

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background to the research

Since the late nineteen-fifties it has been recognised in development circles that the circumstances faced by poor women need to be addressed. The recognition of the key strategic role of women has been reflected in the policies, projects and programmes for providing development aid to the Third World. There has consequently been a shift in Third World development policies: from modernisation policies, basic needs strategies and redistribution, to structural adjustment policies. These shifts have also been reflected in a thorough rethinking of women's role in development (Moser 1991: 161).

Literacy has increasingly come to be recognised as a crucial first step in a process of enabling women to play their significant role. The question then becomes one of quality: what is an effective literacy programme? It is here that the place of evaluation becomes central. Within evaluation circles there has been a move from purely summative evaluation to formative evaluation. Evaluations have thereby gained an important role as providers of information on how to *improve* the programme. They are therefore no longer merely used to justify the programme or report its success or failure, but they seek to provide avenues for achieving the best out of a programme. If this holds true, then it becomes even more essential that the evaluation be performed in a gender informed manner. Many international organisations are committed to a gender aware development approach, however when it comes to evaluation there is often a surprising lack of rigour on the question of gender (Medel-Anonuevo 1999a: 2). Therefore this study is an attempt to highlight the importance of gender input in evaluation, which in turn can offer a critical contribution to the discussion about how to ensure that literacy training programmes could become more gender relevant. It becomes important then to investigate who is doing the evaluations, the circumstances under which they are being conducted, and their underlying theoretical assumptions. Any such analysis of

the politics of evaluation will need to include within its scope at very least, the women whom the programme is meant to benefit, the local community, the training providers, the funders and the evaluators. The roles and relationships within such a constellation of actors will need clarification, and the particular role of evaluation itself requires description and analysis.

Many literacy programmes indeed do understand themselves as having a commitment to furthering gender equality by means of education. They might also describe specific initiatives to address the issue of gender disempowerment. However, when it comes to evaluation, gender aspects of a programme are often overlooked. Consequently, the gender objectives often do not correspond with the organisation's evaluation practices, a phenomenon that is in need of explanation and analysis. Related problems include the need for an agreed understanding of what "women's empowerment" means in literacy projects, and how progress in empowerment can be measured.

1.2 Defining the research problem and formulation of a hypothesis

Evaluation reports can play an important role in furthering gender awareness in development circles. Evaluations are a means to improve a programme's future performance and potential impact on the society. If analysis with regard to gender is overlooked, then the outcome of a programme will of necessity be dependent solely on perfectly gender aware planning and implementation. However, as practice has shown, gender aware planning and implementation are very difficult, and projects often do not end up making any significant a difference in this regard, or at times even leave the women worse off than before (Whitehead 1991: 68, Medel-Anonuevo 1999b: 3, Longwe 1999a: 22). Bearing this in mind, the current research is an attempt to gain greater understanding of evaluation practices of literacy programmes, and to highlight the critical importance of gender in such evaluation (in chapter 4). It hopes to contribute to a greater gender awareness in evaluation and reporting procedures of development projects as well as offering a critical reading of existing evaluations.

In spite of a stated awareness of the need to address the question of gender, evaluations often fail to address the issues raised by gender studies. Even though gender specific data may be collected and reported upon, the research instruments used often do not have the capacity to answer questions of empowerment specifically with regard to women. Furthermore, standard evaluation handbooks provide significantly little practical guidance on how to address them. Gender usually appears to be a vague appendage and is not integrated into the main structure or the objectives.

An obvious hypothesis then for a study of the role of gender in the evaluation of literacy programmes is that such evaluations will usually exhibit significant deficiencies with regard to gender. Establishing *reasons* for this phenomenon is however the more important challenge. Here account will need to be taken of the complex relationship between policy-making and programme evaluation. In terms of the political emphasis on the necessity of local involvement (cf. section 3.2), some of those involved in these two aspects are inevitably drawn from the country where the programme is conducted. These local specialists are usually incorporated into a network of international policy and evaluation specialists. Social scientists have over the past decade come to characterise such interest driven networks as “transnational civil society” (Haynes 2001) or “transnational social movements” (Timmermann 2002, and for further bibliography Westby 2002: 1). Careful examination of the roles of the various actors – policy makers, gender activists, curriculum writers and research specialists – then becomes a way of gaining more precise understanding of the politics of evaluation. A feature of such loose associations is that although there will be a certain degree of shared direction, important differences of interest and emphasis are likely to emerge. The UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE), staffed with adult education specialists mainly from developing countries, has over the past two decades established itself as a key facilitator in bringing together people and ideas in the fields of literacy and gender (see below, section 1.3). The nature and degree of its involvement in evaluation could vary from evaluation to evaluation.

