participants that did not receive any support from a spouse. Participant C-030 stated, "Nothing, he only discouraged that I was

wasting time and I will not benefit anything." Participant K-011 stated, "There was no support at all, only discouragement. Some of the spouses said that there are others who completed before you, what did they achieved? Nothing. And do you think you are the one who will change things?" Two participants were widows and three were not married. Only few women received support, while others did not receive support from their spouses. Instead women experienced discouragement and shame from their spouses.

**Family support.** Women were asked to describe the support they received from their family. In response to this IQ 3.2, five participants responded they were supported by family members through words of encouragements. Some family members looked after their children so they could attend classes. Some family members encouraged them not to listen to what people are saying, not to despair, but to think when they are old. Some family members knew the benefit of being literate. As participant G-070 stated,

> I received support from family members when they encouraged me that literacy is important in someone's life. In the future, education will help you not wait that my sister or brother will give me something, but through literacy, one can assist yourself by seeking employment even as a clearer. If you only rely only on your family, what will happened when the family members are no more there? It will become difficult to survive because your bread winners are not there to support you. This is why I say I am happy to have family members who support you to have good things in life.

Discrepant cases occurred when three participants responded not to receive support from family members. Instead they were teased that they were too old and no benefits. As participant A-010 stated,

> No support from families of nowadays. Families are some of those who will tease you, "Why struggling with education in your old age? You won't get anything." There are others who tried before you, what did they achieved? Nothing, only wasted time. Is there nothing you can do in the house, why you are forcing attending classes? You should rather stay home and do better things in support the family, not school at your age.

Participant J-010 responded to say there was no support without any reason provided while participant K-011 responded to stay alone without any family members.

In response to this question, five participants out of eleven indicated that they were supported by community members through words of encouragements, and motivations. Few women received support, while others did not receive support from family members. Women were discouraged due to old age.

**Community support.** Women were asked to describe the support they received from community members. In response to IQ 3.3, four participants out of eleven responded to receive support from community members, while there were seven participants that had discrepant cases. Participant I-009 stated,

> Some of the community members encouraged me to stay in the program. We shall join you too. Do not listen to what people are talking about. Literacy is important nowadays, not like in the olden days where people looked after cattle and

> farming, no. Education is more important. Now that literacy is available, let us go and attend to be educated. I could see those few ones understood what literacy means to someone's life. Those words kept me going and never to give up.

The seven participants responded that they were not to be supported. In fact, they were harassed by people teasing and laughing at them and telling them that it was a waste of time in their old age. Females were challenged with the feeling with discouragement and shame because the community teased because of no positive results. Participant F-006 stated,

> Community did not support me; we could have been many who joined, [but did not] because they are ashamed. They only discouraged me by saying at your age you are still struggling with school. It is a waste of time. Is only in your old age you are shivering for school. It makes you feel ashamed.

Participant H-008 stated, "Community did not support me only laughed and teased me. Even when you were young you could not manage, what about now? You are old, there is nothing you will do."

**Interview Question 4**

**Program support.** In response to IQ 4.1, seven participants responded by requesting to renew the English program which was discontinued some years back. Participant H-008 stated,

> I requested to find a replacement for the English instructor. I know, without English Instructor, we shall not have classes. English program is part of the advancement of the literacy program beyond AUPE. My progress, depend on the

> English Instructor. Bring back the English Program to improve the level of English. Not only "how are you? I am fine and how are you?" But also to be able to ask things one doesn't know in English. Things like, how to name "a pot" in English. These are important for me to know.

Participant A-001 indicated to introduce computer program, business content, horticulture, and crop farming. Participant K-011 stated to upgrade the curriculum program and align it to Grade 10 School leaving certificate. Participant C-003 stated,

> I request to improve to level of English to be able me to advance to better phase. I also request to improve the education standard of literacy to align it to Grade 10 School going learners. If AUPE is aligned to Grade 10 learners, it will ease the frustration to create an opportunity for employment. Job opportunity only recognized those with a Grade 10 certificate. If one is done with AUPE, you will move to Grade 10. I could have been far [along] with studies. I have literacy certificate, but I cannot use it anyway. To improve the level of the program so that students upon completion are able to find employment or projects to support our families. They should improve how to mention a pot, bucket, how to make a bed, to greet, and how to answer when you're asked a question.

One requested to visit communities to hold meetings and to give motivations to elderly. A number of women requested for the adult literacy program to be upgraded to ensure that upon completion they find employment. Some women requested the Regional staff to visit communities to held meeting and present motivational talks as participant K-011 stated,

> I requested the Adult Regional Officers to visit communities to do need needs assessments. Identification of needs will help the office to appropriately address the needs of adult learners and support them. Lack of community visits creates a vacuum between adult learners and the Adult Regional office. I feel not supported at all because I do not see them at our village. I request them to visit the communities and hear from them how they are doing. Something they should improve is to make some visits to communities to give motivations and hold meetings with the elderly.

While others gained knowledge and skills of be able to communicate, manage health records, and have basic skills in financial matters. Few females requested to introduce new programs on how to run projects, new strategies of how to plant crops, horticulture, small businesses, advance English, computer literacy, painting on small scale, and hand work. D-004 stated, "They wanted to teach us new things like how to do your own business. Participant C-030 stated, "We get educated and at the end you get a certificate, but you do not go further with it. At least to learn computer which is useful nowadays."

**Program impact to their lives.** In **response** to IQ 4.2, all eleven (100%) responded that they were able to: read, write, count numbers, and communicate a little in English, able to sing documents on their own, to read their children's hospital records and bibles, to write letters in their mother tongues (Rumanyo, Thimbukushu, Runyemba, and Rukwangali), to write text messages on the phone. Participant A-010 stated,

> Yes, it did. Like me, I was like a blind person. But now I am able to write my name. I am able to read my child's hospital records. Also, I am able to sign documents myself. Only to speak is difficult. Not like in the past were I used to ask someone to read a letter for me. There was no secret, even confidential message, it became open to that person. That was not good. This is why I encouraged myself to improve that type of life, so that I do things myself.

Participant F-006 stated,

> I was able to borrow books in the public library. I learned that library is one source which is also very important. I am able to borrow books from the library to read. Books helps to improve my reading skills. Also, I can borrow books to support my children with their homework. You see, now I can do all these with the help of literacy skills. Not like in the past when I did not count library as an important resource.

Participant H-008 stated, "Currently, I was not like this where one could gossip me. But now I am able to communicate." Participant J-010 stated, "Like me when I want to hitch hike it helps to communicate with someone who speaks English only."

## Themes

Data analysis revealed broad areas of common understanding from the participants' responses. These are the themes that described adult literacy women's shared experiences. Through the process of coding, the common four themes emerged based on the conceptual framework. The themes discussed are (a) voice, (b) significance, (c) inspiration, and (d) dialog.

**Voice**

The first dominant theme of recognizing a voice emerged from the interview transcription which dealt with experienced gained from the adult literacy program. While some participants pointed out a concern of educating oneself without gaining a fruitful outcome, eight participants emphasized good experience gained from the program such as: Few women gained knowledge and skills of reading and writing, handling documents, and listening to news. Several women were unhappy of being educated without any positive benefits. Quality program is needed to ensure that women improve their lives. According to Bayeh (2016), the global need for high quality education created a demand for formal education that requires society to acquire literacy skills. High quality education plays an important role in eradicating poverty and achieving gender equality to ensure sustainable development. High quality education can increase women's confidence to voice out their ideas. When women receive high quality education, they are able to be self-employed, rather than seek employed by an employer, as Stromquist (2015, Jones, 2018, Qwiny, 2017, Shabalala, 2018) asserted that women are more likely to be employed and able to engage in self-employment. This means that women should not wait to be employed but sustain themselves by doing small businesses or hand work activities. All these depends on the type of education women receive that enhance their skills. Women can use their voices to advocate for the type of programs they need.

Women used their voices to communicate their concerns and the barriers they faced upon completion of the literacy program. While some participants did not experience challenges in the program, others experienced challenges in the community.

Some felt discouraged and ashamed, however, they remained persistence in the program until completion. The participants concluded by requesting to return the discontinued English program. The feeling that all participants shared was that stopping the English program had negative effect on them of forgetting the content that they already knew. This effect was taking them back to become illiterate again. Adult literacy women discussions indicated how women gained confidence by using their voices to be heard. The emerged theme of a voice supports the conclusions of Belenky et al. (1986) and Manyonganise, (2015) that a voice as a communication tool should assist in developing one's identity and personal strength.

**Significance**

The second theme that emerged from the interviews was significance of education that all participants pointed out how important education was in their lives. Participants valued education in different ways. Some women valued education in terms of communication, know about health records, managed to improve from being illiterate to literate persons, and improved the level of writing in indigenous language Rumanyo

Their discussions indicated how vital education was in their lives as women managed to change positively because of the education they received. The feeling shared was that they were different from those who did not attend literacy programs. As C-030 stated, "Now I know many things, I am not the same with someone at home who did not attend literacy classes." This statement agrees with the theory that women who are empowered differentiate themselves from being illiterate (Olomukoro & Adelore, 2015).

The understanding women developed on the significance of education, made women ensure that they discussed areas they wanted to be improved in the adult literacy program such as how to improve the English program, how to add content to programs and upgrade them to advance the AUPE program to align it to Grade 10 level (currently Grade 9) in the Ministry of Basic Education, Arts and Culture. Several women faced challenges to the continuation of the program when they lost the English instructors without replacement, while others requested to introduce new programs on how to improve their chances of financial security.

The emerging theme of the significance of education supports the conclusions of the United Nations Sixty-Sixth General Assembly (2017) and Akello, Lutwanna-Ruundo, and Musiimenta (2017) that empowerment of women is an important step to take in ensuring progress towards the millennium development goals. This empowerment involves the improvement of literacy levels. Bayeh (2016) agreed that the global need for high-quality education created a demand for formal education that requires society to acquire literacy skills. High-quality education plays a vital role in reducing poverty and achieving gender equality to ensure sustainable development. High-quality education increases women's confidence to voice their thoughts.

Education is an indispensable tool for various development as social, economic, political, and cultural aspects. According to Seyoun and Basha (2017), education helps society to be concerned with the liberation of man from ignorance and poverty. Education serves as a means to understand social issues better, survive during economic hardship, participate in political activities, and utilize cultural heritage. However, when

opportunities are not created, adult literacy learners are limited from the benefits of what education offers. Lack of quality education makes adult literacy women vulnerable to ignorance and poverty.

The improved adult literacy program is critical in adult literacy women's lives. Reis (2018) called program designers upon to standardized outcomes, yet allow for individualized learning, support self-regulated learning, foster curiosity, promote professional identity formation as their primary goal. Furthermore, Reis emphasized that an improved adult literacy program should create a process that will ensure effectiveness, implementation process, and to be fit for purpose. The effectiveness of the program should produce positive results as an effect on the participants' learning. The program results should show the impact on the longer-term program effects. In other words, women alumni should show tangible skills gained from the program.

**Inspiration**

The third theme that emerged from the interviews was the inspiration that women displayed in their discussions. Women were mentally strong and excited when they shared their feelings about the literacy program. While several women raised concerns about the literacy program, all eleven participants interviewed indicated their excitement that they attended the program that helped them to read and write. All eleven participants indicated that they gained experience of basic communication in English, be able to manage health records, and be able to manage essential financial matters. Some women were inspired to think creatively. While others requested to introduce new programs on how to improve agricultural activities, projects, and handwork.

Some women shared a feeling of excitement that ensured that the program was completed without dropping out. As K-011 stated,

> Oh, of course it did. I can really say that literacy have changed my life in terms of improving my reading, and writing communicating in English which I did not do in the past. Even to work now I can work anywhere. Things have become easier. Everything became easy like listening to English news, reading advertisements of jobs in both English and Rumanyo. In addition, I am requesting those that did not yet join the adult literacy program to do so because it is useful. It assists with withdrawing money from the bank and a lot more.

The shared feeling of showing excitement supports the theory of Belenky et al. (1986) that people develop self-esteem by becoming aware of their shortfalls. This discussion indicated that women were excited because they became aware that they changed from not knowing anything to having the ability to even raise issues on the adult literacy program. While women were excited about the adult literacy program, others shared feelings of being mentally strong to overcome the barriers they faced. As C-030 stated, "I was persistent with my goal and ignored what people were talking about. People talk, but I knew what I wanted. Some people do not want others to progress and get good things." K-011 stated, "What I did was to ignore and to persevere with the literacy program to improve my study." This shared feeling of becoming mentally strong supports the theory stating that a tie that is created can be a women's defense mechanism (Belenky et al., 1986). The knowledge women gained from the adult literacy program helped them to become strong and stay in the program despite challenges (Dimici, 2015).

Instead of women withdrawing from the program due to a lack of supports, women persisted. Persistence indicated that adult literacy women needed relevant programs that can support them.

**Dialog**

The fourth theme that emerged from the interviews was the dialogue that each woman utilized favourably to their circumstances. Through dialog, women were able to raise their opinions about the adult literacy program, which defines women's relevance in society as one requested to find a replacement for the English instructor. One indicated to introduce computer programs, business content, horticulture, and crop farming. One stated to upgrade the curriculum program and align it to the grade 10 school leaving certificate. One requested to visit communities to hold meetings and to give motivations to the elderly. E-050 stated, "They should improve the curriculum on how to mention things like; pot, bucket, how to make a bed, to greet and how to answer when one asked a question." Their discussions indicated that women used the communication tool to link with others. The emerged theme of dialogue supports the theory of Belenky et al. (1986) that discussions help women to communicate effectively. However, this can only work when women use relevant tools to support them to become more aware of themselves. Although literature pointed out that women needed relevant tools of support to become more aware of themselves, this study revealed that women were more confident in their ability to communicate. An appropriate platform should be created for parties to understand the difference between formal and non-formal education.

The under-conceptualization of non-formal education in the field of education and the implications this has for the implementation of adult literacy policies requires to have a better understanding of the concepts. Some educators and program developers do not understand well the distinction between formal education, non-formal education, and informal learning. Seyoun and Basha (2017) argued that formal education receives the greatest policy attention and funding, while non-formal and informal learning are considered less important. Non-formal education, according to this view, is constructed as the opposite of formal education, everything that formal is not. Seyoun and Bashe argued that this view is shortsighted and misguided. Non-formal education is not simply the absence of certain elements of formal education; it should be considered an independent form of education. Moreover, identifying the positive elements of non-formal education frameworks would deepen and sharpen policy formulation and provide answers to key policy and research questions. A deeper understanding of the adult literacy conceptual framework ensures better plans for program interventions.

Social support in an adult literacy program is considered important when it is integrated into the already existing programs. Seyoun and Basha (2017) noted that integrating adult literacy skills like reading and writing with that of income generation, environmental protection, cultural education, health, civic education, and skills in agriculture, will promote internal efficiency. Adult literacy programs that involve adult learners about the programs ensure retention (Francois, 2014; Petty & Thomas, 2014). There is evidence that suggests considerable advantages in using learning technologies in adult literacy programs. Seyoun and Basha (2017) asserted that the use of learning

technologies such as computer software with adult learners have many advantages as of giving privacy, providing fast feedback to each learner, and attract more learners who are able to acquire basic computer skills. However, a number of challenges remain, such as low self-esteem and a lack of funds to purchase computers and maintain them. The data generated from this study and the theories of Belenky et al. (1986) can develop future interventions and policies to address the needs of the adult literacy learners.

The results of this study revealed that women did understand the significance of literacy education, although Olomukoro and Adelore found that women may fail to understand the significance of literacy education, leading them to the possibility of dropping out of the adult literacy program. This study supported the work of Belenky et al. that women can use their voices to liberate themselves and advocate for their own literacy.

## Summary of Outcomes to the Literature

The impact of the long-term program reform is in n multifaceted. Reis (2018) asserted that improving adult literacy programs can lead to a larger number of adult literacy women alumni improving their lives, for example, a number of adult women will enter positions of higher levels, and women will be able to compete for the job market. This will increase women's economic standing. Improving women's economic standing will lead to positive contributions to their communities and increase the local economy. Furthermore, it can lead to the larger-scale benefit of widespread educated adult women entering the workforce or sustaining themselves.

Sustainable development is an important function of transformation and improvement of society. Seyoun and Basha (2017) and Seya (2014) noted that for adult literacy women to be transformed, an integrated functional adult literacy program is needed that will focus on conveying knowledge and skills in income generation, environmental protection, cultural education, health, civic education, and skills in agriculture. The integrated knowledge and skills are intended to increase the productivity of individual adult literacy learner. Improved skills will promote upward social mobility. Upward social mobility ensures quality lives that will lead to sustainable development.

Appropriate literacy practices outside the educational system contribute to the sustainable literate environment. Easton (2014) observed that those who resource adult literacy programs should understand the lessons from the demand side if they want to see literacy programs taken up in a sustainable way. This means programs should be relevant to respond to adult literacy learners' needs in the community. Adult women understood the significance of the literacy education that inspired them to remain without dropping out of the program.

