

PANA V

Evaluation of a



Literacy Project

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CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

RESULTS

Organisation

Quantitative outcomes

Cooperation with other organisations and projects

Didactics and didactic materials

Impact on poverty reduction

Impact on the civil society

Empowerment

Impact on the Pentecostal church

The impact of the Pentecostal church on alphabetisation

Sustainability of the project

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

SUGGESTIONS

Cooperatives for leaders

Study groups

Literacy practices

REFERENCES

APPENDICE

List of interviews and observations

INTRODUCTION

Access to literacy has for long been perceived as one of the most fundamental human rights. Alphabetisation¹ has been the focus of many projects in developing countries, particularly among Christian organisations. The connection between missionary activities and reading the Bible has been strong. The Pentecostal Church in Sweden, through PMU Interlife, has been involved in development projects in many countries throughout the world and many of these have involved alphabetisation. In 2001 PMU InterLife published a study called *Global projektutveckling – alfabetisering* (Global project development - alphabetisation) (Thornell & Mondragon, 2001) which included policy and outlines for PMU InterLife concerning alphabetisation. In the policy it is argued that “important arguments to decrease and if possible to eradicate analphabetism is that it obstructs social and economic development in the society in a broad outline, at the same time as it constitutes an obstacle for the individual human being to improve his or her quality of life” (translation by the present author).

This evaluation of one of the alphabetisation projects run by PMU Interlife, PANA V in Rwanda will set off from this policy document. The objectives of the evaluation have been formulated in *Terms of Reference* as follows:

- The main purpose is to explore the impact, expected or unexpected of the literacy work related to PMU InterLife’s overall purpose of poverty reduction. The study will focus on clarifying to what extent the literacy project has contributed to empowerment of the targeted groups, providing them with coping strategies for everyday life, especially with regard to women.
- A second purpose is to collect information from teachers and participants about how they have appreciated the particular methodological approach of the course as well as the contents of the didactic materials. The results will be used to develop PMU InterLife’s literacy policy as well for management improvement within educational work of ADEPR.
- A third purpose is to secure sustainability, both of the alphabetisation project and of the achieved proficiency.

This means that the main perspective of the evaluation is a qualitative one. For quantitative outcomes of PANA I-IV see earlier reports from the projects and *Proposal submitted for financial support* (PMU InterLife, 2004). To enable the study of impact on poverty reduction and empowerment, of participants appreciation and of sustainability, an ethnographic perspective were used. Thus interviews and observations with an ethnographic approach were used in the study in the field study. Interviews were carried out with learners, teachers and leaders on different levels. Observations were carried out in classes, examination ceremonies where literacy certificates were distributed and in other relevant places. Discussions were carried out with coordinators in the project throughout the visit. Apart from this also artefacts such as primers, teachers’ books and tests were studied. See appendix for a list of interviews.

The field study started with a seminar i Bujumbura, Burundi, the 5-9 December 2005. In the seminar representatives from alphabetisation projects organised by PMU

¹ In this text *alphabetisation* is used for activities aimed at teaching individuals basic reading and reading skills outside formal school settings.

InterLife in three countries participated together with representatives and leaders from PMU Interlife in Sweden. The participants were from Burundi (CEPBU), Congo (CEPAC from the Bukavu area in eastern Congo and Acotka-Sulo from the north-west of Kongo) and from Rwanda (ADEPR). In Burundi PMU Interlife has recently ended their economic support to the national alphabetisation project CEPBU which, hopefully, will continue on local basis with national resources. In Congo the national Pentecostal church is planning alphabetisation projects together with PMU Interlife. The project run by ADEPR in Rwanda, PANA, which this evaluation is focussed on, was initiated in 1999 and is now in the beginning of its fifth phase, PANA V. The participants from ADEPR, Rwanda, were the Project Monitor from PANA, Ms Joséphine Mukarugwiza, the Project Coordinator from ADEPR, Mr Laurien Kubwimama, and one of the Regional Coordinators in PANA, Mr Theonosis X. After the seminar in Burundi ten days were spent in Rwanda with visits to different parts of the project.

In the earlier mentioned Policy document (PMU, 2001) the main goals from PMU for alphabetisation work are

- To develop the society positively
- To develop the individual positively
- To develop and strengthen the cooperative partner as an actor for positive social progress

The outlines are divided in governing functions, co-ordinating functions, pedagogic components and strategies for implementing an alphabetisation activity. As these outlines have governed the latter part of PANA they will be referred to in the present evaluation, mainly in the discussions.

The terms *literacy*, *literacy practices* and *literacy events* will be used in this document in a way that is congruent with the policy document of PMU.

BACKGROUND

The holistic ethnographic perspective of this evaluation necessitates a short review of the context where the alphabetisation project PANA is carried out. After the war and genocide in 1990-1994, Rwanda remained wounded in many ways. The conflicts had left many persons with traumatic experiences behind, among whom were numbers of widows and orphans. Many schools and colleges had been destroyed and teachers killed. Apart from the suffering of the violence, this had also resulted in a high number of individuals who did not have the opportunity to go to primary school. The determination with which the inhabitants and the leaders of the country have set out for reconciliation is impressive. There is no more mentioning of Hutus or Tutsis, only Rwandese. The legal process of prosecution of war criminals is still being carried out. On village level the local trials, the so called “Gacaca” are still held. These are civil courts where all adults in the village are acquired to be present to decide on consequences for the prosecuted. Memorials of different kinds are present, such as memory bows over roads, memorial places and official ceremonies all over the country. Military soldiers, police constables and security guards are present in many places. It is obvious that Rwanda is still actively in a process of reconciliation.