A reasonable hypothesis would then be that there is a relationship between the seriousness with which gender is taken into account in an evaluation and the level of involvement by transnational civil society, particularly where the latter has a strong

emphasis on gender. The research objective would thus be to examine, from a gender perspective, the implementation process of more than one literacy programme evaluation, and then to compare them.

1.3 Method of research

Because of the complexity of the social field being examined the study will of necessity be exploratory and qualitative, in that it will seek to understand how an institution like the UIE exercises an influence on the practice of literacy evaluation, particularly when considered from a gender perspective. In order to study the role of the UIE it will be necessary to examine in detail the nature of the interaction between the UIE and specific literacy evaluations. Within such processes there will be several “actors”: gender and literacy networks, policy makers, writers of evaluation handbooks, and evaluators themselves. “Actors” is here used in a collective sense (cf. Merkel 1994). Actors drawn into a relationship with each other by means of combinations of shared and contrasting interests are described as a “constellation of actors” (Merkel 1994: 316-17). Such a conceptual framework can be applied to studying the roles of the various actors within a particular programme evaluation constellation. It draws attention to the need to pinpoint both their shared interests and the places where actors’ interests differ.

The evaluation reports themselves will serve as a starting point for identifying the major actors with regard to a particular evaluation. For example, it will be important to know who the evaluators were, their background, gender, relationship to the UIE, and so on. The next task will be to examine the role that gender plays in the contribution of each of the various actors. Careful attention will be devoted to finding out where differences in emphasis exist. If these are noticeable differences, they can then serve as a starting point for exploring the role of each party.

One possible method for obtaining the necessary data for such a study could be to interview a representative sample of each of the categories of actors. This would result in data that largely reflected the views of individuals at the time when they

were interviewed. Such a cross-sectional study would also require a considerable travel budget for a researcher and, more importantly, only have limited explanatory capacity. Evaluations take place under circumstances that differ significantly from one to the next. Furthermore, UIE's role in evaluation cannot be expected to remain static. Only if its policies and practices did not change over time, then it would be possible to generalise on the basis of information drawn only from contemporary interviews. This is however not the case. A literature survey of the changing trends in the UIE with regard to both evaluation (below, chapter 3) and gender (below, chapter 2) will be sufficient to demonstrate the risk of such assumptions. It is only in studying concrete evaluation projects that there can emerge data that is both reliable and relevant to a study of the UIE's role.

Evaluations take place over time and also within very fluid contexts of evolving policies and practices. A longitudinal study would have the advantage of making it possible to trace these processes in relation to the various actors. In the present case there is a considerable amount of documentary data which has been produced by the key actors in the form of policy documents, collected essays, evaluation handbooks, and the evaluations. Such documents are usually the products of negotiation and revision by more than one person, and hence have a greater degree of representativity than would be the case with individual interviews. Of course, had it been feasible to interview people who were involved in the evaluations, this could have provided valuable supplementary data.

The present study, in confining itself to manageable parameters, will be based on a qualitative analysis of documentary data produced by groups of people in particular circumstances. In this sense it is an empirical study which relies on the qualitative interpretation of documentary data (cf. Mouton 1996: 110-111). A longitudinal and comparative study of this kind is what Babbie calls *historical/comparative analysis* (1994: 328-336).

Because the field of research is diachronic it will be necessary to trace emerging trends within the UIE with regard to gender policy, adult literacy and to programme evaluation. Therefore, this study will include an extensive review of literature in

these fields (see below under chapters 2 and 3). In order to avoid unnecessary repetition these matters will be dealt with properly in due course.

Secondary literature is an invaluable source of information needed to follow historically the ways in which the UIE has developed its policies and sought to exercise its influence. A literature study would however on its own have been unable to provide the kind of information needed to discuss the UIE's role in literacy evaluation. The problem of the policy - implementation gap would still have been unclear. Neither could such a survey have done much more than indirectly address the hypothesis of a causal relationship between the amount of emphasis on gender in an evaluation and the degree of involvement in the evaluation team by specialists, local and international, who are strongly committed to a gender perspective. Such a hypothesis is best explored by using the texts produced by the UIE actors themselves: their policy documents, their guides to literacy evaluation, and the evaluation reports themselves.

For all their worth as sources of empirical data from specific actors, it must be recognised that these documents are official publications which select and present information for their own favoured audiences. One cannot simply trust their accuracy, and possibilities of bias in this primary data will need to be investigated (Babbie 1994: 333). If they are to serve as reliable sources it will therefore be necessary to subject them to critical scrutiny. Such analytical methods will be drawn mainly from Gender Studies (cf. below in this section). Furthermore, this primary data will need corroboration (1994: 334). A historical survey of secondary literature in the fields of gender and literacy evaluation (chapters 2 & 3) will serve to explain as well as corroborate the primary data.