Relevant literacy practices contribute to the sustainable development of adult literacy alumni. McKay, (2018) and Bradburg, (2016) noted that consistent program evaluation improves the adult literacy program to increase learner achievement. For example, when regular adult literacy program evaluation is done, it helps reveal the effect on participants, discover problems and needs early, ensure that quality is maintained, and recommend an improvement for future programs. This ensures the determination of the evidence of the program's impact on participants.

The relevance of the adult literacy program is determined by the context of the adult literacy alumni women find themselves. Easton (2014) asserted that it is important to recognize the value of the "insider" perspective in understanding the learning outcomes of adult literacy learners. This means the voice of the beneficiary, "insider," must be heard. To the adult literacy women alumni, learning literacy, represented the opportunity to learn in the language and circumstances that were most relevant to their rural context. However, the outside perspective (outside of the local language community) does not recognize the value of adult literacy education in rural areas because it is unclear, and it is not easy to imagine the contexts in which adult learners live. Therefore, the contribution of adult literacy in the local language to further their education seems to be a challenge. The implication is that the adult literacy program receives inadequate resources. This means that it is important to listen to the voices of the insiders when they describe the opportunity for positive social change and their personal development that literacy program provides.

Adult literacy program is evidenced that it has impact on literacy women's lives. Seyoun and Basha (2017), stated that the impact could be observed in literate mothers support children's education, more effective communication in both oral and written language, improved family health, and more productive livelihoods. Literacy supports the micro-entrepreneurship projects in the informal economy that leads to productive livelihood. Adult literacy programs should ensure that the strategies are effective for implementation. For the program to be effective, the following points should be considered: First, to be effective, literacy policies must recognize the wide diversity of

literacy challenges in each country and (sub) region. Second, programs must carefully tailor their literacy improvement strategies to the specific communities and populations they serve. Third, literacy involves a deeply contextual process connecting formal education, employment, social empowerment, cultural change, and active civic participation. Fourth, it is imperative to think comparatively about literacy policies, strategies, and solutions (Easton, 2016). Although scholars talked about the effectiveness of the adult literacy program in an ideal situation, Govinda and Biswal (2014), Yousif 2014; Warrican 2014, and Mitra (2014) cautioned on the barriers to effective implementation of the literacy policy and program.

There are certain factors that can limit the effective implementation and successful impact of literacy policies and programs. Despite these enabling policy and legal frameworks, many studies highlight unfulfilled promises, fragmented and ineffective literacy programs. Govinda and Biswal (2014), Meng (2014), Mitra (2014), Warrican (2014), and Yousif (2014), and highlighted barriers to effective implementation of the literacy policy and program:

- Inadequate resources, poorly trained facilitators and an over-reliance on volunteers
- Language and linguistic barriers to literacy
- Irrelevant or inappropriate contents and pedagogy
- Weak monitoring and evaluation frameworks
- Unreliable costing exercises of the actual expenses of literacy programs
- Poor linkages between non-formal education and formal education

Effective literacy policies ensure the effective implementation of adult literacy programs. It is, therefore, important to learn from other countries with similar programs. One good lesson to learn is unless policy Planners find ways to mitigate the impact of these factors, existing adult literacy policies will remain weak. Effective policy implementation involves both parties, learners, and program designers to dialog.

## Project Deliverable in Terms of the Results

According to Creswell (2007), there are specific structured methods for data analysis using a phenomenological research study. I used Creswell's strategy, as outlined in Creswell (2007) for the data analysis process. Furthermore, I used hand coding to develop epoch bracketing, horizontalization, and themes. The process of data analysis began following the interview process by reading and rereading the participants' responses to interview questions to ensure that meaning was made from the data. This process helped to reduce the frustration that could come when the data became overwhelmed (Miles et al., 2014). I bracketed my personal beliefs about the persistence of women alumni overcame barriers to avoid dropping out of the program as much as possible in order to understand the participants' experiences.

Section 3 presents the proposed project study, explained the purpose of the study, program description, barriers, project plan, and addressed project goals. Additionally, a review of the literature has been provided, summarizing an in-depth review of previous research that contributed to this project. Furthermore, implications for social change and recommendations were discussed with the goal of improving the quality and effectiveness of the program. Based on the qualitative findings provided, I arrived at two

recommendations: To suggest how the program can be improved or reformed so as to produce more positive social results and to suggest an implementation plan for the recommended results to ensure greater rates of learning output and increase in the number of NNALP graduates with adequate skills in the local setting.

Section 3: The Project

## Introduction

Throughout this project, I aimed to generate and present findings and recommendations from a doctoral research study concerned with the experiences of 11 adult women alumni from Tupumenu district in the Kavango East Region of Namibia who had graduated from the NNALP. This study addressed the problem of how the NNALP women alumni overcame barriers that would have caused them to drop out of the program, something that they wanted to avoid. Specifically, the white paper recommendations are targeted at the set of obstacles that included a lack of time, a husband who refused to allow their wives to work outside of the home, and the death of a male breadwinner.

The study revealed that the women were mentally strong and excited when they shared their feelings about the literacy program. The program improved their lives by helping them achieve literacy. Instead of women withdrawing from the program due to lack of support, discouragement, and shame, these women persisted until they completed the program. A few of the women received support from their spouses, family, and community for their attendance in the literacy program, but most did not receive any support. Several women raised concerns about the discontinuation of the literacy program. Others were unhappy when their education did not produce any positive benefits. The women faced challenges when they lost their English instructors without replacement. Some women requested the introduction of new programs on how to improve their chances of financial security. Informed by the theory of Belenky et al.

(1986), the research question of this phenomenological study examined how enrolled women overcame barriers that would have caused them to drop out of the program. The study revealed four themes: (a) voice, (b) significance, (c) inspiration, and (d) dialog. These findings and the best practices discussed in the literature led to two recommendations on how the program could be improved: (a) improving the program and (b) providing better support for the participants.

First, the adult literacy program should be upgraded and aligned to the old Grade 10 (current Grade 9) to ensure that, upon completion, the graduates could find employment. To achieve this outcome, the regional staff of the Directorate of Adult Education should visit communities to hold meetings and present motivational talks. These meetings should introduce new programs on how to run projects, new strategies of planting crops, horticulture, small businesses, advanced English, computer literacy, painting on a small scale, and handiwork. Adult literacy programs aimed at specific target groups could have better results. Adequate resources, trained facilitators, and reduced reliance on volunteers need funding. The pool of literacy materials available for adults from linguistic, ethnic, and cultural sources that concurrently nurture literacy facilitators who are proficient in unofficial languages needs to be expanded. Concrete ways to improve the relevance and appropriateness of program contents need to be developed. Strong monitoring and evaluation strategies for continuous improvement need to be implemented.

Secondly, to support adult literacy women alumni, effective linkages with nonformal and formal education institutions and NGOs need to be created. Barriers that

hinder participation of adult females need to be overcome. The involvement of adult learners in the decision-making process becomes paramount.

## The Goal of the White Paper

Based on the current study results, white paper policy recommendations suggest how NNALP alumni overcame such barriers as of lack of time, husband refusing to allow their wives to work outside of the home, and the death of male breadwinners to avoid dropping out of the program. The reforming of the literacy program can provide graduates with skills that can help them as job seekers and as workers in their regional economies. The recommendations include an implementation plan to ensure increased rates of learning output and increased numbers of NNALP graduates with adequate skills in the local setting.

## Rationale

The rationale for this white paper was to achieve an improvement in the quality of the current adult literacy program to increase the number of NNALP graduates with job-worthy skills. I chose a policy recommendation as the final project type to disseminate the findings of the study to the Directorate of Adult Education in the Kavango East Region and at the national level. Given the diversity of the stakeholders involved in the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture, I used a white paper format to engage stakeholders. I also provided suggestions for policy changes on adult learners' performance to ensure program quality.

A white paper, by definition, is well suited to disseminate information on a problem and provide a recommended resolution. Sakanuero, Shelley, and Hyde (2015)

described a white paper as a way used by presenters to explain the challenges and, at the same time, recommend a solution. Lerner, Tomasello, Brand, & Knowles (2016) supported the idea that if the white paper's summary is short and concise in nature, it can convey meanings, maintain interests, and provide specific information. The concise construction of a white paper allows the presentation of the relevant necessary information to stakeholders. The main objective of this project is to provide insight into the experiences of women studying to achieve literacy and trying to avoid the pitfalls that would result in their dropping out of the program.

Through this project study, I addressed the problem by collecting data, analyzing the collected data, and reporting on the findings. This process produced empirical evidence for determining whether the NNALP was effectively addressing the quality of the program. This evidence could then be used to support how NNALP alumni overcame such barriers as of lack of time, husband refusing to allow their wives to work outside of the home, and the death of male breadwinners to avoid dropping out of the program.

## Review of the Literature

The current research revealed that improved programs for AUPE in the rural areas for adult literacy women could be beneficial in increasing learner retention and graduation (Berger, 2014; Stewart, 2014). The quality adult literacy programs attracted adult literacy women to overcome barriers without dropping out of the program. The following online databases and search engines were used to reach saturation and to provide information reviewed for this section: Google Scholar, EBSCOHost, Science Direct, and ERIC. The search terms used to find articles were the following*: adult*

*learners, adult education, effective learning, successful education, persistent, retention, effective quality adult education, reform, revised program, improved program, intervention, policy, white paper, education success, best practices, social support*, *motivation,* and combinations of these terms. I chose these terms because they were closely related to the results of this project study. Of the literature reviewed, 95% was published within the last 2 years, and 5% of the literature was published more than 2 years ago.

## Best Practices in African Literacy Programs

This section presents the best practices this project study has learnt from to improve the adult literacy program. There are a number of countries in Africa with similar challenges of adult literacy programs. It is best to learn from other countries who went through similar experiences. These experiences will help to guide the development of relevant and effective adult literacy policies in Namibia.

### Improvement of Adult Literacy Policies and Programs

Awgichew and Seyoum (2017), Benavot (2015), Hanemann and McKay (2015), and Perry and Homan (2015) asserted that a functionally literate individual could effectively read, write, and perform mathematical calculations well enough to function in their communities. If for one to function effectively requires a bit of basic writing, reading, and mathematics calculations, policymakers and program designers need to recognize the importance of adult literacy programs. Effective communication can serve as a linkage tool between the provider and the beneficiaries. For productive members of society, writing, reading, and numeracy should be combined with training skills. The

contextual setup would determine the type of training skills each community requires. My study findings also supported this view because I found the importance of effective communication through dialog. This study revealed that women's views need to be heard. Conducting this study provided just such an opportunity.

**Women's Involvement in Programs**

Women's involvement increases the passion for sustaining the program. Dusabe, Pisani, Abimpaye, and Honeyman (2019), and Easton (2014), stated that it is important to listen more to the voices of the beneficiaries for a better understanding of their needs. When the needs are well understood, appropriate policies and programs will be implemented. Program designers are expected to find the right combination of elements and components to be part of the program design and implement appropriate interventions for women alumni. Understanding the program design ensured the easy implementation of the program. Appropriateness of policies can be determined by women's geographical locations, ethnicity, cultural diversity, language, and economic status (Dusabe et al. (2019), and Easton (2014). The needs of the adult literacy women alumni are identified according to their specific communities. In this case, different women might end up with different skill training. My study findings also supported this view in the sense that the participants raised similar sentiments to the effect that the program did not support them well. Because of this lack of support, women recommended that other programs be added to improve the standard of living of their families. These other programs are those within their geographical areas.

Listening to voices of the beneficiaries is useful to both parties. It is beneficial to the learners to ensure sustainability in terms of attendance. On the other hand, it is also beneficial to the side of the program designers to cut costs and not to waste resources when participants are not supporting the program to run (Dusabe et al., 2019, and Easton, 2014. Listening creates a better understanding of the needs of the beneficiaries to address those needs appropriately.

**Skills and Entrepreneurship Training**

Easton (2014), Nikiema (2016), and Sichula and Genis (2019) asserted that active, passionate women could support the programs. Women in such communities benefit greatly from writing, reading, and numeracy, integrated with practical knowledge and skills that directly relate to their living situations. Reading and writing can help to understand and manage their businesses better. Reading and writing can become easy to understand because themselves they understand the language. Applications become of information into context can be done without difficulties. Passionate women are active women who could support the program.

Numeracy is one of the important elements that is important in business. It involves mathematical calculations which involve counting of money. Counting in financial matters becomes easier to understand through entrepreneurial training. Training can equip women with the necessary skills required to manage businesses. Appropriate skills can be beneficial to ensure and sustain businesses. A learning society can be created because it supports what women want. Not only what women want, but what women need in society to become relevant.

Integrated skills in women lead to improved livelihoods in communities. Integrated skills involve not only skill in one area, but to have variety of skills such of health related, hospitality, agriculture, environment, and other technical skills (Dusabe et al. (2019), and Easton (2014), Integrated skills lead to new opportunities in women's lives because one does not rely only on one skill to survive. Many doors can be open for women to test their skills to improve their livelihood.

**Integration of Literacy Skills and Training with Basic Education**

Awgichew and Seyoum (2017), Benavot (2015),) Dusabe, Pisani, Abimpaye, & Honeyman. (2019), and Hanemann and McKay (2015) posited that integrating skills with a basic education can create opportunities in policies to align the progression of programs. In other words, academic and practical skills can be aligned for adult learners to continue with relevant and suitable entrepreneurship training that will help address the needs of adult learners across societies.

Aligning literacy skills with basic education can create opportunities and solutions for the progression of adult literacy program which limited. Dusabe, Pisani, Abimpaye, & Honeyman. (2019), and Maikano (2014) stated that when literacy and basic education is aligned, the shortage of human resources in literacy program can be reduced because the program can make use of teachers in basic education. The program can be sustained for a longer period and save costs. Women's empowerment can be achieved.

Skill integration with basic education can create new opportunities for women and for the program designers. For women, relevant program can be implemented and delivered by those with relevant skills and expertise. Relevant skills ensure quality

delivery of the program content. Literacy program can support its graduate upon completion to be employable.

**Empowering Women**

Abiy, Kabeta, and Mihiretie (2014), Benavot (2015), Hanemann and McKay (2015), Jones (2018), Kaiper (2018), Nikiema (2016), Olaghaju (2020), and Seyoum and Basha (2017) argued that gender balance could be achieved when human capital development is recognized by the government to build and empower women in society. Women have to take control of their own destiny. The involvement of adult women learners in decision making becomes crucial. Women have to use their voices to be heard, but not to wait for someone else to it for them.

Seyoum and Basha (2017) argued that human capacity development requires women to be lifelong learners for sustainable development. This research supports this theory. The findings of this study revealed that women were not sufficiently empowered through adult literacy programs. Articulation of AUPE to basic formal education upon completion was recommended by participants of this study. Women are part of the human capital development, and women need to capacitate to compete fairly in the job markets.

Achieving gender balance is in the hands of government to build and empower both gender in society. This study revealed that women lack behind compared to men in society, especially in the rural areas. For women to take control of their own destiny, women need to be educated to ensure that they are part of decision making in society, be it traditionally or in offices.

**Lifelong Learning**

Olaghaju (2020) stated that it is important to recognize that literacy is the foundation of all learning. If this is the case, it is important to know that adult learners have the rights to education too. The right to education of adult learners should compel African governments to take adult literacy programs seriously. In other words, consistent improvement of adult literacy programs should become a priority.

However, contrary to the ideal situation, Biswal (2014), Govinda and Yousif (2014), Hanemann and McKay (2015), Mitra (2014), and Warrican (2014) alerted policymakers to the barriers that can come with such programs. Several factors can hinder the effective and efficient implementation of adult literacy programs. Firstly, inadequate resources are allocated to implement the programs. The framework for adult literacy programs does not recognize that adult literacy is the foundation of learning as formal education does. The outcome leads to dependence on insufficient training for facilitators and over-reliance on volunteers. Secondly, content and pedagogy were identified to be irrelevant and inappropriate for adult literacy women. The needs of the adult literacy women should direct what to offer in the programs, not the other way round, to achieve learner productivity. Thirdly, inappropriate linkage between non-formal and formal education programs is a factor. Programs should be appropriately linked to ensure benefits for adult learners upon graduating. This study supports the view of the research. The findings of the study revealed that adult learners could not understand that upon completion of the program, their skills were not relevant to finding employment or sustaining a livelihood.

Recognition of literacy learning as a foundation of all learning is key to all African governments. Olaghaju (2020) stated that it is important to remind ourselves that adult learners have rights to education too. It is this right to education that should compel African government to take adult literacy programs seriously. If African governments take adult literacy programs seriously, it could change the situation of having graduates who cannot find employment upon completion of the program.

## Adult Literacy Student Support in Africa

This section presents the type of supports that are needed for adult literacy students. Providing support for adult students is important to motivate them to remain in the program. The context determines the type of support required to address the needs of students adequately. Building capacity is one of the different ways how students can be supported.

### Building Capacity by Introducing Variety of Adult Literacy Programs

Abiy et al. (2014), Benavot (2015), Jones (2018), Kaiper (2018), Hanemann and McKay (2015), Nikiema (2016), Olaghaju (2020), and Seyoum and Basha (2017) asserted that it is important to consider the diversity of adult learners. Diversified needs to determine flexible schedules when adult literacy programs are implemented. For example, one group can be in the morning, another in the afternoon, and the last group in the evening. The researcher recognized the challenge this schedule can create. However, public-private partnerships with NGOs and religious and community-based organizations considered to implement the functional literacy programs.