In this context it is important to be aware of some factors, apart from traumatic experiences and resulting hatred, which may risk the instability of the country:

- The contrast between the small minority of rich persons, mainly in Kigali living in a context with internet, mobiles, parabolic antennas and who are mainly French- and English-speaking and the majority which is very low educated, usually illiterate and only Kinyarwanda-speaking. Among this latter group a big part are widows, orphans and handicapped people.
- The dense population with about 280 persons/km and a birth rate of 1.2%² (Fitzpatrick, Ray and Parkinson, 2003). The only uninhabited areas in the country are the big national parks. In connection with the repatriation of former refugees from Tanzania part of the national park in the eastern part of the country, Parc de Lakagera, was used for resettlement. The scarcity of land may create tensions in the future.
- Instability in the neighbouring countries with groups that may have interests in Rwanda. The most important is probably the civil war in eastern Congo where gangs of the former Interahamwe are among the rebellion groups. The instable situation in Burundi is also a risk as the wars there have earlier had big influence on what happened in Rwanda. Expatriate Rwandans in Uganda may also have an instable influence and perhaps also expatriates in Tanzania.
- The high number of victims from the genocide that suffer from traumatic experiences.
- The settlements that have been a result of the expatriation of former refugees will also need more time to stabilize. In some of these settlements the situation is instable and local tensions occur.

In the perspective of the process of reconciliation, stabilising factors are important. Alphabetisation projects may have such effects.

After the war the rate of illiterate people³ among adults in Rwanda had increased and has been estimated to more than 50 % of adults (Fitzpatrick, Ray and Parkinson, 2003, Nationalencyklopedin, 1995). Many of the survivors were orphans and widows and the war had had severe effects on especially primary school education. In 1999 the Pentecostal church in Rwanda, *Asociation des églises Pentecôtal du Rwanda* (ADEPR) started a pilot project for alphabetisation, PANA, in cooperation with PMU InterLife. This was followed by PANA II, PANA III, PANA IV and PANA V. The latest, which this study set out to evaluate, was started in april 2005 and runs to 2007.

In the study referred to earlier (Thornell & Mondragon, 2001), the term *Ideological model* is used. This model is based on Unesco's *Functional literacy* (Unesco 2000) and Paolo Freire's *Pedagogy for the oppressed* (Freire, 1972). The *Ideological model* may also be seen as an application of theories developed by, among others, Brian Street (1993) and David Barton (1998). The model is then prescribed by PMU InterLife in the actual alphabetisation project. The most outstanding characteristic of the model is the holistic perspective, which is divided in four main areas: *learning to*

² Nationalencyklopedin (1995) gives 275 persons/km and a birth rate of 3,4%.in 1990.

³ The term *illiterate* is here used to denote adults who do not have basic literacy knowledge, such as basic reading and writing skills. The ways of measure this have been debated but in the case of this study many of the informants maintain that they did not know a single letter before the alphabetisation course. About mathematic skills they are more vague.

be, learning to learn, learning to live together and learning to do. As this may be seen as the ideological frame of the project this will be considered in the evaluation.

The notion of *literacy practices* is used in the policy document. The concept of literacy practices is connected to an ethnographic perspective of literacy. Research in this tradition has shed new light on alphabetisation projects and enabled a more critical and reflective perspective when plans for alphabetisation are made. Traditionally these projects were based on assumptions made in advance by literacy 'experts' from the west according *what* targeted groups should learn, *why* they should learn it and *why* this should be done. The ethnographic perspective enables plans more sensitive to local peoples' own, situated literacy practices. Literacy practices can be defined as both behaviour and the social and cultural ways of utilizing written language that people draw on in their lives" (Street, 1995:2). Literacy practices can be understood as the ways people understand literacy, their perspectives on literacy and their uses of it.

RESULTS

Organisation

The project PANA is run inside the Pentecostal church in Rwanda, ADEPR, which is relatively well organised in a hierarchical structure, in cooperation with PMU InterLife in Sweden. The organisation of the project follows the recommendations from the earlier mentioned study (Thornell & Mondragon, 2001) with a project coordinator (in PANA called project monitor), regional representatives and group leaders. The project has expanded through the period, from only reaching Kigali city to reaching nationwide in 2005, at the time of this evaluation..

PANA is lead by the project monitor, Ms Joséphine Mukarugwiza. She is supported by the National Management Committee consisting of five representatives from ADEPR. She has administrative support from a secretary, a cashier and an auditor. In PANA V also a logistic officer is included but by the time of this evaluation this post was vacant. The Project Monitor works in cooperation with the head of the Department of Social Affairs, Ms Odetta X and the Project Coordinator of ADEPR, Mr Laurien Kubwimama, who coordinates the different projects of ADEPR. At this central level PANA has at its disposal logistic support in the form of a Toyota Landcruiser, a driver, a computer and mobile telephones. At the time for the evaluation there was no working internet connection at the office of PANA. The staff on this level that get their salaries through the project are the project manager, the driver and the secretary. The cashier and the accountant receive 1/3 of their salary from this project.

On regional level the project has 12 Regional Coordinators who organise and supervise the alphabetisation activities through 51 Regional Sites Coordinators. The Regional Coordinators and the Regional Sites Coordinators are invariably pastors in ADEPR. Each Regional Coordinator is with the start of PANA V given a salary of 35 000 RFr monthly and is planned to have access to a mobile telephone, a lap top computer and a motor cycle. Each Regional Sites coordinator organises the alphabetisation work through literacy trainers, the *formateurs*, most of whom are pastors but not all. All leaders on this level have been trained and sensitised in

alphabetisation issues through courses inside the project on national and regional level.

The group leaders, the *moniteurs*, have been sensitised and trained by the literacy trainers in their respective congregations and they are the ones who run the courses. Many, but not all, of the group leaders are evangelists. They carry out their task on voluntary basis, without payment.

An important ingredient in the project is the commitment, which is part of the Pentecostal Church ideology. People who have experienced salvation are expected to commit themselves in many ways, such as participating in a choir or working as deacons or as evangelists. This is expected to be carried out as a call, without expecting payment. The alphabetisation task, in the form carried out by the group leaders, is thus done in this context. This means that monitors carry out this as a call but it also means that there is a strong connection between religious belief/salvation and literacy. It is for example a ruling ideology among leaders in ADEPR and PANA that basic literacy competence should be demanded for all deacons, evangelists and choir members. This will be discussed further below.

The structure of the project, with many posts being held by the pasteurs also has gender implications. As only men are pastors in ADEPR this means that except from the Project Manager, Ms Mukarugwiza, only men hold leading posts in the project. Women are only found on the group leader level and also among them the far majority is men. This is a problem particularly when the high number of illiterate women is considered.