As already mentioned, it will be necessary to consider more than one literacy programme evaluation. Comparison between them will make it possible to identify similarities and differences in the way in which the actors within the particular constellation make their contribution. Only on the basis of such comparison will it be possible to offer generalisations from the interpreted data and to come to any conclusions about the role of the UIE in relation to the question of gender and literacy programme evaluation.

At the heart of the present study will be an analysis of two evaluations conducted: the Literacy Programme, Oyo Province, Nigeria (1989-1990), and the National Literacy Programme, Namibia (1994-1995). Both evaluations were carried out in association with the Hamburg based UIE. The present study will use these materials as the means of obtaining its concrete data. This will be done by analysing the evaluation reports: *Literacy, Tradition and Progress. Enrolment and Retention in an African Rural Literacy Programme* (Omolewa et al 1998) and *“Free to Speak Up”. Overall Evaluation of the National Literacy Programme in Namibia* (Lind 1996).

The objective will then be, from a gender perspective, to discover how such evaluation was done, how information is prioritised, and how certain kinds of silence in information are never problematised. In other words, the present study is like taking a photograph of someone else who is her/himself taking a photograph. The primary concern is the relationship between the photographer and her/his object of interest. “What is the angle they are using?”, “how is the picture composed?”, “what is left out?”, become the leading questions. Application of such a set of hermeneutical categories makes it possible to bring evaluation into relation with policy on gender. An institution that has been involved both in policy making *and* to a certain extent in evaluation, is an obvious place to begin such an enquiry.

This study has therefore chosen to focus attention on the role played by the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE). With an emphasis on adult education, the UIE has emerged over the past two decades as one of the leading agencies both in the field of adult literacy and as a significant lobby for greater gender awareness (Medel-Anonuevo 1999b: 2). What makes them particularly interesting for this study is that their work encompasses a spectrum of activity: from theoretical reflection and political lobbying through to the publication and dissemination of evaluation reports. This institute, with its headquarters in Hamburg and a staff of usually around eight consultants, organises meetings which bring together policy makers, practitioners and theoreticians. These deliberations, which usually contain some degree of internal diversity, are then edited into books for wider dissemination. Practical manuals on how to conduct evaluations of literacy projects have been published, and they have managed to focus attention on the importance of evaluation by their annual award to

the most significant evaluations, which are then published by the UIE. Some of their staff have also participated in evaluation teams in co-operation with other agencies.

Their very significant role in generating and influencing theoretical discourses surrounding adult literacy and gender has been documented (Tuijnman & Boström 2002: 93-110; UNESCO Institute for Education 2002: 46-51). The way in which this thinking has actually influenced the evaluation practice is a field which has, however, not yet received adequate attention, which is the justification for the present study.

The reason for choosing specifically these two evaluations lay in that they each deal with a literacy programme in Africa. As is well documented, women are here even more severely disadvantaged by illiteracy than men. Therefore, any programme that aims to address illiteracy will need to be planned, implemented and evaluated in a gender aware manner. Literacy programmes have also an important mission as vehicles for democratic values and redressing inequality among men and women. Thereby, empowerment becomes often one of the central objectives of a literacy programme. However it would be a fallacy to believe that every literacy programme is empowering. Therefore gender critical evaluations are a very important link for achieving literacy programmes that are truly empowering for women. A successful literacy programme, in gender terms, will further women's access to economic, legal, cultural and political power. One of the objectives of Development Studies therefore is to analyse the relationship between literacy programmes and their stated objectives of empowerment and civic education. An important function of evaluations is therefore to look rigorously at these issues so that the projects will be more likely to have an empowering effect, as is indeed often the stated expectation of these programmes.

The assumption is that evaluation documents, while providing us with a refracted perspectives of actual programmes, when critically analysed, will provide us with information about the priorities of the evaluators themselves. Evaluation reports produced by consortia, as is the case with the reports under consideration, will inevitably reflect a process of negotiation. Critical analysis of the text is essential in

order to enable the researcher to understand the role of gender within such a text. In this way a text becomes a source of empirical social data.

In order to explore such a complex set of local and international relationships, a study of actual evaluation reports is an important place to begin. The specific methods of evaluation employed there will be compared to UNESCO's own evaluation guidelines for literacy projects: UIE Handbooks and References Books 3, *Evaluating literacy for development projects, programs and campaigns* by Bhola (1990), and UIE Studies 4, *Sharpening our tools; improving evaluation in adult and nonformal education* by Peter A. Easton (1996). A study of these works has a dual function. Firstly, as widely recognised examples of good practice in the field of guides to literacy evaluation, they could provide a technical means of assessing the evaluations themselves. And secondly, and even more importantly, an analysis of these handbooks in relation to questions of gender could illustrate a diversity of emphasis between the various interest groups within the UIE and in their relationship to UNESCO.