In discussing the introduction of community skills development projects for adult learners (SIP), Olaghaju (2020) stated that SIP could be beneficial to adult women because it aims at reducing poverty by providing functional literacy and numeracy skills for six years. In other words, it proceeds from a basic to an advanced literacy level. Therefore, SIP requires suitable facilitators to meet the standard of the programs. In this way, utilizing teachers at primary schools in some of the sessions for improved quality service delivery is appropriate. The benefit is that teachers know the content at basic formal education level. At the same time, University students could be utilized as tutors too. Utilizing students can be cost-effective, where resources are inadequate to maintain standards.

Diversified needs to determine flexible schedules when adult literacy programs are implemented can be useful to utilize teachers at primary schools for the program. Flexible in the sense that it can accommodate all learners involve and the facilitators, while meeting the intended goal. Teachers know the content well, while University students could be utilized as tutors to cut costs.

**Building Women's Capacity Through Skills Acquisition Programs**

Abiy et al., (2014), Juswik (2014), Skerrett (2014), and Trudell and Cheffy (2019) argued that to reduce the level of unemployment, poverty, and illiteracy among women in Africa, especially in Namibia, the need to train potential entrepreneurs has to be addressed. Women can acquire different entrepreneurship skills such as chicken rearing, garden crop farming, creation of kindergarten schools, sewing, catering, cookery,

hairdressing, and soap making. Such programs can contribute to human capital development that, in turn, empower women's financial standing and self-reliance.

According to Olaghaju (2020), self-reliance is when women understand their conditions, utilize the situation to empower themselves for end goal of improving the family's livelihood. For women to empower themselves, relevant programs should be accessible to women in rural communities. Program should reach all women irrespective of their location to contribute meaningfully to national development.

Capacity building through skill acquisition programs will require national development agenda. Olaghaju (2020), Blunch (2014), and Sow (2015) posited that government has an obligation of states to not only formally recognizing principles, but most importantly is to level the playing field for effective literacy for all. Literacy is a fundamental right for all citizens (Olaghaju). If literacy is considered as a fundamental right for all citizens, women should benefit from such programs like skill acquisition. African governments should budget to have a well-coordinated intervention in the communities.

**Loan Support**

Functional literacy does not only focus on theoretical knowledge but on practical skills too. For women to be self-reliant, loan support has to be considered. Abiy et al., (2014), Juswik (2014), Seyoun and Bashe (2017), Skerrett (2014), and Trudell and Cheffy (2019) stated that it is important to maximize the loan support on small-scale business for women to meet their specific needs. Small scale business for self-reliance development contributes significantly to women's empowerment in many of the poor

communities in Africa, and Namibia is no exception. The benefits are two-fold: women can become either employable or self-reliant. However, the content of the skill acquisition training programs and where women are located can be a hindrance to the quality of such programs.

Skill acquisition programs in African states should be sufficiently funded by government and NGOs. Moruatona (2020) posited that skill acquisition programs be a hindrance to quality delivery of such programs. Skill acquisition requires for a highly trained professional workforce to expand such training in the whole country. This professional workforce should have the responsibility of training the potential entrepreneurs. Entrepreneur development will ensure human capital development to contribute to financial empowerment of women (Olaghaju, 2020). Financially empowered women can be self-reliance to run their own small businesses such of farming, sewing, cookery, catering services, hair dressing, and soap making to mention but a few.

Relevant skill acquisition and training programs that are demand driven that respond to the labor market needs requires adequate scholarship for trainers. Abiy et al. (2014), Juswik (2014), Seyoun and Basha (2017), Skerrett (2014), and Trudell and Cheffy (2019) stated that the important thing is to empower women to become either employable or self-reliance. African governments should be cognizance that the state should promote personal growth and improve the socioeconomic development of the citizens. The fundamental question these researchers asked is why governments budget less than 1% for adult education if it is considered as a fundamental right for all citizens

(Abiy et al., 2014; Juswik, 2014; Seyoun & Basha, 2017; Skerrett, 2014; Trudell & Cheffy, 2019). Women are part of all citizens, and they are also part of all gender. Therefore, fair share should be stretched to all citizens in the society.

**Program Reform in African Literacy Programs**

Program reform is characterized by practical knowledge that is relevant to rural settings. Alidou and Glanz (2015), McKay (2018), Moruatona (2020), and Street (2014) asserted that adult literacy programs should create opportunities where adult learners learn from one another, learners are supported and motivated, programs are evaluated, and problems are being solved. Learning space, referred to as a community of practice, should be created for relevant content to be taught. A community of practice requires program designers to reflect on adult learners' needs to understand them better so that they can find appropriate solutions.

Find appropriate solutions that can address adult learners' needs to create a community of practice. Moruatona (2020) and McKay (2018) posited that adult literacy should create opportunity where adult learners learn from one another, and where learners are supported and motivated. Commitment is required from participants, and from the support of the administration of the program. In other words, it enables decision makers to become more considerate to the public around the benefits and the limitations of programs to ensure opportunities for changing the system (McKay, 2018; Moruatona, 2020). Learning together could be created through these opportunities. Providing such systems is one way of supporting adult learners.

Constant program evaluation contributes to quality of content and programs. Bradbury (2016) asserted that programs that are constantly evaluated provide opportunities for transformation as a collaborative system to determine the suitability and relevance of materials for adult learners. Relevance and suitability of resources motivate adult learners to be committed and remain focus in the program. The needs of the adult learners are addressed to increase their learning moral.

In addition, Takayanagi (2014) posited that collaborative learning, and togetherness requires up-to-date teaching materials and effective literacy program at the grassroots level. Meaning, adult learners working with one another and supporting each other. It requires a control self-motivated learning and a community development programs. For self-learning and community development to improve their standard of living, women should learn based on their needs to take control over their self-learning. Doing so, positive social change can be realized.

**Appropriate Solutions Through Action Research.**

Alidou and Glanz (2015), Aragon and Glenzer (2017), Kemmis, McTaggart, & Nixon, (2014), and McKay (2018) observed that conducting action research enables adult learners to understand and develop research practices. In other words, program interrogation can look at how to redefine and redesign learning as a democratic entitlement to ensure that no one is left behind. Commitments of the participants and researchers are required to do this, as is the support of the program administration. When action research is implemented, decision-makers can become attuned to public considerations on the benefits and limitations of the programs and, in doing so, can create

opportunities for improving the programs. The community can experiment together and learn together. The outcome can be a shared enthusiasm and a common commitment to the collaborative work.

Embedding adult literacy needs in other social policies of government can lead to another solution. McKay (2018) stated that for effective targeted program delivery, government ministries, and agencies with different roles and at different levels should collaborate together. In other words, it is important to realize that multiple government systems have the same client. It makes more sense if all networks work together to achieve the common goal, as this will benefit the community and help it to develop.

Self-learning and community development are central to improve the standard of living. Takayanagi (2014) and Oviawe (2016) asserted that collaborative learning creates opportunities for adult learners to work together. Through such activities, adult learners benefit from up-to-date materials. Such materials contribute to effective literacy programs at the grassroots level. Collaborative learning contributes to the improvement of the standard of living of learners and their communities. As the metaphor goes, "Educate a woman, you educate a nation." Theory and the research supported that when women learn based on their needs and take control of their self-learning, this can lead to positive social change.

Adult literacy education should serve as a means to promote sustainable livelihoods among adult women. Blunch (2014), Morakinyo et al. (2018), Sow (2015), and Yasunaga (2014) argued that decision-makers should use adult education as a tool to promote basic literacy, sustainable development, and continuous learning because these

pave the way to employment-oriented programs for different target groups. This study supports this view. However, the study findings reveal that the AUPE qualification is not recognized by industries.

**Strengthen the Provision of Learning Environment**

Abiy et al. (2014), Hanemann and McKay (2015), Morakinyo et al. (2018), and Sichula and Genis (2019) stated that to provide a suitable learning environment that supports quality learning in rural areas requires strengthening coordination among different stakeholders such as ministries and NGOs. Ministries have already existing programs that only need to be properly coordinated to share the resources. On the other hand, NGOs might run similar programs where only partnerships are required. Therefore, through collaboration, various adult literacy programs can be supported by stakeholders as per learners' needs. The Belenky et al. (1986) theoretical proposition, therefore, received overwhelming empirical support. Both the theory of Belenky et al. (1986) and the research valued collaboration as an essential component in executing adult literacy programs.

Collaboration as an essential component in executing adult literacy programs. Morakinyo, Nzima, & Kapueja, (2018), and Sichula and Genis (2019) stated that government institutions should create positive relationships among different stakeholders such as ministries and NGOs. Healthy relationships open up opportunities for partnerships on similar programs that are run from government and among different stakeholders such as ministries and NGOs. Mutual agreement could be reached to ensure

sharing of resources and human capital. Adult learners' needs could be addressed, at the same time find a solution to sustainable development.

Strengthen suitable learning environment that supports quality learning in rural areas. Abiy et al. (2014), Hanemann and McKay (2015), Morakinyo, Nzima, & Kapueja, (2018), and Sichula and Genis (2019) stated that the cognizance of maintaining healthy relationship with different stakeholders becomes crucial for effective creation of suitable learning environment for adult learners in communities. Relevant adult learners' needs should be identified and properly coordinated to share resources.

**Encouraging and Promoting the Practical Usage of Libraries by Adult Literacy Learners**

Blunch (2014) and Hanemann and Mckay (2015) viewed the utilization of community libraries as an essential tool for developing a literate environment. Decision-makers can partner with different stakeholders such as school principals, teachers, district officials, and parents to build relationships to support library activities for the benefit of adult learners. This study supports this view because the findings reveal that adult learners do not utilize libraries on a regular basis.

Provide support to community and school libraries in the rural communities. Abiy et al. (2014), Hanemann and McKay (2015), Morakinyo, Nzima, & Kapueja, (2018), and Sichula and Genis (2019) stated that equipped libraries in rural communities create opportunities to collaborate with different stakeholders, such as NGOs. Good working relationship with NGOs ensures sharing of resources to equip the libraries. If libraries are well-resourced, it could create opportunities for different stakeholders such as school

principals, teachers, district officials, and parents to have a relationship to support the libraries.

Community libraries as an essential tool for developing a literate environment. Hanemann and McKay (2015), Morakinyo, Nzima, & Kapueja, (2018), and Sichula and Genis (2019) stated that different stakeholders such as school principals, teachers, district officials, and parents could build relationships to support library activities for the benefit of adult learners. Meaning, principals can identify some of their teachers to support adult learners in the afternoons. District officials, and parents could also identify individuals with relevant skills to support adult learners over weekends.

**Literacy Viewed as a Fundamental Right for Citizens**

Blunch (2014), Moruatona (2020), and Sow (2015) asserted that literacy is inseparable from human dignity. It is, therefore, the responsibility of African states to be cognizant of the fact that the ethical obligation of states is not only about formal recognition of principles but about the importance of creating an effective learning condition for everyone. However, the inadequate resources allocated to literacy programs suggest that a strong willingness may not exist. The lack of priority by government institutions assigned to adult literacy programs creates challenges for education donors who must fund such programs adequately.

In addition, Moruatona argued that women who become empowered economically, reduce poverty because their family welfare is improved. Such women can ensure that their children are immunized, that women are better informed about children's nutritional requirements, and that they can adopt improved sanitation practices.

Such practices can lead to higher children's survival rates. This study supports this view and that of the theory of Belenky. The findings of this study revealed that the knowledge that women gained from the adult literacy program was not sufficient to sustain them during economic hardship. The recommendation to improve the adult literacy programs to cater for learners' needs in their society emanated from the findings of this study.

The conclusion that emerges from both the literature reviews and the data from the project study is that there is a need to improve the program for adult literacy and support the women alumni. The literature supports the view that improved adult programs have the potential to increase retention rates, graduation rates, and overall economic success. The data generated from this study provide a starting point for meeting this need.

## Project Description

The goal of this white paper was to produce and present findings and recommendations based on data produced the study of the experiences of 11 adult women alumni from Tupumenu district in the Kavango East Region of Namibia who graduated from the NAALP adult literacy program. I focused on developing a policy recommendation to reduce obstacles that prevent adult women from completing the program. The recommendations were made based on the findings of the project study and the available literature, which revealed four major themes: (a) recognizing a voice, (b) significance of education, (c) inspiration, and (d) dialogue. Participants provided recommendations to the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, especially the Directorate of Adult Education.

The problem identified is that how NNALP alumni overcame such barriers as of lack of time, husband refusing to work outside of the home, the death of male breadwinners, to avoid dropping out of the program. Results showed that adult literacy women alumni were not supported by the current program. This study project serves as a means to confirm the effectiveness of services and program, to identify gaps in practice, to provide recommendations for program improvement, and to influence allocation of resources. Therefore, revising the current adult literacy program was suggested. The white paper recommendation for the improved current adult literacy program involved the integrated functional adult literacy program that conveys knowledge, and skills in income generation, environment protection, cultural education, health, civic education, and skills in agriculture intervention.

The white paper recommendations entailed the project study results of the adult literacy program for the adult women alumni located in the Tupumenu district of the Kavango East Region of Namibia. The resources needed to implement the program improvement included money, human capital, study participants, the use of interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, and other relevant documents to the program. The technical resources needed to conduct the revise program include, internet access, computer, and computer software. The physical resources required to conduct the revise program includes the facilities used for the one-on-one interviews of the adult literacy program component, the location of the participant's interviews, the suppliers and equipment used to document findings, and the space used for the review of the documents.

Potential barriers, such as lack of finance to implement the revise program as intended, time management, access to facilities and resources. Money is very crucial in ensuring that the recommendations are implemented. Lack of money to implement the revise program might hamper the aspirations of the adult literacy women alumni to lose hope. It is therefore recommended to partner with non-governmental organizations to seek funding and involve them in taking part of implementing adult literacy programs.

The identified practices associated with effectiveness, along with the implementation of the revised program, the creation of a proposed timeline for implementation was required. Upon the acceptance of the completed doctoral study, I will immediately inform the Executive Director in the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture to present the project study results. The offer will include an overall presentation and the opportunity to answer questions. With the Executive Director's consent, I will extend an offer to present the project to the Regional education directorate of adult education that include the Director of education in the Region, and the staff who represent the current adult literacy program. These meetings will require money. Money is a required resource while money is not available. The stakeholder will consider budgeting provision to accommodate the revise program for adult.

In qualitative research, a researcher is considered as one of the instruments used in the study (Glesne, 2011). The role of the researcher served as an instrument for collecting and analyzing data. As a researcher, my role and my responsibility were to conduct the study on adult literacy alumni in terms of whether it is aligned with the adult women's needs. I interviewed the participants on the sites, and reviewed documents

relevant to the adult literacy program. For general understanding, I collected and analyzed data from the one-on-one interviews. Participants' responsibilities were to be aware of the purpose of the study by agreeing to sign the consent forms. The scholarly literature, data analysis, theories, and research findings addressed the content of the proposed project study.

The primary responsibility of implementing this white paper recommendations will be for the administrators and stakeholders. Stakeholder will stipulate the budget available to improve the adult literacy program and implement, since this adult literacy program will mostly involve policy makers and curriculum designers. Minimal budget will be required. Administrators will handle the required resources and information that they may need.

Successfully implementing an adult literacy program requires analysis and thoughtful planning. Easton (2014) explained why conducting a program revision is a valuable tool to educational leaders because identification of projects' effectiveness or ineffectiveness after a specific length of time through adult learners' perceptions is crucial. Understanding learners' perceptions helps the Directorate to determine whether they have the necessary skills, and resources to deliver services. The process can reveal the strengths and weaknesses of the program to ensure that learners' achievement is improved. When adult learners are part of the process, taking ownership of the program becomes easier. When adult learners are part of the process, ownership of the program becomes easier for adult learners.

In addition, Easton (2014) asserted that it is important to include already existing groups when adult literacy program is set up. Building partnership with Non-governmental Organizations and private enterprises strengthen the adult program deliverance and services. The strength of the program is through continuous monitoring and evaluating the program activities. Conducting regular research on adult literacy program such as enrollment, attendance, and dropouts also strengthen the adult literacy program. The Ministry, especially the directorate can benefit from the research findings to continuously improve the adult literacy program.

## Project Implications

The project is offered as a white paper to provide recommendations to stakeholders (see Appendix A). The purpose of the project was to investigate how the NNALP' women alumni overcame barriers that would have caused them to drop out of the program, something that they wanted to avoid. These are women who need to be empowered to initiate change in the society in which they live. Women that are empowered initiate change in the family and community. Empowered women can influence their families and communities. This means literate women with relevant skills and knowledge can secure livelihoods in their societies. The findings of this study might assist other broader educational settings in narrowing the gap between what these settings currently offer and options for what they could be offered by way of adult literacy programs. The motivation was to provide information for the stakeholders to improve the quality of their adult literacy programs. The use of the white paper is intended to open new dialogues on the findings pertaining to women alumni's persistence in overcoming

barriers to avoid dropping out of the program. The recommendations in this white paper should help stakeholders on how to improve the adult literacy program to increase adult learners' participation in the program.