Quantitative outcomes

Although this evaluation has a qualitative approach it is suitable to mention some quantitative data for the project. The most outstanding is that the project works mainly on voluntary basis and that after five years, at the end of 2005, more than 50 000 learners had passed the test. However one should also consider the high number of drop outs, roughly two thirds of those who register for the courses do not finish. This will be commented on more further on.

Cooperation with other organisations and projects

The projects have, according to earlier reports from the project, been carried out in cooperation with other churches, different NGOs, UNDP, authorities, the organisation Profemmes Twesehamwe and Literacy Evangelism Fellowship. During PANA V leaders in some zones have cooperated with other agents in alphabetisation projects. In Buhoro region the cooperation has resulted in mixed study groups, with participants from different churches studying together. Resources from different sources such as the government and different NGOs have been used to run these courses. The Regional coordinator for PANA gives several examples of good cooperation and also witness that the mayor has contributed in several ways with his own, private money. Also in Umutara region the literacy coordinator mention economic support from authorities, in this case concerning costs for roof for a school

building. In other zones however regional coordinators talk about “war” when they speak of other organisations involved in alphabetisation projects. Resources given by other organisations are often mentioned as a problem, particularly incentives to group leaders. Other organisations are said to “entice” group leaders to teach in their courses by giving them a small salary or incentives such as a bicycle. This problem is mentioned in many places. This is often connected to money deposited by the government for alphabetisation. Leaders in PANA express a strong concern that there is a risk that this money may be used for the benefit of individuals instead of for alphabetisation. This is expressed in connection with the consciousness that the didactics of PANA are highly positively renowned and with a concern both for the Pentecostal church and for its group leaders and believers. Leaders seem concerned that the Pentecostal group leaders work inside the organisation of the Pentecostal church. Some also mention the concern that learners may attach themselves to the own or other religious communities, due to who organises the alphabetisation courses.

Methodological approach and didactic materials

Didactics can be said to cover *What* is taught *How* and *Why*. One of the objectives of this study was to evaluate the methodological approach and the material. However, the field study did unfortunately not give much information on the impact of the didactics and the didactic materials used by PANA V. This was due to organisational problems. The primers and teachers’ guides were not made available for the evaluation until the end of the field study. This was also the case with the tests. Only one visit was made to a group session with learners and their group leader, and this was only for a few minutes and not in a natural teaching situation.

However, the cursory study of the didactics together with the initial seminar for project managers in Burundi, gave a very positive impression. It has to be kept in mind that this project is run at a minimal cost level, with “teachers” on extreme grass-root level. The group leaders/teachers only have a few days of training by literacy trainers who in their turn only have a short training themselves. None of these receive salaries for this work. It should also be taken into account that some of the monitors did not themselves attend school, but learned the three R:s (reading, writing and numeracy) in one of the earlier courses of the project. Bearing this in mind the results in PANA I-V with a number of more than 50 000 learners who have passed the final test is extremely impressive. Learning to read and write is to achieve complex cognitive skills and that this is carried out under such circumstances is honourable.

The didactics and the didactic materials have been changed and developed during the process of earlier phases of the project. The seminar in Burundi gave new input to the leaders who participated and this will hopefully be transmitted to coordinators, trainers and group leaders. The use of the holistic ideological model is appropriate for the situation. That a particular method, which is different from the one traditionally used in primary schools, is used for adults, give the learning a higher status. Although this method would probably also suit school children well, the very fact that it is different from school methods, give a special status to these literacy activities and is a way to show adult learners respect. This is important when the shame often associated with illiteracy is taken into account. Generally the method has a good reputation, both among leaders and learners inside ADEPR and among people in Rwanda outside the

project. People testify that other organisations wish to use the materials and to be trained in the methodology. This gives PANA high status which is of big importance for the outcome of the project.

As the ideology behind the didactics is given in the earlier mentioned study (Thornell & Mondragon, 2001) and as this is, as far as may be valued through this evaluation, well implemented in PANA V, the materials and didactics will not be scrutinised here. Suffice it to say that they are simple, structured and clear, which is a requirement for success under the given conditions. Only a few specific comments will be given here.

The training of group leaders is still important. In the short visit in a group session, the group leader was very unclear when pointing to the text on the black board. He did for example hide the text while pointing at it for the learners to read. As the connection between the eyes and the text is crucial when reading, this is something that should be made very clear to group leaders. This is particularly important when the abundance of chorus reading in primary schools in this context, without pupils actually watching the written text, is taken into account.

In the seminar in Burundi the holistic perspective was stressed and the importance of giving learners support and not to embarrass them in front of the group. How this will be implemented will be seen in a later stage of the project. One has to realise that the restricted training that group leaders achieve, does not permit drastic changes in teaching methodology.

Although the evaluation did not permit thorough analysis of the tests in context, some comments can be made. It should be reflected on the necessity to have graded tests, as is presently the case. Although this can have some importance, for example in the case when adolescents are transferred to standard four primary school after having passed the test⁴, or when authorities make demands in connection with the certificates, the importance of not devaluing adults and of not making them feel ashamed should be stressed. The leaders who participated in the Burundi seminar will probably be able to adapt the tests to the methodological policy given there.

Using a holistic type of test, similar to what learners may encounter in their daily life, would be more congruent with the methods used in PANA. The awareness of what is measured should also be increased. Tests should not be too “school-like” not to measure “schooled knowledge”. One example is when tests give mathematic problems such as: $2 + _ = 18$ and $_ - 12 = 23$. This type of questions is very abstract and linked to schooling. The types of question that link to daily life are those where the result is asked for, such as: $12 + 6 =$ and $38 - 15 =$. It should also be thought over if life knowledge should be tested in written form, bearing in mind that this also tests reading (and eventually writing) skills simultaneously. The given value to different parts of the test compared to the pass-level should also be considered. Presently the test gives 100 points, with a pass-rate of 50 or 55 points. This means that an individual may fail on a big part of the test but still receive a pass. The part testing

⁴ Leaders mention that learners who are in school age are advised to start in primary school after having passed the test at the end of the course. These learners are said to be put in standard four. In one case a man of more than thirty years of age is said to have decided to start primary school after he had passed the alphabetisation course.

mathematic skills, for example, usually represents 30 points and the part referred to test reading 40 points. This means that technically an individual could fail the reading part totally and still receive a pass. Considering the holistic methods and the objectives of PANA, it is more relevant with only one grade, pass.