Another important source of evidence needed for a properly nuanced picture is the UNESCO policy concerning gender equality (UNESCO 1995a, 1995b, 1998, 2000a) and, more specifically, the *Checklist for the Integration of Gender Issues in the Evaluation of UNESCO's Programmes* (UNESCO 1999b) produced by the Paris based Women and Gender Equality Unit. In order to appreciate the particular thrust of these documents, the broad philosophy and approach of UNESCO as an institution to the questions of gender and project evaluation will also need to be taken into consideration. Furthermore, the documents serve an additional function for our purposes, as they too provide important critical tools for a gendered analysis of evaluations. Comparison between their requirements and the selected evaluations, will provide important insight on the differing emphases within the constellation of actors.

Included in the data to be analysed are the two evaluation reports *Literacy, Tradition and Progress. Enrolment and Retention in an African Rural Literacy Programme* (Omolewa et al. 1998) and "*Free to Speak Up*". *Overall Evaluation of the National Literacy Programme in Namibia* (Lind 1996), the two evaluation handbooks

Evaluating literacy for development projects, programs and campaigns by Bhola (1990), and *UIE Studies 4, Sharpening our tools; improving evaluation in adult and nonformal education* by Peter A. Easton (1996) and the *Checklist for the Integration of Gender Issues in the Evaluation of UNESCO's Programmes* (UNESCO 1999b). Each of these categories of text has a specific function and anticipated audience. Furthermore, because they were published over a period of more than a decade it ought to be possible to trace a development over time with regard to a question such as gender. A Historical-Comparative study of the UIE will monitor such shifts, but it will also need to take account of the complex nature of the institution itself.

Acting under the umbrella of UNESCO, the UIE regularly organises workshops which bring a range of people together from NGOs, government departments and universities. Papers presented by no means always reflect unanimity, but they are nevertheless published by the UIE. An important illustration of this inner dialogue within the broader UIE network is the work of Sara Longwe (Longwe 1997, 1999a, 1999b). She will serve to illustrate a particular strand of feminist thought which is at the same time within the spectrum of opinion sanctioned by the UIE and is nevertheless somewhat more radical than the more vague official position. Discussion of her work will however not be confined to clarifying her place as an actor within the constellation. To gain a further feminist heuristic viewpoint, the evaluation reports can be scrutinised by means of the “Women’s Empowerment Framework” which she developed. The framework was created for planning, monitoring and evaluation. It allows users to question an intervention’s transformatory potential. The framework was outlined by Longwe (1991) in an essay, “Gender awareness: the missing element in the Third World development project”. It has been used in the *Oxfam Gender Training Manual* (Williams 1994), and expanded by March, Smyth & Mukhopadhyay (1999). Longwe has also published seminal articles in the field of gender and literacy, which will be discussed in detail below in chapter 3. In this way attention is specifically paid to the different aspects of women’s empowerment in a programme as reported by its evaluations.

A “hermeneutic of suspicion”, which has characterised gender aware scholarship in Development Studies of the past two decades and which finds expression in the Women’s Empowerment Framework, will form the basic methodological orientation

of the present study. Texts will be located within particular socio-political relationships, and therefore not be accepted as neutral. Statements of intention, no matter how laudable, will not be accepted at face value, but subjected to rigorous scrutiny in relation to worrying silences in the text and other elements which undermine the stated intentions. Only in this way will it become possible to reduce the incidence of programmes setting out to improve the lot of women but which have limited or even reverse effects.

Therefore, the research process to be followed will need to include:

1. Critical analysis of UNESCO's and the UIE's policy documents on the question of gender, and a survey of their Evaluation Handbooks.
2. Analysis of Evaluation Reports using the *Checklist for the integration of gender issues in the evaluation of UNESCO's programmes* (UNESCO 1999b). The key terms of reference in this case being: a) planning, implementation and participation, b) relevance, c) effectiveness and efficiency, d) impact, e) recommendations and lessons learnt, f) composition of the team.
3. Analysis of Evaluation Reports using Longwe's "Women's Empowerment Framework". "Levels of equality" are: participation, conscientisation, access and welfare; and will serve as a means of measuring and analysing these texts.

Primary sources of information will be the above-mentioned evaluation policy documents, together with the two evaluation reports, one from Nigeria and one from Namibia. Secondary literature on the role of gender in Development Studies in relation to emerging trends in the field of literacy evaluation will form the theoretical and historical context to our study. The term "gender" refers to socially constructed differences between women and men, as defined in UNESCO documents (UNESCO 1998:1, UNESCO 1999a:i-ii), and discussed in detail below in Chapter 2. "Evaluation" is used in the sense of judging the merit or worth of a development project and as a process of learning and improvement for both funders and beneficiaries (Bhola 1990: 299, Easton 1996: 6, and also discussed in detail below in Chapter 3).