On the societal level, implementation recommendations from this white paper may produce social change by giving increased numbers of adult women alumni the chance to engage in activities that are more likely to improve their livelihood than are their current participations. The learned skills and knowledge will lead to a larger number of adult women alumni utilizing literacy to improve themselves and the society they inhabit. Such women will be able to act on opportunities to compete equally in the job market because they possess higher skill levels. The white paper could benefit other regions if the program is scalable. Finally, preparing low-literate adult women alumni to be globally competent, proficient in information skills, and adaptable to change in their community helps improve the quality, equity, and social justice in their communities and environments.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

## Project Strengths and Limitations

The purpose of the white paper is to help stakeholders in the Ministry of Basic Education, Arts and Culture, and other educators to improve insights of the NNALP. The project shed light on how the NNALP women alumni overcame barriers that would have caused them to drop out of the program, something that they wanted to avoid. The white paper's recommendations are the project's strength. The exhibition of the findings herein makes it possible to communicate and highlight the main findings widely. Other strengths of the project are in bringing attention to how ineffective the current adult literacy program is and in presenting recommendations on how to improve the NNALP contents. The objective here is to assist the NNALP in addressing the literacy needs of the female adult learners. Lastly, with this project study, I intend to work to improve adult learners' productivity through program effectiveness, which hopefully will increase the retention of adult learners in the adult literacy program.

Researchers employing qualitative methods focus on discerning the meaning of a phenomenon in which individuals or groups participate (Creswell, 2012). Because the study sample consisted of only 11 alumni of the Tupumenu district in the Kavango East Region in Namibia, the findings from this study may not be generalizable quantitatively.

## Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

The phenomenon I addressed with this project study was the experiences of adult women alumni in overcoming barriers to avoid dropping out of the NAALP adult literacy program in which they were enrolled. I investigated this phenomenon through one-on-one

personal interviews with adult women alumni participants. I used the findings of the study to write policy recommendations. Another way to deal with the NNALP' women alumni overcome barriers that would have caused them to drop out of the program, something that they wanted to avoid, could have been to explore the academic integration of the program content. On the other hand, I could have investigated the persistence of females completing their adult literacy programs. Different options could have been used to examine other data collection techniques, study designs, or projects. I could have conducted a mixed-method study focusing on individual experiences and group ideas through focus discussions and interviews to determine whether diverse groups had shared experiences. Furthermore, I could have explored different data collection methods to look at how stakeholders implement adult literacy programs to respond to the issue raised by participants. Alternatively, another study could have used longitudinal reports where adult learners are followed for 1 or 2 years to realize what influence the livelihood of adult learners had on retention. The results of this study revealed that there is an opportunity for other studies to be conducted in the area of the how the NNALP' women alumni overcame barriers that would have caused them to drop out of the program, something that they wanted to avoid.

**Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change**

With the experience of conducting this project study, I have improved from being a novice researcher to becoming a researcher by exemplifying practices such as reading purposefully, studying critically, and listening carefully. The process of research has enabled me to improve my critical writing, which is an important component of

scholarship. When I reflected, I recognized two areas in myself noteworthy of personal development through this process: building research skills and increasing my level of confidence with the research process.

I gained comprehensive research skills during the course of this project study through steps ranging from (a) setting the premise of the study, (b) establishing a problem statement, (c) developing a prospectus, (d) writing and securing approval of a proposal, (e) performing data collection and data coding, and (f) analyzing the data using bracketing. Research skills gained was the biggest contribution to my scholarly development as a researcher. Towards the end of my study, I realized that the quest for my scholarly activities began when I enrolled in the EdD program, as I have personally developed research skills that I shall use throughout my career beyond graduation. This process afforded me an opportunity to understand different research stages better. I expect to publish journal articles and supervise student research with confidence.

I have gained significant confidence throughout the process, which has resulted in improved scholarly writing of this project study. This self-confidence developed through constant interactions with my committee chair and the second committee member. Their support inspired me to work independently and to analyze and critique my own work. The nature of my professional work as a researcher requires a high degree of self-confidence, leadership, and communication skills. Engaging in this project study has enhanced my leadership skills by ensuring that the study results are shared with the relevant stakeholders. Research studies provide evidence for educational leaders to make

informed decisions. The research skills and self-confidence have developed, transformed, and assisted me in developing from a novice researcher into a scientific researcher.

In view of the potential of a doctoral study to project a broad influence, I realized that I needed to accomplish something that would improve adult learners' experiences. I needed to choose a project that would affect social change. In addition, I needed a compelling communication tool that was accessible to readers and that would allow me to share my strategies and recommendations. Thus, I selected the white paper recommendation format for this project study. In choosing the information delivery format, I experienced an additional aspect of scholarly writing that was appropriate for the project study type and to justify the choice of the project study.

The white paper is a means of communicating research findings and recommendations in higher education settings. Sakanuero, Shelley, and Hyde (2015) recognized a white paper as a kind of report composed for a target group. I will use the input gathered from stakeholders to decide whether they understood the recommendations outlined in the white paper. Subsequently, I will incorporate this feedback into the formative evaluation of the white paper. Through the process of developing a white paper, I have learned that developing a white paper requires time and labor. The experience has provided me with professional skills that I will treasure, especially as applied to the final writing.

During the time that I have spent studying at Walden University, I have built various skills as a scholar-practitioner through coordinated efforts with colleagues and respected peers. In my job as a deputy director of academic affairs and research at the

University of Namibia, Rundu Campus, situated in the remote rural area of the Kavango East Region of Namibia, I have learned how to research issues to reach solutions, look for learning and comprehensive ways to address these issues, and share research outcomes with fellow colleagues before making a final decision regarding an issue. The development of my project study has inspired me to be more engaged as a leader in my field of study.

## Reflection on the Importance of the Work

This doctoral project study is the expression of my long educational journey and an opportunity for me to focus my energy on the issue of adult women alumni experiences. The research has given me a firm understanding of the experiences of these adult women alumni in overcoming the barriers to avoid dropping out of the adult literacy program. The recommendations I made in the white paper have the potential to improve the NNALP content and positively impact the quality of life for the women. The positive social impact may result in more women successfully improving their literacy and changing their livelihoods. Other regions that experience similar challenges may adopt the recommendations in the white paper in similar areas of weakness. Implementing the recommendations for improving the quality of the program and developing outreach programs could ultimately influence the entire adult education program in the Kavango East Region.

## Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

Positive social change refers to the application of strategies, actions, and ideas that could improve the development of any society (Walden, 2014). The outcomes of this

project study have implications for positive social change. The incremental understanding derived from the project study can positively affect program persistence and graduation rates. Further, the study offered insights that are potentially useful in program reform to improve the skill levels achieved by graduates, whether they are job seekers or are already working within their regional economy. The findings of this study also hold implications for other interventions to improve adult literacy in Namibia. These implications stimulate the progress of adult women alumni and for the introduction of handwork activities. The positive results of personal cognitive characteristics suggest that educational developers should not only focus on academic content but also on integrating programs with handwork (crafts) activities.

Positive social change can help adult learners open avenues for other alternative programs. My goal is to publish the results of the project study and make them available to the stakeholders and study site participants, other educational institutions, officials, education providers, trainers, community leaders, and the public. I will be available as and when necessary to discuss or interpret this study's results in academic and research forums such as symposiums, workshops, and conferences at local, national, and international levels. It is my conviction that administrators will use the findings of this study to develop, improve, and implement the recommendations in the white paper. Consequently, these intervention programs can improve the lives of adult learners in society and also contribute to the quality of education of the adult literacy programs throughout the country.

## Conclusion

In this section, I acknowledge and document the reflections of my doctoral journey along with the study project's strengths, recommendations, scholarship, development, leadership and change, implications, applications, and directions for future research. The purpose of this project study was to investigate the experience of adult women alumni in overcoming barriers to completing their adult literacy programs, barriers such as a lack of time, a husband refusing to work outside of the home, and the death or incapacity of male breadwinners.

My enthusiasm for solving the problem of increasing retention in adult women's literacy programs inspired me to identify a conceivable answer for the issue at the study site. I was able to develop policy recommendations for program developers at the ministry of Basic Education, Arts and Culture and in the Directorate of Adult Education derived from four themes and two recommendations to improve the study site.

The four themes that emerged were the following: (a) voice, (b) significance, (c) inspiration, and (d) dialog. From these themes, two recommendations clearly stood out as social imperatives, namely improve the quality of adult literacy program and address the barriers to participation. This doctoral project study has been fulfilling and gainful for me personally, and it will hopefully lead to significant improvements in the retention of women in the literacy program in the Tupumenu district of Namibia.

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Appendix A: The Project

IMPROVING NAMIBIA'S NATIONAL ADULT LITERACY PROGRAM FOR BETTER LIVELIHOOD OF ADULT WOMEN ALUMNI

Mathilde Shihako

## Executive Summary

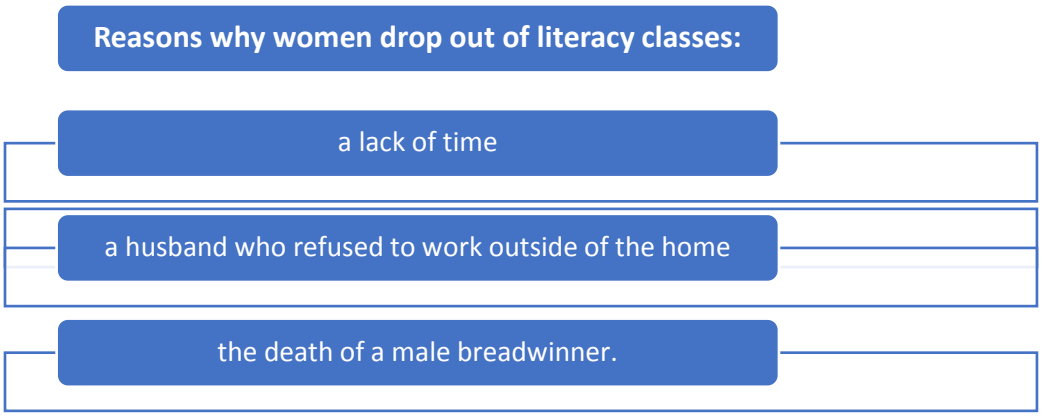
This project aimed to generate and present findings and recommendations from a doctoral research study concerned with the experiences of 11 adult women alumni from Tupumenu district in the Kavango East Region of Namibia who had graduated from the NNALP. This study addressed the problem of how the NNALP' women alumni overcame barriers that would have caused them to drop out of the program, something that they wanted to avoid. Specifically, this white paper's recommendations were targeted on the set of obstacles that included a lack of time, a husband who refused to work outside of the home, and the death of a male breadwinner. Informed by the theory of Belenky, the research question of this phenomenological study was to examine how enrolled women overcame barriers that would have caused them to drop out of the program. The study revealed four themes: (a) voice, (b) significance, (c) inspiration, and (d) dialog. These findings and the best practices discussed in the literature led to two recommendations on how the program could be improved:

- Improving the program and
- Providing better support for the participants.

## The Problem

This study addressed the problem of how the NNALP' women alumni overcame barriers that would have caused them to drop out of the program, something that they wanted to avoid. Specifically, this white paper's recommendations were targeted on the set of obstacles that included a lack of time, a husband who refused to work outside of the

home, and the death of a male breadwinner.




The study revealed that the women were mentally strong and excited when they shared their feelings about the literacy program. The program improved their lives by helping them achieve literacy. Instead of women withdrawing from the program due to lack of support, discouragement, and shame, these women persisted until they completed the program. A few of the women received support from their spouses, family, and community for their attendance in the literacy program, but most did not receive any support. Several women raised concerns about the discontinuation of the literacy program. Others were unhappy when their education did not produce any positive benefits. The women faced challenges when they lost their English instructors without replacement. Some women requested the introduction of new programs on how to improve their chances of financial security.

First, the adult literacy program should be upgraded and aligned to the old grade 10 (current grade 9) to ensure that, upon completion, the graduates could find employment. To achieve this outcome, the regional staff of the Directorate of Adult Education should visit communities to hold meetings and present motivational talks. These meetings should introduce new programs on how to run projects, new strategies of how to plant crops, horticulture, small businesses, advanced English, computer literacy, painting on a small scale, and handiwork. Adult literacy programs aimed at specific target groups could have better results. Adequate resources, trained facilitators, and reduced reliance on volunteers need funding. The pool of literacy materials available for adults from linguistic, ethnic, cultural and, that concurrently nurture literacy facilitators who are proficient in unofficial languages needs to be expanded. Concrete ways to improve the relevance and appropriateness of program contents need to be developed. Strong monitoring and evaluation strategies for continuous improvement need to be implemented.

## The Goal and Design of the White Paper

Based on the current study results, white paper policy recommendations suggest how the program can be improved to produce more positive social change. The reforming of the literacy program will provide graduates with skills that will help them as job seekers and as workers in their regional economies. The recommendations will include an implementation plan to ensure increased rates of learning output and increased numbers of NNALP graduates with adequate skills in the local setting. I utilized phenomenological study design to examine the lived experiences women shared in the study project (Creswell, 2007). The research question for the study was:

**1#: By what means have the NNALP women alumni overcame barriers to avoid dropping out of the program?**

The participants responded to a predetermined set of open-ended questions. The participants were women selected subject to the following criteria: (a) alumni of the program and head of households, (b) over 18 years of age, (c) have attended literacy classes, (d) Completed the adult literacy program. Eleven participants were selected homogenously from the 30 female alumni of the NNALP. Homogenous sampling is a test group technique in which the researcher purposefully selects individuals based. I started gathering data after I received written approval from IRB.

## Results

I used Creswell's strategy Creswell, 2007), for the data analysis process. Furthermore, I used hand coding to develop epoch bracketing, horizontalization, and themes. Informed by the theory of Belenky, the research question of this phenomenological study was to examine how enrolled women overcame barriers that would have caused them to drop out of the program. Themes revealed by this study:

(a) voice
(b) significance
(c) inspiration and
(d) dialog

### Voice

The first dominant theme of recognizing a voice emerged from the interview transcription which dealt with experienced gained from the adult literacy program. While

some participants pointed out a concern of educating oneself without gaining a fruitful outcome, eight participants emphasized good experience gained from the program such as: Few women gained knowledge and skills of reading and writing, handling documents, and listening to news. Several women were unhappy of being educated without any positive benefits. Quality program is needed to ensure that women improve their lives. According to Bayeh (2016), the global need for high quality education created a demand for formal education that requires society to acquire literacy skills. High quality education plays an important role in eradicating poverty and achieving gender equality to ensure sustainable development. High quality education can increase women's confidence to voice out their ideas. When women receive high quality education, they are able to be self-employed, rather than seeking to be employed by someone.

**Significance**

The second theme that emerged from the interviews was significance of education that all participants pointed out how important education was in their lives. Participants valued education in different ways. Some women valued education in terms of communication, know about health records, managed to improve from being illiterate to literate persons, and improved the level of writing in indigenous language Rumanyo. Their discussions indicated how vital education was in their lives as women managed to change positively because of the education they received. The feeling shared was that they were different from those who did not attend literacy programs as C-030 stated, "Now I know many things, I am not the same with someone at home who did not attend literacy classes." This statement agrees with the theory that women who are empowered

differentiate themselves from being illiterate (Olomukoro & Adelore, 2015). The understanding women developed on the significance of education, made women ensure that they discussed areas they wanted to be improved in the adult literacy program such as how to improve the English program, how to add content to programs and upgrade them to advance the AUPE program to align it to grade 10 level (currently grade 9) in the Ministry of Basic Education, Arts and Culture. Several women faced challenges to the continuation of the program when they lost the English instructors without replacement, while others requested to introduce new programs on how to improve their chances of financial security.

The emerging theme of the significance of education supports the conclusions of the United Nations Sixty-Sixth General Assembly (2017), Akello, Lutwanna-Ruundo & Musiimenta, 2017) that empowerment of women is an important step to take in ensuring progress towards the millennium development goals. This empowerment involves the improvement of literacy levels. Bayeh (2016) conquered that the global need for high-quality education created a demand for formal education that requires society to acquire literacy skills. Education is an indispensable tool for various development as social, economic, political, and cultural aspects. According to Seyoun and Bashe (2017), education helps society to be concerned with the liberation of man from ignorant and poverty. Education serves as a means to understand social issues better, survive during economic hardship, participate in political activities, and utilize cultural heritage. However, when opportunities are not created, adult literacy learners are limited from the

benefits of what education offers. Lack of quality education makes adult literacy women vulnerable to ignorance and poverty.

**Inspiration**

The third theme that emerged from the interviews was the inspiration that women displayed in their discussions. Women were mentally strong and excited when they shared their feelings about the literacy program. While several women raised concerns about the literacy program, all eleven participants interviewed indicated their excitement that they attended the program that helped them to read and write. All eleven participants indicated that they gained experience of basic communication in English, be able to manage health records, and be able to manage essential financial matters. Some women were inspired to think creatively. While others requested to introduce new programs on how to improve agricultural activities, projects, and handwork. While women were excited about the adult literacy program, others shared feelings of being mentally strong to overcome the barriers they faced. This shared feeling of becoming mentally strong supports the theory stating that a tie that is created can be a women's defense mechanism (Belenky et al., 1986). The knowledge women gained from the adult literacy program helped them to become strong and stay in the program despite challenges (Dimici, 2015). Instead of women withdrawing from the program due to a lack of supports, women persisted. Persistence indicated that adult literacy women needed relevant programs that can support them.