On the ideological level of PANA and ADEPR, cautions should be made about the frequently uses of images such as “fight against illiteracy”, illiteracy as an “enemy causing much evil” and “leaving the darkness and coming out into the light” (as an image of learning to read and write, similar to the image of salvation/seeing the light). These images are used in many contexts connected with the project. The association between “illiteracy” and “the illiterate person” is tempting close and putting shame on individuals who do not know to read and write, should be avoided as far as possible. Some learners and group leaders mention that there are learners who drop out because of being laughed at and we will see below that the sense of shame in connection with not knowing how to read and write was mentioned by many learners. Caution should also be made against putting up demands for literacy skills for different positions in the church, such as for deacons, where this is not necessary. In a campaign, such as this teaching people the tree R:s, it is tempting to use strong ways of persuasion, but it is important to be aware of dangers with to strong persuasions. One should bear in mind that too strong persuasion may cause resistance. Probably those who have already joined and passed the courses are those who were easy to persuade, and probably many of them managed to acquire basic literacy skills quite easily. However, we know that many persons will find it quite difficult to achieve these skills. These persons may benefit from other attitudes. Reading and writing is not good per se, it is what we do with it that counts. Much evil has been done in the world by using literacy. One can for example think of the rapidly growing criminality using information-technology and of different type of frauds. To make reading and writing important tools for positive development in people’s lives, it is important to promote ways that may make this happen.

There is a problem in the literacy courses with a high number of drop outs. One main reason, given by learners and group leaders, is the harsh life conditions for many of the learners. In some areas people frequently move to other parts of the country or to towns in the search for job. As Rwanda is a small country, it is also common that persons move abroad, mainly to Uganda, Congo and Tanzania but also to Burundi. Particularly in the newly settled areas instability is a fact. Furthermore many of the learners are women and in the case of pregnancy many of them chose to leave the course. Some of them return after one or two years. Some of the learners are orphans and street children who have such a tough life that it is difficult for them to follow a course regularly. Thus it should not be too much of a surprise to find a high drop out rate. Still, the importance for group leaders to show a humble attitude towards learners, avoiding making fun of their mistakes, can not be too much stressed. Although this is also pointed out by leaders in interviews one may assume that this is a problem as the issue of not knowing to read, write and count is so often connected with shame and embarrassment. One may assume that one reason for the high drop out rate is the feeling among leaders of shame and the sensitivity to negative remarks. Hence, one important characteristic of a leader in an alphabetisation project like this is humbleness and ability to show people respect. Thus, an advice is not to focus too much on images such as eradicating illiteracy and being in the dark.

Impact on poverty reduction

Although literacy is not in itself something good, reading, writing and numeracy can be used in many ways for development. Particularly economic and health issues are important for poverty reduction. Many of the learners that were interviewed during the field study for this evaluation stress the positive effect their literacy skills have had on their own development. One young man who is involved in local trade between Congo and Rwanda expresses the importance of mathematic skills in the exchange of money⁵:

-Now I can understand also dollar⁶ as I have learned to count. (...) ⁷ Now I can exchange currency and they can't cheat me. I can multiply also big numbers. Also to divide between different persons I know now.

He gives examples of his trade with shoes and how he now can estimate the profit and calculate the use of his money. He, as many of the interviewed young men, also explains the importance of mathematic skills and of knowing how to calculate in writing when paying the bride price. The sum of money is too high for most men to be able to pay at once. Another man described how he handled this:

- For me it was 90 000 RFr. If I pay 30 000 RFr I'll know that I have 60 000 left. If I pay another 15 000 I know that I have 45 000 left.

The learners give examples of how they would use their mathematic skills to plan trade with shoes, rabbits, hen and goats among other things. They also give examples of how they would use writing in the case of a loan between friends. One women says:

- If it is little money we will give it without writing. If it is much we will write. I can do that. I will remember but still I will write. I know how to write numbers, also big sums.

On the question on how to use a big sum of money, would he get one, one man says:

- I can count, buy things. Most of the counting I will do in my head but I also know how to write. If I would get 30 000 RFr I would perhaps use 10 000 to buy a bicycle. Then I would take 5000 to buy a stem of bananas that are not yet ripe. Then I would buy other things that can be sold. I would write down and understand how much I had spent and see how much I have earned. There is also a cost to keep the bananas until they are ripe [to be sold]⁸.

⁵ All interviews were carried out by the evaluator with the help of an interpreter från ADEPR. The evaluator used Swahili which is a language only some of the interviewees understand. Thus the interpreter translated into Kinyarwanda. Most of the interviewees answered in Kinyarwanda which was then translated to Swahili by the interpreter. The interviews were recorded and transcribed. The translation to English in this text is made by the evaluator.

⁶ Dollar is the currency of The Republic of Congo while Franc, RFr, is the currency of Rwanda.

⁷ Brackets, (...) are used to show that something has been excluded from what was said by the informant.

⁸ Square brackets, [], are used for explanations added by the evaluator.

One elderly man who joined the literacy course and passed the test in his 70s, says that his wife advised him to concentrate on reading and writing and to leave the mathematics due to his age. Regarding a loan to someone he states:

- Then I need someone who knows more, such as a child, who writes. Then I'll sign. I would keep the paper myself but I have to trust someone else for writing the sums. But people are not trustworthy.

From this we see that learners give many examples of how they have been able to use their mathematics skills. When it comes to reading and writing skills the ability to read the Bible is highly emphasised by most learners. Many of them refer to having been in the darkness and now having come into the light. One young man of 19 years expresses this very vividly. During the whole interview he holds his Bible, turning pages and pointing to it. When he talks his gestures include the Bible.