In conclusion, a detailed literary analysis of the evaluation reports, policy documents and evaluation handbooks from the critical methodological perspective of Gender

Studies does have the capacity to provide information about the *roles* of the range of actors involved, including programme participants, trainers, policy makers, and evaluators both local and international. Such deep analysis of texts in their relation to social actors is characteristic of a number of qualitative social sciences approaches used in studies of transnational civil society (cf. esp. Timmermann 2002: 4-11; further on the place of qualitative methods in Development Studies, see below in section 3.2). Gender Studies thus opens up a critical perspective for exploring the nuances of the interaction between the parties in such a way that some explanation can in the end be offered for the disparity between policy and practice. To arrive at some clarity in this regard will require a systematic study of all aspects of that particular element of transnational civil society which is facilitated by the UIE.

1.4 Summary of chapters

The first chapter takes as its point of departure the problem that evaluations of literacy programmes seldom do so from any effective gender perspective. This is often true even where gender is included in the objectives of the programme or in the objectives of the evaluation. In trying to explain this phenomenon it is argued that the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE) serves as a valuable case study in that its work spans both the fields of gender policy formulation and project evaluation.

Chapter two introduces the concept of gender in Development Studies and gives a brief history of the field of women and gender in development. The historical overview will serve to highlight the complexity of achieving development that indeed furthers equality and women's empowerment. Many attempts have been made in the name of addressing women but not all have furthered women's issues, but on the contrary have increased women's burden. Therefore, gender analysis of the two programmes and their evaluation is considered important, and the historical perspective will serve to locate them within the context of gender studies.

Furthermore, the introduction to UNESCO's approach to gender analyses and discourse will give a point of reference to consider the programme and the evaluation in terms of the guidelines and standards set by an internationally recognised organisation standing for women's empowerment. It is not without significance that UNESCO is also a major direction-giving organisation within literacy programme circles, with many years of expertise in the field of literacy. It is also the organisation that furthers international discussion and networking in the field of adult education. We shall see that within its commitment to life long education, literacy education and democratic values teaching have come to play a central role. In this context, UNESCO has introduced its own guidelines for analysing their own programmes from a gender perspective. To gain a sharper feminist point of reference for the current analyses, a Women's Empowerment Framework proposed by Sara Longwe is introduced (Longwe 1991, 1997, 1999a, 1999b). Longwe is one of the voices from Africa that has had a important contribution within the conferences organised by UNESCO's subsidiary organisation, UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE). The role of the latter within this process in generating new directions in women's empowerment is discussed. In this initial overview her framework is introduced in relation to the debate regarding gender within Development Studies. Later, in chapter three, it will be discussed in greater detail within the context of literacy evaluations.

Chapter three discusses briefly the developments within evaluation circles. It introduces some of the debates in the context of literary programme evaluation, which will help to locate the selected evaluations in the context of the discussion of the last 20 years, which will make it possible to contextualise more broadly. Special emphasis is placed on the history of evaluation in relation to development thinking within UNESCO due to its important role in promoting literacy. Furthermore, the Women's Empowerment Framework will be discussed with specific emphasis on literacy programme evaluation.

In chapter four the two evaluation reports are analysed in relation to the broad guidelines for literacy programme evaluations provided by UIE as well as the specific guidelines for integrating gender issues in evaluation of UNESCO. The analysis is then further intensified by scrutinising the evaluation reports by means of the Women's Empowerment Framework in order to shed light upon the empowering

effect on women of both the evaluation and, by inference from the report, the literacy programmes themselves. Such analysis demonstrates how information silenced can be just as valuable as information reported. The Women's Empowerment Framework, it will be argued, is a valuable tool for analysing the evaluation reports in this regard. The logistics of the chapter are such that it starts with the analysis of the Nigerian literacy programme's evaluation, *Literacy, Tradition and Progress. Enrolment and Retention in an African Rural Literacy Programme* (Omolewa et al. 1998), and is followed by the analysis of the Namibian literacy programme's evaluation report, "*Free to Speak Up*". *Overall Evaluation of the National Literacy Programme in Namibia* (Lind 1996). These analyses, using a gender perspective, will be central to gaining an understanding of the function of the various actors, both local and international.

In chapter five, the conclusion, theoretical implications of the findings are discussed, consequences for policy formulation made, and suggestions for further research are outlined.

1.5 Conclusions

The decision to use two evaluation reports as a starting point for exploring the problem of the apparent ineffectiveness of gender policy means that it will be possible to compare the approach taken in the reports to that of the stated guidelines. These reports will therefore be used both to provide information about the literacy programmes, and, by examining their particular methods of evaluation, also provide information about the priorities of evaluators themselves.