**Dialog**

The fourth theme that emerged from the interviews was the dialogue that each woman utilized favourably to their circumstances. Through dialog, women were able to raise their opinions about the adult literacy program, which defines women's relevance in society as one requested to find a replacement for the English instructor. One indicated to introduce computer programs, business content, horticulture, and crop farming. One stated to upgrade the curriculum program and align it to the grade 10 school leaving certificate. One requested to visit communities to hold meetings and to give motivations to the elderly. Their discussions indicated that women used the communication tool to link with others. The emerged theme of dialogue supports the theory of Belenky et al. (1986) that discussions help women to communicate effectively. However, this can only work when women use relevant tools to support them to become more aware of themselves. Although literature pointed out that women needed relevant tools of support to become more aware of themselves, this study revealed that women were more confident in their ability to communicate. The under-conceptualization of non-formal education in the field of education and the implications this has for the implementation of adult literacy policies requires to have a better understanding of the concepts. Some educators and program developers do not understand well the distinction between formal education, non-formal education, and informal learning. Seyoun and Bashe (2017) argued that formal education receives the greatest policy attention and funding, while non-formal and informal learning are considered less important. Non-formal education, according to this view, is constructed as the opposite of formal education, everything that formal is

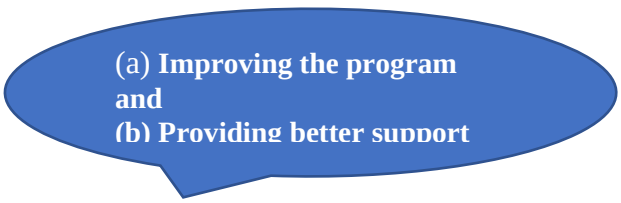
not. Seyoun and Bashe argued that this view is shortsighted and misguided. Non-formal education is not simply the absence of certain elements of formal education; it should be considered an independent form of education. Moreover, identifying the positive elements of non-formal education frameworks would deepen and sharpen policy formulation, provide answers to key policy and research questions. A deeper understanding of the adult literacy conceptual framework ensures better plans for program interventions.

Social support in an adult literacy program is considered important when it is integrated into the already existing programs. Seyoun and Bashe (2017) noted that integrating adult literacy skills like reading and writing with that of income generation, environmental protection, cultural education, health, civic education, and skills in agriculture, will promote internal efficiency. Adult literacy programs that involve adult learners about the programs ensure retention (Petty & Thomas, 2014; Francois, 2014).

The results of this study revealed that women did understand the significance of literacy education. While Olomukoro and Adelore found that women may fail to understand the significance of literacy education, leading them to the possibility of dropping out of the adult literacy program. This study supported the work of Belenky that women can use their voices to liberate themselves and advocate for their own literacy.

## Recommendations

These findings and the best practices discussed in the literature led to two recommendations on how the program could be improved:



**Recommendation #1: Improving the Program**

Adult literacy program should be upgraded and aligned to the old grade 10 (current grade 9) to ensure that, upon completion, the graduates could find employment. To achieve this outcome, the regional staff of the Directorate of Adult Education should visit communities to hold meetings and present motivational talks. These meetings should introduce new programs on how to run projects, new strategies of how to plant crops, horticulture, small businesses, advanced English, computer literacy, painting on a small scale, and handiwork. Adult literacy programs aimed at specific target groups could have better results. Adequate resources, trained facilitators, and reduced reliance on volunteers need funding. The pool of literacy materials available for adults from linguistic, ethnic, cultural and, that concurrently nurture literacy facilitators who are proficient in unofficial languages needs to be expanded. Concrete ways to improve the relevance and appropriateness of program contents need to be developed. Strong monitoring and evaluation strategies for continuous improvement need to be implemented.

Awgichew & Seyoum (2017), Benavot (2015), Hanemann & McKay (2015), and Perry & Homan (2015) asserted that a functionally literate individual could effectively read, write, and perform mathematical calculations well enough to function in their communities. If for one to function effectively requires a bit of basic writing, reading, and mathematics calculations, policymakers, and program designers need to recognize the importance of adult literacy programs. Effective communication can serve as a linkage tool between the provider and the beneficiaries. For productive members of

society, writing, reading, and numeracy should be combined with training skills. The contextual setup would determine the type of training skills each community requires.

Women's involvement increases the passion for sustaining the program. Dusabe et al. (2019), Easton (2014), and Yilben (2014) stated that it is important to listen more to the voices of the beneficiaries for a better understanding of their needs. When the needs are well understood, appropriate policies and programs will be implemented. Program designers are expected to find the right combination of elements and components to be part of the program design and implement appropriate interventions for women alumni. Appropriateness of policies can be determined by women's geographical locations, ethnicity, cultural diversity, language, and economic status. The needs of the Adult literacy women alumni were identified according to their specific communities. In this case, different women might end up with different skill training.

Awgichew and Seyoum (2017), Benavot (2015), Dusabe et al. (2019), and Hanemann and McKay (2015) posited that integrating skills with a basic education can create opportunities in policies to align the progression of programs. In other words, academic and practical skills can be aligned for adult learners to continue with relevant and suitable entrepreneurship training that will help address the needs of adult learners across societies. Women's empowerment can be achieved. Abiy et al. (2014), Benavot (2015), Hanemann and McKay (2015), Jones (2018), Kaiper (2018), Nikiema (2016), Olaghaju (2020), and Seyoum and Bashe (2017) argued that gender balance could be achieved when human capital development is recognized by the government to build and empower women in society. Women have to take control of their own destiny. The

involvement of adult women learners in decision making becomes crucial. Human capacity development requires women to be lifelong learners for sustainable development. This research supports this theory. The findings of this study revealed that women were not sufficiently empowered through adult literacy programs. Articulation of AUPE to basic formal education upon completion was recommended by participants of this study.

**Recommendation #2: Providing Better Support for the Participants**

To support adult literacy women alumni, effective linkages with non-formal and formal education institutions and NGOs needs to be created. Barriers that hinder participation of adult women needs to be overcome. The involvement of adult learners in the decision-making process becomes paramount.

**Building Capacity by Introducing Variety of Adult Literacy Programs**

Abiy et al. (2014), Benavot (2015), Jones (2018), Kaiper (2018), Hanemann and McKay (2015), Nikiema (2016), Olaghaju (2020), Seyoum and Bashe (2017) asserted that it is important to consider the diversity of adult learners. Diversified needs to determine flexible schedules when adult literacy programs are implemented. For example, one group can be in the morning, another in the afternoon, and the last group in the evening. The researcher recognized the challenge this schedule can create. However, public-private partnerships with NGOs and religious and community-based organizations considered to implement the functional literacy programs.

**Introduction of Community Skills Development Projects (SIP) for Adult Learners**

Olaghaju (2020) stated that SIP could be beneficial to adult women because it aims at reducing poverty by providing functional literacy and numeracy skills for six years. In other words, it proceeds from a basic to an advanced literacy level. Therefore, SIP requires suitable facilitators to meet the standard of the programs. In this way, utilizing teachers at primary schools in some of the sessions for improved quality service delivery is appropriate. The benefit is that teachers know the content at basic formal education level. At the same time, University students could be utilized as tutors too. Utilizing students can be cost-effective, where resources are inadequate to maintain standards.

**Building Women's Capacity Through Skills Acquisition Programs**

Abiy et al., (2014), Juswik (2014), Skerrett (2014), and Trudell and Cheffy (2019) argued that to reduce the level of unemployment, poverty, and illiteracy among women in Africa, especially in Namibia, the need to train potential entrepreneurs has to be addressed. Women can acquire different entrepreneurship skills such as chicken rearing, garden crop farming, creation of kindergarten schools, sewing, catering, cookery, hairdressing, and soap making. Such programs can contribute to human capital development that, in turn, empower women's financial standing and self-reliance.

**Loan Support**

Functional literacy does not only focus on theoretical knowledge but on practical skills too. For women to be self-reliant, loan support has to be considered. Abiy et al., (2014), Juswik (2014), Seyoun & Bashe (2017), Skerrett (2014), and Trudell and Cheffy

(2019) stated that it is important to maximize the loan support on small-scale business for women to meet their specific needs. Small scale business for self-reliance development contributes significantly to women's empowerment in many of the poor communities in Africa, and Namibia is no exception. The benefits are two-fold: women can become either employable or self-reliant. However, the content of the skill acquisition training programs and where women are located can be a hindrance to the quality of such programs.

**Appropriate Solutions Through Action Research**

Alidou and Glanz (2015), Aragon and Glenzer (2017), Kemmis et al. (2014), and McKay (2018) observed that conducting action research enables adult learners to understand and develop research practices. In addition, action research engages adult learners and decision-makers in collective critical self-reflection to interrogate the program outcomes. In other words, program interrogation can look at how to redefine and redesign learning as a democratic entitlement to ensure that no one is left behind. Commitments of the participants and researchers are required to do this, as is the support of the program administration. When action research is implemented, decision-makers can become attuned to public considerations on the benefits and limitations of the programs and, in doing so, can create opportunities for improving the programs. The community can experiment together and learn together. The outcome can be a shared enthusiasm and a common commitment to the collaborative work.

## Program Recommendations

### 1: Improve the Literacy Program

### 2: Provide Better Support for Program Participants

## Closing Thoughts

Embedding adult literacy needs in other social policies of government can lead to another solution. McKay (2018) stated that for effective targeted program delivery, government ministries, and agencies with different roles and at different levels should collaborate together. In other words, it is important to realize that multiple government systems have the same client. It makes more sense if all networks work together to achieve the common goal, as this will benefit the community and help it to develop.

Self-learning and community development are central to improve the standard of living. Oviawe (2016) asserted that collaborative learning creates opportunities for adult learners to work together. Through such activities, adult learners benefit from up-to-date materials. Such materials contribute to effective literacy programs at the grassroots level. Collaborative learning contributes to the improvement of the standard of living of learners and their communities. As the metaphor goes, "Educate a woman, you educate a nation." Theory and the research supported that when women learn based on their needs and take control of their self-learning, this can lead to positive social change.

Literacy is inseparable from human dignity. It is, therefore, the responsibility of African states to be cognizant of the fact that the ethical obligation of states is not only about formal recognition of principles but about the importance of creating an effective

learning condition for everyone. There is a need to improve the program for adult literacy and support the women alumni. The literature supports the view that improved adult programs have the potential to increase retention rates, graduation rates, and overall economic success.

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# Appendix B: Interview Questions

There is one main question and several sub-questions for probing the investigation of the alumni and the barriers that attributed to dropout rates of Namibia's Adult Literacy Curriculum in the Kavango East Region.

**Interview questions**

RQ: How did NNALP women alumni overcome barriers to avoid dropping out of the program?

1.1 What was your experience in completing the program?

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1.2 What did you like about the program? What didn't you like?

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**Program Barriers**

2.1 What barriers to completion did you experience?

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2.2 How did you overcome those barriers?

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**Support for Program Completion**

3.1 Describe the support of your spouse in your efforts to become literate.

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3.2 Describe the support of your family in your efforts to become literate.

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3.3 Describe the support of your community in your efforts to become literate.

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**Program Support**

4.1 How do you perceive that the program could better equip adult learners to overcome barriers to completion?

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……4.2 How did the program impact your life, if at all?

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The data generated in this questions will show areas that learners expect improvement for their learning needs to be meet adequately. It will shows how the content of the NNALP curriculum should be changed to bring empowerment and socio-economic development to enable learners to sustain themselves.

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND INPUT

Appendix C: Interview Questions (Translated in Rumanyo)

**Mapuraghero**

Kuna karapo mapurokurona matatu ntani namapuroghona ghakukushuva-shuva ghakukavaterera Kawana vishanashana vya varongwa owo vamano shure ya vakondi nakakenga vilimbikwa ovyo vya yitangopo litundomo mushure yavakondi mushirongo sha Namibia muruha shirongo Kavango Ghpumeyuva.

**Mapuro:**

RQ: Weni mo vakamali owo vayimbiro likukwamo lya shure yavakondi vya vatompoka mukukondera vya kushana kudonganita shure yawo mukuka pira kukatundamo?

1.1 Nke ghuyivipita ghoye mukumana likukwamo lya shure yavakurona?

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1.2 Nke wahora kuhamena likukwamo? Nke wanyenga kuhamena likukwamo?

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**Maudito kuhamena Likukwamo**

2.1 Maudito munke wagwanikire nawo mukumana likukwamo lino?

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2.2 Weni wakambadalire kughapita maudito ghano?

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**Mbatero Kuhamena Kumana Likukwamo**

**3.1 Tjangurura** mbatero kuhameno nturaghumbo ghoye munkambataro yoye ghuwane likushongo**.**

**……**

**……**

**……**

**……**

**3.2** Tjangurura mbatero ya valikoro munkambadaro yoye uwane likushongo**.**

**……**

**……**

**……**

**……**

**3.3** Tjangurura mbatero ya vamukunda munkambadaro yoye mukuwana likushongo.

**……**

**……**

**……**

**……**

Weni omo una kuyuvha? Ghuna shana kupyuyumuka ndi?

**Mbatero Kulikukwamo**

**4.1** Weni una kuvi kenga shi ndi mo lya waperera likukwamo kukulita vakurona mukukaupapo maudito vakamane likukwamo?

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4.2 Weni likukwamo lya shure ya vakurona lya tjindja liparu lyoye, ntjeneshi lya tjindja shiri?

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Mbudi yino ngayitundo muno mumapurayero ngayi negheda vikaramo vya ovyo vana katateraera vanuke liwapukururo kuvihepwa vyawo vya kukushonga mukukavitikitamo nawa-nawa. Ngavi negheda shi weni ukalimo wa likukwamo lya shure yavakurona shi weni mukukali wapukurura mukayita makutjindjo ntani nampalikito mumakuliko gha liparu mukuvatera vanuke vakakuyimanene panaumwawo.

MPANDU KURUVEDE NA KUMBUDI

# Appendix D: Letter of Approval from Stakeholder

Sample Letter of Cooperation from a Research Partner

Community Research Partner Name Contact Information:

Mrs Sanet Steenkamp

Executive Director

Ministry of Basic Education, Arts and Culture

P/Bag 2134

WINDHOEM

NAMIBIA

Date: July 2019

Dear Mathilde Shihako, Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled Tupumenu Women Persistence in Namibia's NNALP within the Directorate of Adult Education in Kavango East Education Region. As part of this study, I authorize you to work with adult literacy alumni as participants when you collect data through interviews. Adult literacy alumni will be consulted to do the member checking and during results dissemination activities. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: Providing class attendance register for the adult literacy learners to assist in identifying alumni who will participate in the study and also in result dissemination activities to all personnel in the Directorate of Adult Education. Participants reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if their circumstances change.

I understand that the student will not be naming our organization in the doctoral project report that is published in Proquest.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without the permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,

…….

Ministry of Basic Education, Arts and Culture

Appendix E: Member Checking Interview Summaries and Responses

## Participant 00-1

### Background

The participant is a female from a very small village along the Kavango River in the Kavango East Region. She was interviewed on December 3, 2019. The participant was 43 years old. The participant was married. She did not attend school at the tender age. Her life was hardship because it does not have anything. The area is remote and does not have everything. She attended adult literacy program with some stages.

### Main Points

- Very remote and small village
- Married
- Went to school outside the village, but did not complete
- The area is very poor and harsh to live in

**Question: How Namibia' National Adult Literacy Program overcame barriers to avoid dropping out of the program? What was your experience in completing the program?**

I gained experience of reading and writing. This is helping in writing text messages on the phone and even reading I am now able to read my own messages without asking anyone do it for me as I was in the past. Now things are easier because I can read and write.

**Main Points**

- Experience in reading and writing
- Helped in writing text messages on phone
- Now things are easier because I can read on my own

**Question: What did you like about the program?**

What l like about the program is that it helped me to know the language for communication such as English and Rumanyo because I do not need to be translated, because I am able to speak and write on my own.

**Main Points**

- Helped to know the languages English and Rumanyo for communication
- No need to be translated
- Able to speak and write on my own

**Question: What did you dislike about the program?**

[Pause] Hmm…I dislike just playing and walking in the street.

What do you mean with just playing and walking in the street?

I mean when one does things that are not suitable for a grown-up person to help yourself.

**Main Points**

- Walking in the street and do irrelevant things to your life

**Question: What barriers to completion did you experience?**

I experienced difficulty of communicating in terms of using English as a language. Also, no support from my husband.

**Main Points**

- Experienced difficulty of communicating in English language
- No support from the spouse

**Question: How did you overcome those barriers?**

What I did is to ignore and to persevere with the literacy program and improve my study.

**Main Points**

- Stayed focused and persevered in the literacy program
- Ultimate goal was to improve my study

**Question: Describe the support of your spouse in your efforts to become literate.**

Ahh…there was no support at all, is only discouragement by saying 'why waiting time? There are others who completed before, what have they achieved? Nothing and do you think you are the one who will change things. But I ignored and kept on going and be persistent, because I told myself as long as I know how to read and write is better than nothing. The bright future is ahead of me.