- Before I found salvation I could not walk with the Bible, but now I've found the salvation and I walk with it and read the words of Good. Then everybody sees that there walks a servant of Good. Until I learned to read I could not benefit from the texts in the sermons. When they said where you should read in the Bible I could not. I am really respected now. Before, if there was any problem I had to ask somebody to help me to write. Now they can ask me. This really gives you respect.

The impact of reading and writing skills seem to be more indirectly. Two young traders explain the importance of literacy skills in trading. They are organised in a cooperative together with other traders where they save their money. The cooperative has a chairperson, a secretary and a cashier. For all these posts literacy skills are necessary. Many learners express the feeling that they had been cheated before, for example in the trade.

Another important literacy practice connected with health is the use of clinique cards. Pregnant women and infants regularly visit the "clinique", local child and mother welfare centres, where their weight is measured and they are given vaccinations and some health advices. Facts about the pregnancy and infancy are written on the "clinique card" which is kept by the mother.

Impact on the civil society

One literacy practice mentioned as important for many learners is the reading of road signs. This might seem a bit odd in a poor country but it is a fact that there are comparably many road signs in Rwanda. Some of the informants have also experienced refugee, as this man:

- I was an orphan so I never went to school. When we did the test (after the course) I was number one. I got 99 %. I couldn't read at all before. I could write L which is the beginning of my name. When the war came I took off. On the road I was not able to read the road signs. I didn't even dare to ask somebody about anything as I had not been to school.

That people write and receive letters is apparent but seems not to be very frequent. Many express concern of being able to read letters without the help of others. Reasons given are that one wants to keep ones secrets, that other people tend to cheat you and the feeling of shame. Another man expresses the bad feeling of depending on other persons:

- They might say that they had no time while I was in a hurry. Then perhaps the recipient complained that I was late.

The importance of being able to read is expressed by a man

- Perhaps I stood somewhere where there was a sign telling that you were not allowed to stand there.

A woman, who grew up as an orphan, expresses the impact the literacy learning has had on her life:

- I'm very grateful as many things have changed. I was totally in darkness but now when I've learned I've been appointed as evangelist. Thus I've been very blessed. Then I've seen that I can help others. And the ones that I teach [She is now a group leader in the project] are happy as they learn. In a meeting I become happy when I see that those that I've taught hold the Bible. Now I'm respected. They don't count me among the fools anymore. I'm also glad that I'm a woman among the other evangelists that are men. Thus I may influence other women to make an effort.

One man refers to his wedding:

- When I was going to marry I wrote down what should be on the invitation cards and gave the note to the printing office. But I had written it myself.

An old man gives another example of the use of literacy practice.

- Before I could read and write I could have received a letter where I was called by the police [without understanding it]. Now I can be ready and prepare myself⁹.

Empowerment

The importance of literacy skills for the self-esteem and for the perception of status and respect is expressed by many informants. They express the feeling of shame they had before learning to read and write. Many give the example of how they feel ashamed when having to ask somebody to read a personal letter for example. A woman expresses the way she feels more respected now:

⁹ It should be remembered that this takes place in the context of reconciliation after the genocide. On this very day a gacaca, the local trial, was held in this village. This make this example in real in its highest degree.

- Before I could read and write I participated in meetings but I didn't understand well what was said but now I do so they have chosen me to be the leader for the women in my area. I could not have been chosen before but now I may be chosen as a leader.

The importance of literacy for empowerment is expressed by another woman:

- Before I thought literacy was bad. I felt insecure and was afraid of showing myself (in front of other people) because I was in the dark but now we have learned that we may even vote. Even we women. Now I feel that also I can be a leader in the society.

One man explains with feeling the shame he felt when he was going to propose to a girl and had to ask someone to write the letter for him and also to read the answer he received for him.

-This is shameful as this is a secret between two persons.

One man explains how he earlier had tried to hide his illiteracy, pretending he knew how to read and write. He says that when he finally decided to join a literacy course, people were surprised and he had had to confess that he had only been pretending.

- When I found salvation it was shameful when they asked me to read a part at a meeting so that I had to confess that I couldn't. Then I felt very much ashamed but now I know and I can read to others.

Another situation where literacy proficiency is perceived as important is at the wedding ceremony when one is supposed to read from a document. This is given as an example by many of the learners of a situation when it is shameful not to be able to read by oneself. The feeling of being more respected after having learnt to read and write is expressed by many of the learners. A man says:

- Nobody can cheat me today. If they'll say things that are not true I'll realise. I can write down and read and see what is written. I have grown personally. When I didn't know I was despised but now I'm the one that knows how to read and write. I know that even if they have studied at secondary school.

An old man expresses the importance of literacy for his respect:

- Why, if someone had written to me I would have had to ask someone (to read) and then they would have been able to know my secrets. Now I'm respected in another way as they know that I can read and write.

Impact on the Pentecostal church

It is apparent that the project has positive impact on the Pentecostal church in Rwanda, ADEPR. The high value that is given literacy and particularly the didactics and didactic materials of PANA gives positive associations to ADEPR. The fact that

many individuals have learned basic literacy skills under the organisation of ADEPR gives the church and the organisation positive status. The positive outcome of the project has officially been recognised by UNESCO, who awarded the Honoris Diploma and a medal to PANA for their work in 2002. The fact that representatives from the government in some regions have shown their appreciation for the project also shows the high value given to PANA, and following this also to ADEPR. One example of how the connection between the project and ADEPR may be perceived is given by one of the Region coordinators. He says that a pastor in the Catholic church had become worried when he saw the good outcomes of literacy courses run by the Pentecostal church. As he realised the impact on the church he was concerned that people might prefer also to attach themselves to the Pentecostal church instead of to the Catholic church. He then had decided to pay the literacy teachers in his church a small sum of money.

In the alphabetisation project there is a strong connection between proselytising and alphabetisation, as shown earlier. Thus one may assume that the project, apart from teaching individuals to read and write, also attracts individuals positively to the Pentecostal church and ADEPR. The amount of resources in the project probably strengthens this effect.

A problem expressed by some of the coordinators and leaders is that some pastors in ADEPR do not realise the importance of PANA and thus do not commit themselves fully to the project. Some pastors are said to see their own task primarily as a spiritual one and not as a developing. The project coordinator in PANA says:

- They do not understand that also the person's physical well-being is crucial. If someone is sick or hungry and is not able to see any means for the future, he or she is not interested in salvation. Thus PANA is very important for the church.