This dual function of documentary sources will also be the case with the UIE literacy evaluation handbooks, the UNESCO guidelines on gender in evaluation, and the Women's Empowerment Framework. These texts will be used as critical tools to read the evaluation reports because they are widely recognised as standard works in the Literacy Evaluation field. At the same time this set of texts - UIE guidelines on programme evaluation and the guidelines on gender - will be studied to trace any discontinuities between them, and more importantly, between their perspectives and

those of the compilers of the evaluation reports. It is precisely the analysis of this last relationship that is crucial for the present study. The basic social data provided by analysis of these texts and in their relationships to each other will make it possible both to determine where they might differ and to begin to understand some of the underlying causes of such a phenomenon. The first step in attaining these objectives will be to trace the emergence of a gender perspective as a priority in development discourses, and more specifically within UNESCO and within its subsidiary, the UIE.

CHAPTER 2

Location of the UNESCO approach and the Women's Empowerment Framework in relation to the debate regarding gender in Development Studies

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter it will be necessary to begin with a general survey of trends in the gender field over the past five decades. It will be done by means of following a useful classification developed by Moser (1991) which highlights the extent to which women's needs (practical and strategic) are addressed by various development efforts: welfare, equity, anti-poverty, efficiency and empowerment approach.

This classification reflects the emerging awareness of the importance of women's role in development. Such a study serves as a necessary background for understanding UNESCO's particular role in these developments. UNESCO's long commitment to gender equality has influenced the field of gender studies but it has itself, at the same time also been influenced by these new trends.

One important role of UNESCO is to enhance transnational discussion in the field of gender studies by means of organising conferences in order to get new ideas heard. Sara Longwe is one of these important new voices in the field. She has contributed a valuable tool (the Women's Empowerment Framework) for furthering gender awareness in the field of Development Studies, which will be discussed in general terms in this chapter. The applicability of it to literacy programme evaluation will be discussed in more detail later in chapter three. It is essential however to locate such initiatives within the broad historical sweep of emerging ideas in the field of Women in Development.

2.2 A historical overview of WID (Women in Development)

In the 1950s and 1960s women were generally overlooked as a significant factor in processes of modernisation and development. Women were seen as objects to protect. Therefore women's issues in development were incorporated into Human Rights issues (Brett 1991: 1). This pre-WID approach was classified by Moser as *the welfare approach*. The dominant features of it can be traced to the early European welfare policies. The nineteenth century European Poor Laws as well as welfare measures after World War II in Western Europe laid the foundation for this approach (Kabeer 1994: 5). The main emphasis was on the reconstruction of the society to achieve economic growth. There was a strong commitment to the market system and its driving force was to achieve economic well-being for all. To complement this process a weak welfare system was established to assist the vulnerable who were not able to benefit from the mainstream of development. The main engines of the system were different welfare organisations which were often run by middle class women who felt sorry for the poor and the sick. The welfare ministries established were often weak and had limited financial support (Moser 1991: 59).

These values were subsequently applied to Third World development thinking. The bulk of development funds was allocated for enhancing economic development and modernisation, while welfare assistance targeted the dependent and vulnerable. Women were thus seen as the main beneficiaries of the welfare practices.

The extent to which women's issues were addressed was thereby severely limited. In other words, assistance aimed solely at meeting women's practical needs. Their productive role was not recognised. They were perceived as passive recipients rather than active contributors to development. Women were considered only in their reproductive role. In other words, women were seen primarily as mothers, not as women (Moser 1993: 59-60).

Classical features of the welfare approach are food aid and other measures against malnutrition such as advising pregnant and lactating mothers about nutrition. The

early programmes paid little attention to women's health, their focus was instead on children. Women were also targeted in order to slow down the population growth by means of family planning. It became solely the women's burden to control the birth rates rather than a shared responsibility of women and men.

Emphasis was on top-down measures which tend to increase dependency rather than enable women to become independent. Women did not participate in the planning or implementation of the projects. Such a system therefore relies entirely on outsiders' expertise and knowledge. These programmes consequently often treated symptoms and ignored the causes (Tinker 1990: 37). Such aspects became a focal point of criticism by the subsequent WID movement.

In the 1970s female researchers and professionals, especially in United States, had become aware of the neglect of women in Third World development projects. The initial advocates for women in development came from two separate fields: the U.N. Commission on the Status of Women and the U.S. women's movement (Tinker 1990: 28). It was clear that the modernisation theory had not had its expected success. An important achievement at the time was the Percy Amendment to the US Foreign Assistance Act of 1973 (Tinker 1990: 31).

This new awareness of women's role in the development process stimulated discussion and laid the foundation for the original WID approach, *the equity approach*. The United Nation's 1975 International Women's Year Conference in Mexico City as well as the Copenhagen and Nairobi conferences became important forums for discussion. The years 1976-1985 were declared the United Nations' Decade for the Advancement of Women. The official aim was to further equality, peace and development. Parallel to these official conferences many important non-governmental meetings were organised to discuss the role of women in the development process (Tinker 1990:32).