**Main Points**

- No support from the spouse
- Discouragement, waste of time
- Former students did not achieve anything
- You are not the one who will change things

- Remained focused and persisted
- Knew what I wanted, to read and write
- Bright future is ahead

**Question: Describe the support of your family in your efforts to become literate.**

From the side of the family, they encouraged me not to despair, but keep the spirit going despite challenges in life it will pass. They encouraged me not even to think that I am maybe old to study, because literacy important in someone's life.

**Main Points**

- Supported with words of encouragement, not to despair
- Keep the spirit going despite challenges, it will pass
- Not to think that I am too old to study
- Literacy is important in someone's life

**Question: Describe the support of your community in your efforts to become literate.**

They too used to encourage me not to give up, but to persevere, you will benefit in the future they said.

**Main Points**

- Encouraged not to give up
- To persevere
- Reap future benefits

**Question: How do you perceive that the program could better equip adult learners to overcome barriers to completion?**

To improve English for communication to avoid translation. And also, to improve the level of the program so that students upon completion are able to find employment or projects to support their families.

**Main Points**

- Improve English for communication to avoid translation
- Improve the level of the program
- Students upon completion to find employment
- Projects to support families

**Question: How did the program impact your life, if at all?**

Ooh off course it did. I can really say that literacy have changed my life in terms of improving my reading and writing skills, communicating in English which I did not do in the past, even to work now I can work anywhere, things have become easier. Everything became easy like listening to news, reading advertisements of jobs in both languages English and Rumanyo. In addition, I am requesting those that did not yet join the program to do so, because it is useful. It assist with withdrawing money from the bank and a lot more.

**Main Points**

- Improved reading and writing skills
- Communicating in English language which I did not do in the past
- Can work anywhere now

- Things have become easier: listening to news, reading advertisement in both English and Rumanyo languages
- Requesting others to join the adult literacy program, useful
- Assist with withdrawing money

**Question: Any question you would like to ask?**

Yes, what about people who completed literacy program, is there a way for us to get project opportunities? Or to be invited for employment? We are not considered for employment even if we apply. Some give up because they think it is a waste of time to do literacy program.

**Main Points**

- Projects opportunities
- Invited for Employment opportunities
- Some give up
- waste of time to do literacy program

## Participant 00-2

**Background**

Participant is a 29-year-old female. She lived in the remote village where life was hard with nothing. Participant was married. She did not attend formal schooling like everybody. She was interviewed on December 4, 2020 at her own village along the

Kavango River in the Kavango East Region. She studied adult literacy program. However, did not complete all stages.

**Main Points**

- Very remote and small village
- Married
- Went to school outside the village, but did not complete
- The area is very poor and harsh to live in

**Question: How Namibia' National Adult Literacy Program overcame barriers to avoid dropping out of the program. What was your experience in completing the program?**

I gained experience of reading and writing. And also abled me to write text messages to my family and friends without being assisted.

**Main Points**

- Experience in reading and writing
- Abled to write text messages to family and friends

**Question: What did you like about the program?**

l like to read and learn English so that I am able to read advertisement in English. This is an important benefit in terms of work.

**Main Points**

- Read and write
- learn English language to read advertisements
- Important benefit for work

**Question: What did you dislike about the program?**

I hated when I did not read and write, because I depended on people to read for me, to write me and withdraw money for me.

**Main Points**

- Hated when I could not read and write
- Dependent on other people for assistant
- Seek assistance to withdraw money

**Question: What barriers to completion did you experience?**

None.

**Main Point**

- Nothing

**Question: How did you overcome those barriers?**

None.

**Main Point**

- No barrier experienced

**Question: Describe the support of your spouse in your efforts to become literate.**

My husband encouraged me to complete the program because it has the benefit of reading and writing.

**Main Points**

- Spouse encouraged her to complete
- Benefit of knowing reading and writing

**Question: Describe the support of your family in your efforts to become literate.**

Ahh…family members, nothing.

**Main Point**

- Family no support

**Question: Describe the support of your community in your efforts to become literate.**

From the community is only our Promoter {Instructor} who kept on encouraging us to know how to read and write. She told us that one day you will travel outside your country and it will help you to communicate and find employment.

**Main Points**

- Instructor encouraged to know reading and writing
- Benefit for travelling
- Help to communicate
- Help to find employment

**Question: How do you perceive that the program could better equip adult learners to overcome barriers to completion?**

For literacy program not to stop so that other people can benefit like us.

**Main Point**

- Literacy program not to stop
- Benefit others like us

**Question: How did the program impact your life, if at all?**

Now I'm able to read and write. It changed me to know what literacy is.

What is literacy in your view?

Literacy helped me to read and write and even counting mathematics. The important of this is to know things in the world. One can even read the number plate of a car. Those are the importance of reading.

**Main Points**

- Able to read and write
- Changed understanding of the program
- Helped with counting mathematics
- Know things globally
- Helped to read car number plates

**Question: Do you have any question you would like to ask?**

Why do you think that literacy graduate cannot compete like anybody else?

The challenge is they tried to apply at different institutions, but unfortunately, they tell us that you do not qualify, because you do not have grade 10 certificates. I feel literacy program should be improved to be at par with grade 10 level for us to be able to compete fairly in the job market.

Main Points

- Graduate cannot compete like anybody else
- Applied for employment, do not qualify
- Required grade 10 certificate
- Improve literacy program to grade 10 level
- Compete fairly in job market

## Participant 00-3

### Background

The participant is a 29-year-old female. She lived in a very remote valley village. She was married. She did not attend formal schooling at her tender age. Life was hard in the remote village which forced her to enroll in the literacy program to improve her livelihood.

### Main Points

- Very remote and small village
- Married
- Went to school outside the village, but did not complete
- The area is very poor and harsh to live in

**Question: How Namibia' National Adult Literacy Program overcame barriers to avoid dropping out of the program? What was your experience in completing the program?**

I knew how to read and write. Even in the office, I am able to read and communicate in English.

### Main Point

- How to read and write
- Communicate in English in office

**Question: What did you like about the program?**

I knew how to read and write. No one can tell me; I am on my own. Now I know many things. I am not the same with someone at home who did not go to school.

Probing question: What are things you know now?

I am able to answer when I am asked in English. Things I did not know I could ask our literacy Instructor.

**Main Points**

- Read and write
- Not to be told on my own
- Know many things
- Different from illiterate person
- Able to respond in English
- Able to ask Instructor unknown things

**Question: What did you dislike about the program?**

[Pause] Hmm…What I dislike is to educate oneself without any fruitful outcomes.

Probing question: What do you mean without any fruitful outcome?

I meant the benefit of getting employment when one complete the program

**Main Points**

- Educated without fruitful outcomes
- Employed upon completion

**Question: What barriers to completion did you experience?**

Difficulties of people who laughed at me when I attended classes, they spoke to me that I was old for the program and that I was wasting time. What will I benefit? They

told me that there are those who completed before you, no benefit. They are getting nothing. What will you change? I used to answer them that no problem, as long as I know how to read and write my name, is fine, the benefit will come in the future.

**Main Points**

- Difficulties of being laughed at
- Too old for the program
- Wasting time
- No benefit
- Former students, no benefits
- Got nothing
- No change
- Remained and wanted benefits of reading and writing
- Good for future benefits

**Question: How did you overcome those barriers?**

To be persistent with my goal and ignore what people were talking about. People talk, but I knew what I wanted. Some people do not want others to progress and get good things. I knew that they said these to discourage me to be like them to remain backward.

**Main Points**

- Persisted with goal
- Ignored talk no effect
- Knew what I wanted
- Some people do not want others to progress and better themselves

- Ignored discouragement
- To be different, not backward

**Question: Describe the support of your spouse in your efforts to become literate.**

Nothing. My husband did not offer me any support. He only discouragement that I was wasting time and I will not benefit anything.

**Main Points**

- Spouse no support
- Discouragement
- Wasting time
- No benefit

**Question: Describe the support of your family in your efforts to become literate.**

Yes, my family encouraged me to continue with the program and not to feel discouraged.

**Main Points**

- Encouraged to continue
- No discourage feeling

**Question: Describe the support of your community in your efforts to become literate.**

They too encouraged me not to give up. They told me that they will also follow me to join the literacy program.

**Main Points**

- Encouraged not to give up
- Follow suit

**Question: How do you perceive that the program could better equip adult learners to overcome barriers to completion?**

Like us people who completed literacy program, we get educated and at the end you get a certificate, but you do not go further with it. Al least to learn computer which is useful nowadays. To improve English for communication to avoid translation. And also, to improve the level of the program so that students upon completion are able to find employment or projects to support their families.

**Main Points**

- No progression with literacy certificate
- Learn Computer program
- Improve English skills for communication to avoid translation
- Upgrade the level of program to find employment
- Projects to support families

**Question: How did the program impact your life, if at all?**

Yes, it did change my life by making me to know the following:

To read, write, communicate in English, to write letters in both Rumanyo and English which I could not do before, and counting

**Main Points**

- Read and write
- Communicate in English
- Write letters in English and Rumanyo, could not do before
- Counting

**Question: Any question you would like to ask?**

Us people who completed literacy, what are our benefits? I ask this question, because when I completed stage 4, I am sitting at home doing nothing. In terms of work, they require at least grade 10 which I do not have. How does it work when one complete stage 4? Is not clear for me. I am requesting the government to consider us too, because we have children to feed as well. The program does not equip graduate for employment to be at par with those at grade 10 level.

**Main Points**

- Benefits for adult literacy alumni
- Completed stage 4, doing nothing
- Requires grade 10 for job opportunity
- Explain how stage works
- Government to consider adult literacy alumni
- Have children to feed
- Program no empower graduate for employment opportunity
- Articulate the program to grade 10

**Participant 00-4**

**Background**

The participant is a 59-year-old female who lived at a very remote rocky village along the Kavango Revie. She was married. The remote area is very remote and does not have everything to sustain her life. The village stays far from town, 200 kilometers. Her

mother asked her to look after her siblings. She did not go as far as grade 5. She studied adult literacy program to improve her living standard.

**Main Points**

- Very remote and small village
- Married
- Went to school outside the village, but did not complete
- The area is very poor, rocky, and harsh to live in

**Question: How Namibia' National Adult Literacy Program overcame barriers to avoid dropping out of the program? Did you complete the program?** Yes, I did.

**What was your experience in completing the program?** The one you completed. The experience you gained on the stages you completed.

Thank you. First of all, I attended and learn Thimbukushu language with our Instructor a male one, Eish! We finished. Later on, they brought us a female Instructor with name of Martha who taught us English. But we learnt many things. At least we learnt a lot like to know something on business. Is only that it is raining. Business, to do anything. Even when a person write a letter on the phone. Nothing like to ask someone to read for me. This days no letters but is cell phones, I only hear tick.., I read it myself. I know how to read. I can read it and finish. No more calling people to read it for more, no. I read it myself and finish. Even messages I can read it. Even recharge, I can do it myself. In the past I could not do it, but today I can do it. One can get many benefits. If you put effort, there are many important benefits. If you put effort, you can get benefits. Two of my friends also join the company to dig pipelines when positions came out and I also joined.

This helped me to communicate with a white man because I could understand him without anyone translating for me. Some of my friend who also attended literacy were employed at the school as cleaners until today at Divundu. That's where we all studied at Divundu. There are many benefits really. If one put effort, you will benefit. Is not only that one has to finish and start working, but if one put effort, you will get good things.

**Main Points**

- Learned Thimbukushu language
- Knew many things: Business
- Write text messages
- Impendent now
- No translation required
- Able to read on my own
- Read letters on my own
- Many important benefits with effort
- Able to communicate in English
- Helped others with employments, cleaners
- Not only to be employed, but many other good benefits

**Question: What did you like about the program?**

What I like about literacy and things that made me to like literacy very much is which encouraged me and made me to put more effort is to make myself improve my life to better my education, because in that time when I was a young girl, I did not attend go far with school. My mother asked me to look after my siblings. Those made me not to attend

school. I did not even go as far as grade 5. Only when literacy came, it opened my eyes and know better things in life. Even I hitch hike, I am now able to communicate in English for example: “Where are you going? I reply, I am going to Andara. Ah.., come. Automatic you run fast and go without any difficulty even to Rundu. Even when I took my sick child to the city Windhoek who is there, it was not difficult. I was able to communicate with nurses and doctors. Ooh my God who helped me to educate myself through literacy!

**Main Points**

- Improved my life for better education
- Opened eyes to know better things in life
- Able to hitch hike
- Communicate in English
- Visiting the city Windhoek, easy to communicate with nurses, and doctors
- Able to help myself

**Question: What did you dislike about the program? Repeat. Things you do not like about the program.**

[Pause] Hmm…Things about literacy which I dislike is things like us the students or those to join. When others attend, they do not attend. But when Officers from the radio came to interview those who attended, many flocked pretended to be participants, because they wanted to be heard on radio. I did not go, because that is bad. It can

embarrass the Instructor. It is really bad behavior. When they pick one and maybe is the one who dropped, how will it look? It is not good. It embarrassed the Instructor. Attend and learn something, but not to show off. From the side of the Instructor also, it should be someone who is patient with the elderly and who can explain well things to learners. Sometimes, you spend the whole day until one of you manage to learn that part. Not one who complains that if other learners are learning fast why not you? That is bad, not good at all. Teaching elderly one has to be like treating small ones. To teach them and make them feel good until they feel that they are with someone.

**Main Points**

- People refusing to join the program
- Illiterate people pretending to be participants when interviewed by radio presenters
- Embarrass the Instructor with such behaviors
- To show off
- Instructor to be patient to elderly and explain things well
- Avoid complaining when others do better
- Handle elderly with love and care
-

**Question: What barriers to completion did you experience?**

To make I did not experience with any difficulties. Our Instructor used to encourage us to start classes at 14:00pm. I did not experience with any challenges.

**Main Points**

- No difficulties experienced
- Instructor encouragement
- Program timing fit my life

**Question: How did you overcome those barriers?**

None.

**Main Point**

Nothing

**Question: Describe the support of your spouse in your efforts to become literate.**

**Are you married?**

Yes married, but late.

**Main Point**

Widow, no support

**Question: Describe the support of your family in your efforts to become literate.**

Aah.., family members provided support by looking after my sick child who is inside the house right now due to rain. They took care of my sick child, because the child normally runs outside when unattended. They took care until I return from classes. There was no problem. Sometimes they are the ones to remind you not to go late for classes. No, families supported me well. No problem.

Main Points

- Supported by looking after a sick child
- Reminder to attend classes or not to go late

**Question: Describe the support of your community in your efforts to become literate. How did they support you attended literacy?**

We attracted the community. At least a number of them laughed and teased me that I tricked them to laugh at them when they saw that I joined, I told them that I never attended school, but Mr. Kilas taught me Thimbukushu language. They said that I was teased them and not true. I told them to join and learn English by Ms. Martha. Questioning each other and so on. We laughed. A number managed to join because of that. We were at least a number of us. We had people at least.

**Main Points**

- No support
- Teased and laughed
- I tricked them by joining
- Good for English language

**Question: How do you perceive that the program could better equip adult learners to overcome barriers to completion?**

On that one, I will request to bring back the program, because since we completed stage 4, there is no literacy program at Divundu.

Like us people who completed literacy program, we get educated and at the end you get a certificate, but you do not go further with it. Al least to learn computer which is useful nowadays.

To improve English for communication to avoid translation. And also, to improve the level of the program so that students upon completion are able to find employment or projects to support their families.

**Main Points**

- Return the English program
- Adult literacy certificate no value in life
- Introduce computer program
- Upgrade the program to find employment
- Learn about projects to support families

**Question: How did the program impact your life, if at all?**

Yes, it did change my life by making me to know the following:

To read, write, communicate in English, to write letters in both Rumanyo and English which I could not do before, and counting

**Main Points**

- Read and write
- Communicate in English
- Able to write letters in Rumanyo and English
- Counting

**Question: Any question you would like to ask?**

Us people who completed literacy, what are our benefits? I ask this question, because when I completed stage 4, I am sitting at home doing nothing. In terms of work, they require at least grade 10 which I do not have. How does it work when one complete stage

4? Is not clear for me. I am requesting the government to consider us too, because we have children to feed as well. The program does not equip graduate for employment to be at par with those at grade 10 level.

**Main Points**

- Alumni benefits
- Completed stage 4, doing nothing
- Work require grade 10
- Explain stage 4 benefits
- Government to consider adult literacy alumni
- Have children to feed
- Program does not equip graduate for employment
- Articulate the program to grade 10

**Participant 00-5**

**Background**

The participant is a 68-year-old female, who lived in a very remote village alongside the Kavango River in the Kavango East Region. The area is very remote and rocky with nothing to sustain the life. She was a widower. She did not attend formal schooling, and this encouraged her to join adult literacy program. She completed AUPE and wanted to enroll for an advance program to improve her living condition in the village.