One may assume that the resources in the project that come from Sweden have a persuasive effect in this case. Should the resources from abroad be withdrawn the reluctance from some leaders to emphasise alphabetisation could become a weakness.

The impact of the Pentecostal church on alphabetisation

As has been shown earlier, there is also an impact of the Pentecostal church on the alphabetisation carried out through PANA. The main reason given by leaders in PANA for alphabetisation is that people should be able to read the Bible. Also in the primers the relation to the Bible and the Christian message is obvious. However, in the context of Rwanda, in the context of reconciliation and with many individuals suffering from traumas and stress in different ways, the message from the Pentecostal church, with its strong emphasis on devotion, apparently has soothing effects. The interviewed people express very clearly that they appreciate both the salvation and the reading of the Bible. Apparently the connection between the Pentecostal message and literacy has had positive effects on them.

However, it is important to remember that only very few of the learners were interviewed (28 out of more than 50 000 that have passed the test). Only two of those who have dropped out were interviewed and only two from outside the Pentecostal

church.. Presumably there are also individuals who have chosen not to join a group because of the Pentecostal gospel in it. However, although these voices are not heard in this evaluation, one may remember that there is many organisations working with alphabetisation in Rwanda. Although in some areas PANA may be the only one available and although the didactics in PANA may be more relevant and efficient than many others', the problems of connection between alphabetisation and proselytising in PANA would not be perceived as a major one. As long as the number of individuals who do not know how to read and write is high, the fact that the courses attract many learners and that many pass the final test is very positive.

One important factor regarding the Pentecostal church, mentioned earlier, is the degree of commitment. Believers in the Pentecostal church are devoted in their belief and this influences their worldview in different ways. One way is that there is a strong feeling of consensus among Pentecostals. This may sometimes restrict reflection in the way that people tend to agree without discussions and argumentations. This may result in a naïve belief also in the good results of activities done inside the Pentecostal church that are not per definition religious, such as alphabetisation. An effect of this is that followers are quick to find positive results and to cheer them. This does not encourage reflection, particularly not critical reflection. This may also result in a created sense of *we* and *them* which may exclude non-believers or followers of other churches from for example the alphabetisation courses.

Sustainability of the project

When considering the sustainability of PANA, two different aspects are important. The first one is the sustainability of the project, even after the withdrawal of Swedish aid, and the second one is the sustainability of the achieved literacy skills.

Regarding the sustainability after withdrawal of aid from Sweden, this is not an aspect that is easy to clarify. Resources in the form of economic aid are extremely influential on outcomes. According to my opinion this is very much so inside the Pentecostal church with its strong focus on belief and devotedness. The example of Burundi, where a similar project now is supposed to continue without foreign aid, shows that the disappointment that may be experienced by those involved may diminish the possibilities for sustainability. One complicating factor is the unwillingness to admit such feelings explicitly. In Rwanda, both the leaders in ADEPR and PANA are very firm on the importance of commitment among the believers and that the task should be carried out as a call.. Thus the resistance from the leaders in Burundi (that were experienced at the seminar in December 2006) to continue the project on their own, was not expressed openly but understood implicitly by the representatives from PMU InterLife. Also in the case of PANA and ADEPR, on all levels, from the Project monitor to group leaders, most people stress indirectly the need for incentives.

The implicitness of the issue of salaries and incentives has resulted in rumours going around, mainly among group leaders and literacy trainers about *some* leaders getting incentives but not others. The hoes that were distributed at some time to group leaders seem to have caused many rumours about who have received and who have not as well as speculations about the reasons for this.

Technically a project of this kind, organised inside an existing organisation, building on people's commitment and voluntary work, has a good potential for sustainability. The problem is mainly a question of attitude, but attitudes are very difficult to direct. Also in this case individuals' own personal life and their perception of developmental opportunities, will determine, to a high extent, the outcome. The fact that there seems to be a hidden conflict between explicitly expressed commitment to carry out a call and implicitly expressed longing for economic resources, makes the problem more intricate.

If PANA manages to create a strong commitment not only among evangelists and local leaders, but also among leading persons in ADEPR, and among leading pastors around the country, the conditions for sustainability for the project seems to be good. However, the level of commitment in the alphabetisation task among leaders in ADEPR will be essential and determining for the result.

If we turn to the sustainability of the acquired literacy skills, other factors are important. Although the results of PANA are extremely impressive, given the available resources, one has to remember that we are talking of a weak literacy of a restricted type. Those who have passed the test have only, in the best case, acquired basic literacy skills. The society they live in is very weak concerning literacy and the literacy practices used among people are extremely few. This means that people do not read or write much. Whether they calculate is more difficult to estimate. One may presume that only few make calculations that they need paper and pen to carry out. Neither do they naturally find many uses of literacy. The informants in the evaluation, on all levels, do not give a wide variety of literacy events they are involved in; neither do they express a wide range of literacy practices. The strong conviction on importance of literacy for Bible studies does not extend much to other literacy practices. For most people, also most of the leaders in the project that were interviewed, literacy practices connected for example to learning, seeking or saving information, reporting, communicating and planning seem not to be frequent.

This shows us that the literacy skills created by PANA are restricted and that the literacy environment this is inscribed in is also restricted and thus very fragile. To make this sustainable much has to be done. Some can be done inside PANA but most has to be done by other actors in Rwanda. To build a strong literacy environment in Rwanda work has to be done at different levels. First more people have to achieve basic literacy skills. Then a strong effort has to be put into primary school education. However, to make the literacy skills sustainable, an effort has also to be made to create a literacy environment. Essential is to create what we may call post literacy activities, that is to give people reasons to continue developing their literacy skills by using them for the development of their own lives. People need to get the possibility to change their lives by using literacy, such as reading to learn about essential ways to develop their lives and to get the opportunity to read for pleasure, to read to get information and to remember. They need to get advice on how to write to plan, to write to keep things in memory and to communicate. This is a task for the whole society to become a literate society, and it is a task that may be involved in future activities of PANA. This will be further considered in the conclusions and suggestions.

In PANA V there are plans to develop what is called vocational training. In the plans it is expected that this will have as a result “that illiteracy will continue to fall down as former illiterate people will be showing the difference in their lives and conditions”. Unfortunately, this does not seem to be sustainable. Plans are made to start 15 centres, for leavers from the basic course. Together with a group leader they are planned to learn either tailoring, gardening and cookery, or wood working. However, learning these skills is probably not focussed on literacy skills. Furthermore, someone who intends to become a tailor or a carpenter, has to achieve advanced skills. Usually achieving a basic level demands a full time course of at least two years, after having passed primary school. Skills such as to learn to use a sewing machine demands hours of practice, which is barely possible in a course of a few hour per week and the access to one or two sewing machines. To be able to cut cloth for example for a school uniform or a dress demands much training. Perhaps a few, very talented persons will be able to learn through these restricted courses. However, for the majority of the learners who have passed, these courses will probably not give enough training to enable craftsmanship.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This evaluation set out to explore the impact of the literacy work carried out through PANA V. It focussed on clarifying effects such as empowerment and poverty reduction in relation to the civil society. Two specific objectives were to evaluate the methodological approach and the didactic materials and to evaluate the sustainability of the project.

Although the focus of the evaluation has been PANA V, the project has been evaluated in its context, as one in a series of five projects located in Rwanda ten years after the war and genocide. The conclusion will consider future plans in this field.

The evaluator has striven to create a holistic picture of the effects of the project, although the given time for the evaluation was short. Only three weeks were spent in the field study and only ten days in the actual field. Although there were some organisational and logistic problems, as is common when carrying out a study like this in a poor country, many literacy sites were visited and quite many participators were interviewed.

The overall impression from the study is overwhelmingly positive. So many people commit themselves in this task of teaching Rwandans reading, writing and numeracy. Despite harsh conditions learners strive to learn and group leaders devote themselves to the task. Many leaders on different levels try their very best to manage their difficult and demanding task.

The main objective was to explore the impact of the project on poverty reduction, particularly on empowerment and strategies for everyday life. Women were to be regarded particularly. From the results it is clear that the project has a strong, positive impact both on poverty reduction and empowerment of marginalised groups. Among those who have benefited from the alphabetisation are mainly women. Unfortunately, when it comes to leaders in PANA, who may also be said to have benefited from the project, only a small minority is women. This is something that is recommended that it be reconsidered inside the organisation. As a majority of the targeted learners are

women, and as the economic and social situation of women in Rwanda is generally weak, this is a question that I recommend the Pentecostal church and ADEPR to look particularly into. With many women being single breadwinners of their households, it is important that also women get access to positions that may bring benefits of different kind.

It is also clear that the project has positive effects for the civil society. In the present situation in Rwanda, during the process of reconciliation and rapid progress, basic education for the poor majority is a democratic issue. In a country with a plethora of internet-café's in the capital and a small minority that use cars and mobile-telephones to communicate nation-wide, it is of outmost importance that the majority acquires basic education, of which literacy is a central part.

To strengthen the civil society in Rwanda literacy is important. One central issue is then that Rwanda develops toward becoming a country where literacy is used for the benefit of the citizens and it is a democratic issue that all citizens get an opportunity to participate. Crucial for this is that strong efforts are put into primary schools nation-wide. Literacy projects for adults, like PANA, may only complement these efforts, but they constitute important and necessary complements. Other relevant ways to promote literacy are campaigns in Radio and TV and through cultural events such as festivals, music and theatre. News papers, magazines and books are natural parts of such campaigns as well as adult education.

As stated under the results not much can be said about the didactics in this evaluation. On the whole the methodology and the materials fill their function well and receive a high reputation. As people learn to read and write under very simple conditions, obviously the approach is appropriate. A few suggestions may be given from the study:

- Focus groups leaders' attention on clearness, that they show very clearly what is to be read. Good structuring is probably of great importance for many learners.
- Make clear what is tested in the tests and consider the possibility to use a holistic test that would be more congruent with the methodology. The possibility to use only one grade, *pass*, would enable a more practical test, such as reading a short, relevant text, writing something relevant and solving practical mathematic problems. Avoid tests that demand school knowledge.
- Avoid using metaphors such as "fight against illiteracy" and connections between illiteracy/literacy and darkness/light. It is not true that illiteracy causes bad things and that literacy only brings good.
- Be prepared that it may be more difficult in the future to achieve the goals as it may be the case that the early learners were the ones who achieved easily. The goal of "literacy in six month" in PANA will probably hold only for some learners but also those who do not manage in six months need literacy skills.

A third objective was to secure sustainability. As for sustainability of the project in itself, and of the literacy process, the main conclusion is that there is a good potential. The commitment and devotedness among many involved in PANA proves good. One weakness is individual leaders in ADEPR who do not see this as an important task for the Pentecostal church in Rwanda. Other weaknesses are the unwillingness to mention

explicitly the wish, for example among group leaders, to get some kind of incentive and the fear of losing believers by cooperation with other organisations. A higher degree of transparency in this issue would probably solve some irritations and tensions.

As for the sustainability of the literacy skills much may be done to improve. The acquired skills seem to be comparably relevant. The level achieved, and the level tested, may be defined as *basic literacy skills*, consisting of basic reading, writing and numeracy skills. However, these skills are very restricted and there is a high risk that the skills will decline, which means that there is a high risk that people will forget how to read and write because of lack of exercising.

From these conclusions a few suggestions for future development will be given.

SUGGESTIONS

The focus of the suggestions is to promote that people develop more literacy practices. This means that they develop more ways to use reading, writing and numeracy in their coping strategies for their daily life. To enable people to develop ways of using literacies that are relevant for them, it is important that a variety of literacy practices are promoted in ways that enable individuals to apply them in their own daily life. Three suggestions on how this could be done will be given.