**Main Points**

- Very remote and small village
- Widow

- Went to school outside the village, but did not complete
- The area is very poor, rocky, and harsh to live in

**Question: How Namibia' National Adult Literacy Program overcame barriers to avoid dropping out of the program?** Yes, I did. What was your experience in completing the program? The one you completed. The experience you gained on the stages you completed.

The experience is good like reading and writing. That is the experience I got.

Pause, anything you want to add on the experience gained? Or is that all?

No, when someone call me and to read on the phone. Especially when I receive a call, I will know who calls and I will call back. That is what I got.

**Main Points**

- Reading and writing
- Able to read numbers when being called, able to call back

Question: What did you like about the program?

Things like reading and writing is what I like very much so that I am to read and write on my own.

**Main Points**

- Reading and writing
- Able to write on my own

**Question: What did you dislike about the program?**

Is there anything one will dislike in literacy? No, literacy is things which should come because it is good even for us elderly. Do not be ashamed that I am an old person, no, join to learn how to know things which you did get when you were young.

**Main Points**

- Nothing to dislike
- Literacy should come good for elderly
- Do not be ashamed of old age
- Join to know things

**Question: What barriers to completion did you experience?**

Difficulties of wanting to know something on projects and handwork, they could have brought projects to teach us new strategies of how planting, because currently, they have new ways of planting and we needed to know that to assist because handwork is important.

How do you connect literacy to handwork?

All are important, very important.

**Main Points**

- Projects that were part and hand work
- New strategies on how to plant

**Question: How did you overcome those barriers?**

Those of planting? Just to try to plant and make sure that you clear the land or give water to your seedlings and take care of it.

**Main Points**

- Planting-cleared the land
- Water seedlings
- Maintained the garden

**Question: Describe the support of your spouse in your efforts to become literate.**

**Are you married?**

No, not married, is deceased and did not get married again.

Ooh deceased! My condolence.

**Main Point**

- Widow

**Question: Describe the support of your family in your efforts to become literate.**

How they supported me is when you feel like missing the classes, they are the ones who will tell you that those things they brought is very important, do not miss class. You will know one or two things like reading and writing is number one in life. When you hear that, you run. The classes were put at the right time when one is done with your work in the afternoon. I got important things.

**Main Points**

- Reminded me when not to go late
- Encouraged not to miss classes
- Know new things like reading and writing, important in life
- Timing was right in the afternoon

**Question: Describe the support of your community in your efforts to become literate.**

When I attended some did support, while others were laughing at me saying that why wasting time while old, but some encouraged me that do not listen those what people are saying. Literacy is important. Study do not stop, study.

Main Points

- Some supported, some not
- Laughed at
- Wasting time, too old
-

**Question: How do you perceive that the program could better equip adult learners to overcome barriers to completion?**

Yeah, they should improve the following:

They should improve: How to mention a pot, bucket, to make a bed and to greet and how to answer when you asked a question.

Were these not part of your curriculum?

They taught us, but the program stopped, while we wanted to continue.

**Main Points**

- Improve the English program
- Return the English program

**Question: How did the program impact your life, if at all?**

Yes, it did change my life like right now when my children write to me in Thimbukushu, I am able to read myself. In the past, I used to seek assistant from different people to read for me, can you read for me? Now, I can sit and read, read until I am done. It really changed my life.

**Main Points**

- Able to read letters in Thimbukushu
- Independent now, read on my own
- Changed my life for the better

**Question: Any addition to what you have just said?**

To add on is only to ask to add content of hand work, planting vegetables, potatoes, how to water and take care of it in the curriculum. For us elderly, education is not for further studies, but hand work is important for us to help us with our daily lives such as sawing, crafts, or planting.

**Any question maybe if you have one you want to ask?**

Is only to inform them that this is what the people are asking to bring in hand work, crafts and planting of vegetables or how to do gardening.

**Main Points**

- Improve content of the program
- Introduce practical projects like planting vegetables, and potatoes
- Hand work important like sawing, crafts, and planting
- Introduce horticulture

## Participant 00-6

### Background

The participant is a 52-year-old female who lived in the very remote village alongside the Kavango River. She was married with children. She did not attend formal schooling., She did not attend better school, because her parents decided to get married early. She started late with education or she was behind with education. Later, she started with literacy from stage 1-3 and moved to AUPE. She completed stage 4 of the adult literacy program and wanted to further her studies. The area is very remote and was hard to sustain a living in such a condition.

### Main Points

- Very remote and small village
- Got married early
- Behind with education
- Went to school outside the village, but did not complete
- The area is very poor, rocky, and harsh to live in

**Question: How Namibia' National Adult Literacy Program overcame barriers to avoid dropping out of the program? What was your experience in completing the program? The ones you completed. The experience you gained on the stages you completed.**

In literacy what I gained is good thing like I could not read and write. In the past, I did not attend better school, because my parents decided for me to get married early. I started late with education or I was behind with education. Later, I started with literacy from

stage 1-3 and moved to AUPE. Now, I am able to read in languages like Rumanyo, Thimbukushu, Runyemba language, Rukwangali language and English. Even bible I can read. But in the past, I was not able to read at all to tell the truth. Those are the important things I gained from the literacy.

**Main Points**

- Read and write in Rumanyo, Thimbukushu, Rukwangali, and English
- Read the bible

**Question: What did you like about the program?**

Things I like very much I want to add on English language, to improve my English. Because they taught us English, I can hear but cannot answer. I want to advance with English for me to speak not only to hear. Even in my business, when someone speak, I can hear, but difficult to respond. I feel ashamed sometimes. I want to improve on that. If someone who started late with school go to literacy you will learn and gain many things. Like me now, one cannot gossip me in English, because I will hear everything.

**Main Points**

- Improve English language to communicate well
- Advance English program
- Help business to communicate
- Feel ashamed sometimes when unable to respond
- Gain many things
- Cannot be gossiped in English

**Question: What did you dislike about the program?**

There are no difficulties which I experienced with literacy. They opened my eyes

I only seen many good gains. If one get good Instructor, you will know how to read and write. Even when I go to the shop, I am able to read labels and prices. I encourage myself to go further with education. I did not experience bad things, only good things. I am encouraging people to join the program, because it is very useful in someone's life. One will gain many things.

**Main Points**

- No difficulties experienced
- Opened my eyes
- Only seen many good things
- Good instructor helps to read and write
- Able to read labels in shops
- Encouraged myself to continue schooling
- Encouraging others to join
- Useful in someone's life
- Gain many things

**Question: What barriers to completion did you experience?**

Difficulties of wanting to know something on projects and handwork, they could have brought projects to teach us new strategies of how planting, because currently, they have

new ways of planting and we needed to know that to assist because handwork is important.

How do you connect literacy to handwork?

All are important, very important.

**Main Points**

- Projects and hand work not introduced
- Failing to teach about new strategies on planting
- Hand work, and literacy are important

**Question: How did you overcome those barriers?**

Those of planting? Just to try to plant and make sure that you clear the land or give water to your seedlings and take care of it.

**Main Points**

- Cleared the land
- Watered the seedlings
- Maintained the garden

**Question: Describe the support of your spouse in your efforts to become literate.**

**Are you married?**

Yes. He told me to keep on attending, because literacy is important. It is better to get literate it will open you on many things.

**Main Points**

- Encouraged to attend classes
- Literacy is important

- Literate person has many opportunities

**Question: Describe the support of your family in your efforts to become literate.**

I do not stay with family members. I stay only with my husband and our children stay far from us.

How did your children support you in your efforts to become literate?

Children encouraged me to attend, because it will help you even when we send you money, you will know how much you received.

**Main Points**

- Do not stay with family
- Children encouraged to attend classes
- Help to know when one receives money

**Question: Describe the support of your community in your efforts to become literate.**

Community did not really support me, we could have been many who joined, because they are ashamed, they only discouraged me by said that at your age you still struggle with school, is waste of time. Is only now in your old age you are shivering for school. They do not encourage you. It makes you also feel ashamed and discouragement. Those are the difficulties I experienced.

**Main Points**

- No support
- Discouraged others, and dropped
- Feel ashamed

- Old age, why struggling, why shivering for school?
- Time wasting

**Question: How do you perceive that the program could better equip adult learners to overcome barriers to completion?**

I want to request to return the English program of AUPE which was stopped, because our Instructor was taken to other institution. Since then, nothing happened. If our Instructor was not taken away, I could have been far with my studies. They wanted to teach us new things like how to do your own business. If you are done with AUPE, you will move to grade 10. I could have been far with the studies. This is why I am requesting to return the AUPE program to see how far I can go with my life. They also said that they will bring other good things for literacy program so that people can know that the program is also high.

**Main Points**

- Return the English program of AUPE
- Replace the English Instructor
- Wanted to know new things on business
- Articulate AUPE to grade 10 level
- Wanted to further my studies
- Promised to bring new things to upgrade the program

**Question: How did the program impact your life, if at all?**

I can say that it really changed my life, because I am able to read a bible. If one does not know how to read and write is nothing. Sometime at school I was asked to visit a library,

I was able to borrow a book to read on my own. Now it changed my life, because I can read and write on my own. What I am trying to do is improve my life through this program to finish all the stages.

**Main Points**

- Able to read and write
- Able to read the bible
- Not knowing how to read and write is a problem
- Able to borrow books in library
- Improve life through education

**Question: Any addition to what you have just said?**

To request to bring back English program, because English is important to show them when I speak, people will say "Is that the one who was not able to speak English? The same way we speak our mother tongue Thimbukushu. Currently, one cannot lie to me in English, because I can hear everything. I want to finish the whole program. They also told us to bring things about businesses to help us.

**Main Points**

- Return the English program
- Make a difference in life with English like mother tongue Thimbukushu
- Currently, cannot be lied to in English
- Promised to bring new things on business

**Question: Any question maybe if you have one you want to ask?**

I want to ask us people with literacy, our seniors, don't they see us as equally important people? There are those who fails grade 9 and grade 10, but they are just at home doing nothing. Why cannot a literacy people start the program and finish with grade 10?

**Main Points**

- Why adult literacy alumni not seen as equals?
- Why AUPE not articulated to grade 10 level?
- Why can a literacy person start and finish the program?

## Participant 00-7

**Background**

Participant is a 51-year-old female who was interviewed on December5, 2019 in a very remote village alongside the Kavango River in the Kavango East Region. She was a widow and did not attend formal schooling. The area was very remote, and hard, and rock. She completed AUPE program and wanted to further her studies to better her life, and that of her family.

**Main Points**

- Very remote and small village
- Got married
- Behind with education
- Went to school outside the village, but did not complete

**Question: How Namibia' National Adult Literacy Program overcame barriers to avoid dropping out of the program? What was your experience in completing the**

**program? The ones you completed. The experience you gained on the stages you completed.**

The experience I gained is English, even when someone speak, I can hear not like in the past I could not hear. Now I can read and write. I can understand too.

**Main Points**

- Read and write
- Hear English language, and understand

**Question: What did you like about the program?**

I like education. Even when I go to the hospital, I am able to hear myself. There is no need to be translated. I can help myself.

**Main Points**

- Like education
- Help at hospital
- No translation required
- Able to help myself

**Question: What did you dislike about the program?**

There are no difficulties which I experienced with literacy. Literacy is very important. This is why I am encouraging to join the program learn how to read and write to help them in the future.

**Main Points**

- No dislikes
- Literacy is important

- Encouraging others to join
- Help them to read and write, good for the future

**Question: What barriers to completion did you experience?**

No difficulties apart from losing our Instructor in a short period she taught us, because she moved away to join other institution. We learnt very well. She did not continue to finish all the lessons.

**Main Points**

- No difficulties experienced
- Removal of Instructor
- Learnt well
- Lessons not completed

**Question: How did you overcome those barriers?**

We tried to be patient until at the end of the year and they told us that the Instructor will not return to teach again.

**Main Points**

- Patient
- Tolerant

**Question: Describe the support of your spouse in your efforts to become literate.**

**Are you married?**

No, I am not married.

**Main Point**

- Widow

**Question: Describe the support of your family in your efforts to become literate.**

Family members supported me with encouragement that literacy is important in someone's life. In the future education will help you but not to wait that my sister or brother will give me something, but through literacy, one can assist yourself by seeking for employment even as a cleaner or a security officer somewhere to support your children or households.

**Main Points**

- Encouraged that literacy is important in someone's life
- Valuable for the future education
- Help not depend on others
- Able to assist oneself
- Employment as a cleaner or security guard
- Able to support families or households

**Question: Describe the support of your community in your efforts to become literate.**

Community really support me through encouragement by agreeing to allow me to continue attending literacy classes. Not like in the past where people were only looking after cattle and farming. Now that literacy is available, let us go and attend to get educated.

**According to you, what are the importance of literacy?**

According me, I learn many things like when I go the clinic, I can speak on my own. Even with the doctor I can speak where I feel sick for the doctor to understand. I am able to communicate with a driver who only speaks English to tell him/her where I am going. Those are the benefits of literacy.

**Any addition on your answers, benefits of literacy?**

I only want to encourage those who did not join the program to join because nowadays the use of signing with a thumb is out. Currently is to sign yourself with a pen, be it at the hospital, police station. And other places. Stay away from drinking places but join the program anyway in the country whether in your mother tongue or English, it is very important for one to know how to read and write.

**Main Points**

- Encouraged to stay in program
- Different from past looking after cattle and farming
- Help at the clinic to speak with nurses, and doctors
- Able to communicate in English with drivers
- Encourage others to join
- Important for signing document, not using thumbs like at hospitals, and police station
- Help to stay away from drinking places
- Nowadays, reading and writing is very important

**Question: How do you perceive that the program could better equip adult learners to overcome barriers to completion?**

I want if it was only me to request to add and teach us where we stopped to continue with the program so that we learn more to assist us in the future, not to stop the program.

**Main Points**

- Return the English program
- Improve the program
- Important for the future

**Question: How did the program impact your life, if at all?**

I can say that it really changed my life, because I am able to understand English, in the past I could not understand English, but now I can hear and understand. One will not gossip me in English, although I won't respond. It really changed my life anything that I person will say, I understand.

**Any addition to what you have just said?**

Any question maybe if you have one you want to ask?

Actually, I do not have a question, but only a question of why they stopped with the English program. I only see an Instructor of mother tongue. Can they bring back the English Instructor for us to continue with the program we could not finished?

**Main Points**

- Able to understand English language
- Cannot be gossiped in English language, hear
- Why English program was stopped?
- Only have Instructor for mother tongue
- Return English Instructor or replace her?

## Participant 00-8

### Background

Participant is a 74-year-old female who lived in a very remote village in the eastern side of the Kavango Region. She was a widowed with children. The area was very remote, and sandy. It was difficult to sustain life in this sandy dry land with the Kavango River which was very far from where she lived. She did not attend formal schooling. Participant completed AUPE program and shown interest to further her studies with the same program.

### Main Points

- Very remote and small sandy village
- Widow
- Behind with education
- Went to school outside the village, but did not complete

**Question: How Namibia' National Adult Literacy Program overcame barriers to avoid dropping out of the program? What was your experience in completing the program? The ones you completed. The experience you gained on the stages you completed.**

The experience I gained is English, even when someone speak, I can hear not like in the past I could not hear. Now I can read and write. I can understand too. If one ask me "how are you? I am able to respond: I am fine and how are you?

Those are experience you gained from literacy.

If we could stay longer with our English Instructor, it could have been better, we could learn many things. During that time we also learnt mathematics like counting, Many people dropped the program, I am not sure what the problem was maybe because the challenge of learning how to write because many did not have the background of elementary education, but they wanted to know English, but writing was a challenge.

**Main Points**

- Able to hear and understand English language
- Read and write
- Able to respond when asked in English
- Program was cut short
- Learnt mathematics like counting
- Many dropped out, maybe due to writing with no background

**Question: What did you like about the program?**

I like to learn the English language. When I ask for water and how to communicate when hitch hiking is better, not like sending someone to talk on your behalf. One will change your words or gossip you. In terms of the language is important, it helped me to understand. If we could remain longer in the program, we could learn more.

**Main Points**

- Learn English language
- Useful for asking water and communicating when hitch hiking
- Independent, not to be translated
- Eliminate gossip

- Stopping program had effect on me

**Question: What did you dislike about the program?**

There are no dislikes how can one hate education. Education is always important in someone's life. It will help one when travelling when you meet someone who do not understand your mother tongue, when you asked in English "where are you going?" You will understand. English is the first and most important language nowadays. Classes for English is good. If we could have Instructors, we could go far.

**Main Points**

- No dislikes, how can one hate education?
- Education more important in someone's life
- Help when travelling
- English first and most important language nowadays
- Classes for English were good

**Question: What barriers to completion did you experience?**

No difficulties, because we were not expected to pay anything. Not like normal school where parents run around for money. Like pay here, pay here. But last year, I went to ask about the English program, but I was told that your Instructor joined another Institution. I came back, but wanted to continue with another stage. I like literacy but there is no one to teach us.

**Main Points**

- No difficulties

- Classes were free
- Different from normal schooling, expected to pay fees
- Stopping of English program, affected me
- Wanted to further my studies to next stage
- No replacement for English instructor

**Question: How did you overcome those barriers?**

How should I correct it, is you who are at the office to make sure that you look for an English Instructor. Us we do not have a problem, if we get an Instructor we can start the program. Whether one will not manage, as long as you are in a class is fine.