Cooperatives for leaders

The question of how to strengthen group leaders in PANA has been discussed during the field study. These discussions have mainly been initiated by the Project Coordinator of ADEPR, Mr Kubwimama. His suggestion for the perceived problems of lack of incentives for group leaders and cooperation with, alternatively perceived threat from, other organisations in the alphabetisation field, is that group leaders organise themselves in cooperatives. One example is the way group leaders in the Buhoro region have organised themselves in an association. Through the association they can support each other in both the alphabetisation task and in economic issues. As an organisation they can market themselves and they can negotiate with different organisations about conditions.

In the case there are incentives available these should, according Kubwimama, be handled by the organisation and shared equally by the members. In Buhoro, for example, money given by the government was put into the account of the organisation and used to buy goats, who were given out to members. Part of the results from the goat keeping was then returned to the organisation. This is a relevant way to support leaders by giving them tools to support themselves. However, to enable this, they need support in the form of education in issues such as organisation building, project planning and simple book keeping. Practical courses for the group leaders on these issues could prove very positive for the sustainability of the project. This would be a way to handle the conflict between commitment and for incentives. This would also be a way to combine the acknowledged relevant teaching methods of PANA and recourses made available for example through the government.

Study groups

The suggestion of creating cooperatives for group leaders is related to this second suggestion, to form study groups of learners. One problem of PANA is the problem of sustainability of the achieved literacy skills. As stated earlier, the literacy acquired by the learners in the project is restricted and fragile. To promote its development and strengthening, literacy practices of different kinds, should be encouraged. People need to get the opportunity to use reading, writing and numeracy as tools to develop their own lives. This may easily be combined with the development of basic life skills. A suggestion is that course leavers are encouraged to form study groups. These groups need not necessarily be identical with the earlier study groups. Groups formed by individuals that are connected to each others in different ways, are more likely to succeed. Natural groups, such as neighbours, women groups, groups of farmers, groups for different events¹⁰, religious groups, age groups, economic groups and the like are usually very suitable also for this type of activities. Each group should not be less than five persons and not exceed 15, to make them easy to manage. This grouping should build on local, traditional ways of people grouping themselves and could be encouraged through sensitising seminars. Basic organisational knowledge could be taught, such as the advantage of planning meetings, writing an agenda, writing down the minutes and keeping a cashier book. This is at the same time one way of promoting literacy practices that people may use in their daily lives.

To support these groups in their studies, simple booklets on basic life skills could be produced. The production of these books would not have to be expensive as most of the knowledge is probably already available inside ADEPR and PANA. Some examples of content that may be relevant for the books are:

- Basic book-keeping
- Basic project planning on local basis
- Health issues, such as issues related to HIV/AIDS, nutrition, sanitary issues, the prevention of diseases such as malaria, cholera and bilharzias
- Family planning
- Child care
- Farming and cattle keeping, for example agro forestry and breeding
- Water harvesting
- Basic citizen skills, such as laws and regulations and human rights issues

The groups could then meet for example once a week and study one book at a time. One example of how this could be arranged is that two of the group members read the book in advance and prepare themselves. The book may then be read out loud in the group. This way of using books is familiar for followers of the Pentecostal church who have got used to read the religious books together. Then the members could discuss relevant issues from the book. If they have questions they do not manage to solve they could write them down. Then the literacy trainer, for example, could visit each group once a month and discuss their questions. In the case also he fails to

¹⁰ These can be for example groups of women who help each other in the case of funeral, wedding or child birth.

answer the question he could bring it further and try to find a solution. The whole idea with study groups could be initiated through sensitising seminars. It may be very cost effective and is a relevant way to promote literacy practices and education in life skills.

This type of study groups would actualize the need for female leaders, as many group members would be women and some of the relevant issues they would not discuss with a man, such as family planning and issues of HIV/AIDS.

Literacy for personal, cultural and social functions

There are other literacy practices that may be developed and that mainly have cultural and social effects, rather than direct economic effects. Among these are literacy practices that are related to emotions, beliefs and cultural and ethic issues. In Rwanda, situated in a world of globalisation and high pressure from Western countries, there are an abundance of oral traditions that are important for people but that probably run the risk to be devaluated, marginalised and perhaps eradicated. Some of these may be saved and perhaps get new usage through literacy. This may be for example poetry, songs, proverbs and sayings. Probably there are also local myths, tales, chronicles, genealogies and historic stories. To write this down would be an important contribution to the process of creating a new Rwanda for the third millennium. Apart from saving what might otherwise run the risk of loss, this could constitute an important contribution to a Rwandan literature. To have a national treasure in the written form that is described here, could prove very important in the reconciliation process and for the future. This may have positive influence on the civil society in many ways and is a way to empower local and traditional values, which must be perceived as important for a poor African country in the future.

Also this type of literacy, preserving and developing oral traditions, may be organised in the forms of groups. In Sweden similar groups have been successfully organised to stimulate and help people search for the local history and to preserve cultural treasures. In connection with development in poor countries, such as Rwanda, this side of life is not often high lighted, but it is important to remember that poverty, war and traumas do not diminish the need for spiritual wellbeing, on the contrary. In the situation of distress and traumatic experiences, the importance of cultural and social sides of life is significant. In an organisation such as the Pentecostal church, with its high emphasis on spiritual issues, this might be particularly relevant.

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Appendice 2

List of interviews and observations

Field visits included visits to the north-east, Umutara region, north-west, Ruhengeri and Gisenyi regions and north-south, Gitarama, Butare, Buhoro and Gikongoro regions. Base for the field study was the guest house of ADEPR in Kigali.

During the field study interviews were carried out with the following persons:

- 28 learners, four of them passed the test some years ago, two of them were not followers of the Pentecostal church and two had not yet passed the test
- 11 group leaders, one of them not a follower of the Pentecostal church
- 6 literacy trainers, *formateurs* (group leaders)
- 4 Regional coordinators

Apart from this, discussions with the Project Monitor of PANA, the Project Coordinator of ADEPR, the Head of social affairs department of ADEPR and the driver of PANA, were held throughout the field study. During the initial seminar in Burundi discussions were carried out with the representants from PMU InterLife, from CEPBU, CEPAC and Acotka-Sulo).

Observations were made at ceremonies connected with distribution of literacy certificates, in churches, at the office of PANA, in homes of leaders and at group sessions.

Artefacts that were studied were primers, books, timetables for ceremonies, notebooks and tests.