**Main Points**

- Could not correct it, office should
- Replace English instructor
- Adult learners, no problem to continue
- Managing the program is not an issue

**Question: Describe the support of your spouse in your efforts to become literate.**

**Are you married?**

No, I am not married.

**Main Point**

- Widow

**Question: Describe the support of your family in your efforts to become literate.**

No support, because I stay alone. From the side of my niece she teased me that you with literacy speak English. Only my own interest because I like literacy.

**Main Points**

- No support
- Teased to speak
- Remained focused

**Question: Describe the support of your community in your efforts to become literate.**

Community members only laughed and teased me. To them was a waste of time in your old age even when you were young you could not manage, what about now? You are old, there is nothing you will do. No encouragement.

**Main Points**

- No support
- Laughed, and teased at, too old
- Waste of time, when young could not manage, what about now?
- Nothing to achieve

**Question: How do you perceive that the program could better equip adult learners to overcome barriers to completion?**

To bring back the English program for us to improve the level of communication. Not only “how are you?” I am fine and how are you?” But also to be able to ask things you do not know in English

**Main Points**

- Return English program to improve communication
- Improve content of English program

- Upgrade the program

**Question: How did the program impact your life, if at all?**

Currently, I was not like this where one could gossip me. But now I am able to communicate. What I need is to bring back the English program for me to improve the English. Thimbukushu literacy I understand. Asking for transport in English I know. Those are the only questions I have, do you have any question related to the literacy program?

I only want to talk about the program they stopped. I do not know why it was stopped. What I know is that one of our Instructor finished the University. However, they could have found another one. For me I cannot repeat mother tongue literacy again which I finished, is a waste of time. I know Thimbukushu very well. I need to learn advance English is better.

**Main Points**

- Different from the past
- Cannot be gossiped, can hear
- Able to communicate
- Return the English program, no reason provided for stopping it
- Replace the English instructor
- Able to ask for transport in English
- Understand Thimbukushu literacy
- Waste of time to repeat mother tongue all the time
- Wanted to learn advance English

## Participant 00-9

### Background

Participant was a 47-year-old female who lived in the very remote inland of the Kavango East Region. The area was very remote, sandy village far from the Kavango River. She relied on farming as source of income to sustain her family. She was married with children. She did attend formal schooling but join literacy program to improve her living condition.

### Main Points

- Very remote, and sandy area
- Married
- Relied on farming
- Behind with education
- Went to school inside the village, but did not complete

**Question: How Namibia' National Adult Literacy Program overcame barriers to avoid dropping out of the program?** Did you complete the literacy program? No, {Pause} Laugh. At which stage did you stop with the literacy program? I only stopped at stage 1, because our Instructor moved away from the area to start somewhere else. What was your experience in completing the program? The ones you completed. The experience you gained on the stages you completed. I actually know how to read and write. Anything else apart from reading and writing? How is reading and writing helping you currently in your life? I only know how to read and write. That is all, because our instructor moved away from here due to unknown reasons to me. Where did she go?

Ngaramateya {village}. Did she resign from her work as Instructor? Our Instructor? Yes, why did she moved or stop working? Did she resigned? No, I don't think so. She did not resign actually. There were some challenges and she realized that she does not have where to stay. She decided to move and stay there to change her situation. Since then, we stopped with classes until now. We could not do anything. We just stayed at home.

**Main Points**

- Completed AUPE stage 1
- Instructor moved to another place
- Read and write
- Could not learn more, no instructor

**Question: What did you like about the program?**

Is it something she taught us? Yes please. I thought knowing English will definitely improve my life and to know how to write in the future so that I am able to speak English. That was something I thought I could gain.

**Main Points**

- Knowing English improve life
- Read and write important in future
- Help to speak English language
- Could have gained knowing English language

**Question: What did you dislike about the program?**

There are no dislikes. Nothing at all?

**Main Point**

- No dislikes

**Question: What barriers to completion did you experience?**

No difficulties {Pause}. No difficulties?

**Main Point**

- No difficulties experienced

**Question: How did you overcome those barriers?**

No difficulties.

**Main Point**

- No difficulties

**Question: Describe the support of your spouse in your efforts to become literate.**

**Are you married?**

When my husband arrived, the literacy program had already stopped.

**Main Points**

- No support, not around

**Question: Describe the support of your family in your efforts to become literate.**

No support. Nothing?

**Main Point**

- No support

**Question: Describe the support of your community in your efforts to become literate.**

Nothing.

**Main Point**

- No support

**Question: How do you perceive that the program could better equip adult learners to overcome barriers to completion?**

To bring back the literacy program for us to continue where we stopped so that we too will enjoy the benefits of literacy.

**Main Points**

- Return English program
- Enjoy the benefits literacy

**Question: How did the program impact your life, if at all?**

Currently, I was not like this, it really changed my life. However, the only challenge was the program stopped and since it has taken a long time, I have forgotten those things I knew. I cannot remember them anymore.

**Main Points**

- Different than before
- Improved my life
- Discontinuation of English program affected to forget things learnt, cannot remember them now

## Participant 0-10

### Background

Participant is a 47-year-old female who lived in a remote inland village which was only easily accessible by 4x4 vehicle in the Kavango East Region. She was married with children. She did not attend formal schooling well. The area was very remote and sandy with nothing to sustain someone apart from engaging in farming. She only completed stage 1 of AUPE.

### Main Points

- Very remote, and sandy area
- Married
- Relied on farming
- Behind with education
- Went to school inside the village, but did not complete
- Completed only stage 1 of AUPE

**Question: how Namibia' National Adult Literacy Program overcame barriers to avoid dropping out of the program?** Did you complete the literacy program? No, {Pause} Laugh. At which stage did you stop with the literacy program?

I only stopped at stage 1, because our Instructor moved away from the area to start somewhere else.

### Main Points

- Stopped at AUPE stage 1
- Instructed moved to another place

**Question: What was your experience in completing the program? The ones you completed. The experience you gained on the stages you completed.**

I know how to read and write. Anything else apart from reading and writing? How is reading and writing helping you currently in your life? Reading and writing. In the past I could not know how to read my child's passport for the hospital. I used to ask children to do it. But now, I can do that.

**Main Points**

- Read and write
- Different than the past
- Could not read hospital passport
- Relied on children to translate
- Able to do it myself

**Question: What did you like about the program?**

About literacy program? Yes please.

Reading and writing {laugh}

**Main Point**

- Reading and writing

**Question: What did you dislike about the program?**

Things I dislike is the issue of not teaching us literacy. The challenge is I am forgetting most of the things I learned and that is a challenge. This is not good. Like these years

were we are not attending classes, we are again going back to illiterate, which is not good at all.

**Main Points**

- Not teaching us literacy
- Challenge of forgetting most things learnt
- No classes, returning me to illiterate

**Question: What barriers to completion did you experience?**

The problem of not having a literacy Instructor to teach us. Secondly, the issue of Officers not visiting villages to hear the challenges the community are facing and to see who are those who wants to study.

**Main Points**

- Losing an English instructor
- Officers not visiting communities to hear challenges
- Not knowing about students' challenges

**Question: How did you overcome those barriers?**

Problems I experienced in the program? Yes please. The challenge of not having a literacy Instructor. I am asking myself, are we going to receive another Instructor or not who will teach us?

**Main Points**

- Not having English instructor
- Are we going to receive a new instructor?

- Who will teach us?

**Question: Describe the support of your spouse in your efforts to become literate.**

**Are you married?**

Not married.

Main Point

- Not married, single

**Question: Describe the support of your family in your efforts to become literate.**

Yes, like my brother who is at Nyangana? He encouraged me that literacy program is very important. There are some benefits.

**Main Points**

- Encouraged that literacy is very important
- Have benefits

**Question: Describe the support of your community in your efforts to become literate.**

I did not hear well? Support from the community, did they encouraged you to continue with the program? Off course! People like the Headman of the village and some cleaners gave words of encouragements that literacy is important, because nowadays one must know how to read and write for one not to remain behind. Through that something might come out for you to support your children.

**Main Points**

- Encouraged to continue like Headman and cleaners
- Reading and writing is important nowadays

- Help to support families

**Question: How do you perceive that the program could better equip adult learners to overcome barriers to completion?**

Something they could improve is to make some visits to communities to give motivations and held meetings with the elderly.

**Main Points**

- Visit communities for motivational talk
- Held meetings with elderlies

**Question: How did the program impact your life, if at all?**

Like me when I want to hitch hike it helps to communicate with someone who speaks only English. I also know how to ask water for example. “Give me water” Any addition to your answers? Pause, nothing. Nothing? Do you have any question to ask related to the interview? I want to know, like you, what made you to come to our village and ask me questions?

I am studying a Doctorate in Education. The theme is about women who persistently completed literacy program. Through the interview I have conducted, your responses will help the Officers to improve their program, because they will learn from this study.

On the issue of literacy, can you ask them why it took them so long for us not to have an Instructor?

It is indeed a very good question. However, I do not work with them. I am sure that they know your challenge and they will sort it with time. They know which places have Instructors and which ones do not have.

**Main Points**

- Help when hitchhiking to communicate with driver
- Able to ask water in English language
- Purpose of your visit
- Ask the officers why it took long to replace the English instructor?

**Participant 0-11**

**Background**

Participant is a 43-year-old female who lived in a very remote inland village in the Kavango East Region. She was married with children to someone who also did not attend school. It was difficult to expect him to support me with my studies because he is illiterate. She did not attend formal schooling well. The area was very remote, and sandy village far from the Kavango River. Life was depended on farming to sustain her living condition, and that of her family. Participant only completed stage 1 of AUPE.

**Main Points**

- Very remote, and sandy area
- Married
- Relied on farming
- Behind with education
- Went to school inside the village, but did not complete
- Completed only stage 1 of AUPE

**Question: How Namibia' National Adult Literacy Program overcame barriers to avoid dropping out of the program? Did you complete the literacy program?** No. At

which stage did you stop with the literacy program? I only stopped at stage 1, because our Instructor moved away from the area to start somewhere else. What was your experience in completing the program? The ones you completed. The experience you gained on the stages you completed.

First, I was like a blind person. I did not know how to read and write. At least now I can read my child's passport. I know how to write my name. I know how to read and write.

**Main Points**

- Was like a blind person
- Did not know how to read and write, now, able to read and write
- Able to read hospital passport for my child
- Able to write my own name

**Question: What did you like about the program?**

About literacy program? Yes please. Reading and writing {laugh}. For me also to know how to read and write. Even to communicate in English like others.

**Main Points**

- Reading and writing
- Able to communicate in English language

**Question: What did you dislike about the program?**

Laugh! There is no dislike about literacy. Is only that the classes stopped. We could have improved and advanced with the program. As we can write our names, we could have been far.

**Main Points**

- No dislike
- Only classes that stopped
- Could have improved and advanced with AUPE
- Were able to write our names

**Question: What barriers to completion did you experience?**

The problem of not having a literacy Instructor to teach us and the program was stopped. Can you explain why the literacy program stopped? Our Instructor moved away and left us without anyone continuing the program. Nobody came to help us, but us we want to continue our program. What about the Officers, did they explain why the Instructor stopped teaching? Nothing, not at all.

**Main Points**

- Not having an English instructor
- No replacement for English instructor
- Left without anyone continuing the program
- Nobody came to help
- No visit from the Regional officers
- No explanation provided why the English program stopped

**Question: How did you overcome those barriers?**

We tried to reach the office to bring a replacement. But we were challenged with not knowing how to go about it and how to reach their offices.

**Main Points**

- Failed to reach the office to bring replacement
- Challenged with not knowing how to go about it
- Not knowing how to reach the office

**Question: Describe the support of your spouse in your efforts to become literate.**

**Are you married?**

Yes, I am married. I am married to someone who also did not attend school. It is difficult to expect him to support you because he is illiterate. Secondly, I am married to an older person than myself. No support.

**Main Points**

- No support, illiterate
- Spouse older than herself

**Question: Describe the support of your family in your efforts to become literate.**

No support for families of nowadays. The families are some of those who will tease you that why struggling with education in your old age. You will not get anything.

**Main Points**

- No support
- Teased why struggling in your old age
- Will not get anything

**Question: Describe the support of your community in your efforts to become literate.**

If the family members are not supporting you, do you think the others will support you? Nothing.

Only in cases if you take something to sell, they will buy your products.

**Main Points**

- If family no support, others no support too
- No support
- Only when selling, will buy products

**Question: How do you perceive that the program could better equip adult learners to overcome barriers to completion?**

To help us to find a replacement for us to continue with the literacy program.

**Main Point**

- Replacement for English instructor
- Continue with English program

**Question: How did the program impact your life, if at all?**

Yes, it did. Like me I was like a blind person. But now I can write my name, to read my child's passport. Also, I can sign documents myself. Only to speak is difficult. Otherwise, the basics I can do. Like me when I want to hitch hike it helps to communicate with someone who speaks only English. I also know how to ask water for example. "Give me the water"

Any addition to your answers? Pause, nothing. Nothing?

**Main Points**

- Improved from blind to literate person
- Able to write my name, read and write
- Able to read hospital passport
- Sign documents
- Speaking is difficult
- Basics of English I can do
- Able to use English language when hitch hiking, communicate
- Able to ask water in English language

**Question: Do you have any question to ask related to the interview?**

**Main Points**

- Like in our challenge, where we need to continue with the literacy program, are you able to ask them or take our problem to them?

Appendix F: Experiences of Adult Women Alumni

| Themes | Subthemes | Statements | Adult Women Alumni Experiences | f |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Voice** | Experience gained | Read and write, understand English, listen to English news, read job advertisements, write text message on a mobile phone, write letters in Rumanyo, read hospital passports, sign documents, counting mathematics, | Good experience gained from the program such as: Few women gained knowledge and skills of reading and writing | 11 |
| | | | Handling documents | 7 |
| | | | Listening to news | 4 |
| | | | Quality program is needed to ensure that women improve their lives | 11 |
| | | | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | The likes about the program | Read and write, helped to understand English language, can withdraw money, educated, no translation noted when seeing a doctor, good for hitchhiking, read English advertisement, different with uneducated person | | |
| | | No fruitful benefit, English program | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Dislikes | stopped, represented, to be translated, walking in the street | A concern of educating oneself without gaining a fruitful outcome, | 1 |
| | | | Several women were unhappy of being | 7 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | doing something irrelevant | | |
| | Barriers overcame | Disappointments, hardship, no recognition, discouragement from spouses, family, and community members, no instructors, no benefits, waste of time, too old for school. | | |
| | Support Received | Supported by spouses: Encouragement, change your life, can be independent, assist children with schoolwork, good for the future Supported by family: Ignore | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Significant** | Experience gained<br><br>The likes<br><br>Program Improvement | Read and write, understand English, listen to English news, read job advertisements, write text message on a mobile phone, write letters in Rumanyo, read hospital passports, sign documents, counting mathematics,<br><br>Computer program<br>Practical projects; horticulture, small businesses<br>Advance the English program, upgrade the program, | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | improve the content, articulate the program to grade 10<br>Visit communities | | |
| | Program Impact | General life improvements, read and write, understand English, listen to English news, read job advertisements, text message on a mobile phone, write letters in Rumanyo, read hospital passports, sign documents, counting mathematics | | |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | |
| I**nspiration** | Support Received | Supported by spouses: Encouragement, change your life, can be independent, support schoolwork, good for the future Supported by family: Ignore negative comments, remain focus, good for the future, stay | Women were mentally strong and excited when they shared their feelings about the literacy program. | 11 |
| | | | Interviewed indicated their excitement that they attended the program that helped them to read and write | 11 |
| | | | All eleven participants indicated that they gained experience of basic communication in English, able to manage health records, and be able to manage essential financial matters | 11 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | independent, do not miss classes<br>Supported by communities: Ignore negative comments, remain focus, goal oriented<br><br>Disappointments, hardship, no recognition, discouragement from spouses, family, and community members, no instructors, no benefits, waste of time, too old for school. | Women were inspired to think creatively | 7 |
| | | | Others requested to introduce new programs on how to improve agricultural activities, projects, and handwork | 3 |
| | | | Women were excited about the adult literacy program<br>Shared feelings of being mentally strong to overcome the barriers they faced. | 11 |
| | | | | |
| | | | Women were not supported. They were harassed by people teasing and laughing at them and telling them that it was a waste of time in their old age. | 7 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Barriers overcame | | Women were challenged with the feeling with discouragement and shame, because community teased them of no positive results**.** | 7 |
| | | | | |
| | | | | |
| **Dialog** | Program Improvement | Computer program Practical projects; horticulture, small businesses Advance the English program, upgrade the program, improve the content, articulate the program to grade 10 Visit communities | Women were able to raise their opinions about the adult literacy program, which defines women's relevance in society | 11 |
| | | | Requested to find a replacement for the English instructor. | 7 |
| | | | To introduce computer programs, business content, horticulture, and crop farming. | 3 |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Dislikes<br><br>Barriers overcame | No benefit, English program stopped, represented, to be translated, walking irrelevant Disappointments, hardship, no recognition, discouragement from spouses, family, and community members, no instructors | | |