The central theme for the gender equity approach became thus to increase women's status relative to men. It aims at reducing inequality between women and men by measures that reduce women's subordination. Increasing women's legal status is one

of its many aims. Many of its measures were top-down but there was also an implicit trust in participatory and gender consultative planning (Moser 1993: 64).

It also highlighted the need for collecting sex disaggregated statistical information in order to make women more visible in the development process and to gain better understanding of how different development projects affect women. Furthermore, national statistics had for a long time only recorded payable work and thereby ignored most of the women's work that goes as unpaid and informal economic activity (Young 1993: 152). This meant that at times only men's work was recorded. Women's contribution has thus been ignored by development planners and institutions, and men have in consequence often become the main beneficiaries of development attempts. Modernisation efforts had often ignored these effects and left women worse off than before. Only men had often been targeted as new methods and technologies were introduced, with adverse effects on women. It subsequently also became clear that women-headed families were a more common feature of the rural societies than had been expected.

From the 1970s onwards *an anti-poverty approach* came to dominate to a large extent mainstream development thinking. Inequality between women and men was seen mainly as economic inequality. Women were understood as being worse off because they had been denied the same economic opportunities. Such perceptions assumed that women's poverty and inequality were due to lack of access to land and capital, and due to sexual discrimination in the labour market (Moser 1991: 164).

The World Bank, for example, launched its basic needs strategy to eradicate absolute poverty. It involved development projects that enhanced economic opportunities for poor families, so called income generating projects. Later in the 1980s the Bank's priorities shifted even further away from equity considerations towards creating economic stability by means of structural adjustment programmes. More recently human development and environmental issues have gained new ground in the Bank's thinking (Mosley quoted in Miller 1998: 146). In this new context other factors in women's inequality were often ignored or played down and the measures were concentrated on creating new economic opportunities. Many projects aimed at income enhancing measures. In real terms these projects changed women's positions

very little (Kabeer 1994: 6). These projects utilised local women's skills but they remained in traditional female sectors (Moser 1993: 68). Really poor women often do neither have the time or energy to participate in such programmes. They cannot afford to waste time on activities that do not bring immediate returns (Tinker 1990: 38).

Since the debt crisis of the mid 1970s and early 1980s many African and Latin America countries were forced to implement economic stabilisation and structural adjustment policies. These policies aimed at reducing demand and increasing supply in order to rectify balance of payment difficulties.

The efficiency approach subsequently emerged with its emphasis on women and their importance for economic development. It recognised that economic development does not take place if women are not incorporated in the process. By involving women in the development process greater efficiency and effectiveness can be expected. Coinciding with the structural adjustment policies' main objectives, the efficiency approach has become very popular among many donor nations and agencies. Greater economic participation of Third World women, it is anticipated, will lead to greater equity (Moser 1993: 70).

At the same time it must be noted that women's economic involvement has not automatically led to women's increased status or equity, as the approach anticipates. The structural adjustment policies have often been exploitative of women's time, labour in the workplace and in the household (Eade 1991: 313).

As fewer resources are allocated to meet their practical needs, women are also expected to work harder and longer. In this way the efficiency approach does not only ignore women's strategic needs but also places an extra burden on them (Moser 1993: 73).

The institutional context of WID policies has often resulted in it becoming more a theory for economic participation than a theory of empowerment (Jaquette 1990: 67). Many development agents and institutions have often preferred policies that do not challenge prevailing power relations. Nevertheless, there have been voices which

have called for more radical measures, and which have hence contributed to *the empowerment approach*.

The empowerment approach has its roots in Third World feminism. Third World feminism has played a significant role since 1975 onwards, reaching its high point in the 1980s (Moser 1993: 57). Women have been engaged in patriotic and nationalistic struggles as well as in class conflicts and peasant rebellions (Moser 1991: 168). The approach builds upon women's experiences from the grassroots level in the Third World. It analyses the situation from the perspective of a Third World woman. Third World feminism is thus a response to women's subordination in the Third World. It seeks to empower women through redistribution of power within, as well as between societies. It takes account of colonialism and racism and its focus is often on small scale projects where concrete results can be obtained (Porter 1998: 11). It questions a development process which is designed in the Western world. Women and men in the Third World, it is argued, need to decide for themselves what type of society they want.

The conception of power and subordination found here, differs from Western feminism. It is less a form of power over others as a power within. It aims at increasing power by means of self-reliance and internal strength (Moser 1991: 168). Such a notion of power is neither finite nor is it of substance. It is something that exists in social relations (Rowlands 1998: 14). There exists "power over", "power to" and "power with". "Power over" is a controlling power, while "power to" is a productive power which creates new chances without domination, and "power with" involves the power of a group as opposed to an individual. The exercise of this type of power does not necessarily reduce the power of others although it might have this effect in certain circumstances (Rowlands 1998: 15).

The Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era, DAWN, has articulated the aims and visions of an empowerment approach. DAWN was established in 1984 by a group of southern feminists associated with an NGO Forum in Nairobi. In 1987 *Development Crisis and Alternative Visions: Third World Women's Perspectives* expressed DAWN's alternative vision (Sen and Grown 1987, cited in Antrobus & Christiansen-Ruffmann 1999: 182). The strategic gender needs which are prioritised

are similar to those of the equity approach. The equity approach relies mainly on top-down measures to meet strategic gender needs, while the empowerment approach emphasises the need for women to get organised. A strong support base must therefore be built by means of first addressing strategic needs (Moser 1991: 169). Only through political pressure from grassroots level can the political will come about to translate feminist perspectives in the development process (Bunch & Carrillo 1990: 80). Therefore, feminist organisations play a key role in the empowerment of women. International donor agencies and governments, it is argued, should allocate funding for this purpose if the integration of women into development is to be its goal.

Women and Development (WAD) is also an important approach which came about in the late 1970s. Based on a neo-Marxist feminist approach of dependency theory, it criticises WID for narrowly attempting to include women in the development process without recognising that the relationship between women and development is much more complex, and is influenced by class and international subordination and oppression (Porter 1998: 10).

A complementary approach to this has been formulated under the heading GAD, gender and development. It also takes account of the fact that women are a diverse group within an economically and politically defined global context.

2.3 Gender and development (GAD): gender relations as societal relations

The gender and development approach (GAD) has its roots in socialist feminism and is closely linked to the above-mentioned empowerment approach. Gender and development locates the factors affecting women's position within the society. Societal relationships between women and men are not due to biological characteristics but social relations. This approach is therefore concerned with the social construction of gender, as well as women's and men's assigned roles and responsibilities (Njiru 1999: 48).

In order to challenge the inequality between women and men, fundamental social transformation needs to take place. This involves transformation of the structures of power and of elitism. It is therefore a more radical approach than the WID approaches are. It involves working from a feminist perspective without political compromise.

Another important approach to development has emerged from the awareness of the essential role of the environment for sustainable development and women's interests is the Women Environment and Development approach (WED). WED is based on an ecological feminist perspective, ecofeminism (Braidotti et al. 1994: 80-82). Especially women are often adversely affected by environmental degradation. Therefore there is call for a sustainable development approach which takes into account its effect on the environment and which has an empowering effect on women.

In conclusion, the brief survey of changing trends over the past decades in understanding the place of women in development provides essential background for understanding the ways in which the UIE responded to these influences. Before coming to this it remains necessary to be clear about the way in which UNESCO as a whole has and been shaped by these policies.

2.4 UNESCO and gender. Analysis of UNESCO's policy on women and gender equality issues

The different streams of feminist thought have influenced and been influenced by UNESCO. Within UNESCO there has been a shift since the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing 1995) from a Women in Development (WID) paradigm to a Gender and Development (GAD) paradigm. Gender equity/equality is now defined as actions and policies to promote the advancement of women and girls, and at the same time there is emphasis on the necessity to change the attitudes of men and boys in order to create social relations which will not discriminate against either sex (UNESCO 2000a: 4).

The GAD paradigm is perceived as an evolution from the WID paradigm. The WID paradigm is criticised for viewing women as passive recipients of development assistance rather than as active agents of economic, social, political and cultural transformation. It is now argued that women's concerns were treated in isolation from mainstream development projects, and this thereby contributed to women not becoming incorporated into the state systems and structures. In other words, certain issues were treated as women's concerns to be dealt with separately instead of understanding them as a fundamental aspect of all development.

GAD, according to current UNESCO thinking, emerged out of an awareness that simply targeting women will not resolve women's discrimination. Women cannot be treated separately but need to be integrated into the mainstream of development. In order to achieve this, gender awareness and competence need to be seen holistically. It implies also the recognition that development activities can affect women and men differently, and therefore the emphasis is on the need for appropriate gender planning (UNESCO 2000a: 6).

In short, the fundamental pillars of GAD can be summarised as:

- Recognition of women's and men's different and special needs.
- Women are not a homogeneous group but every individual is criss-crossed with identifications of race, ethnicity, class, age, sexual preference and other factors.
- Women are often disadvantaged in terms of access to and control of means of production and other welfare factors.
- Gender differences can also imply that men are disadvantaged, but in most parts of the world today women are the ones who are disadvantaged.

(UNESCO 2000a: 6-7)

This more advanced approach has started to replace the women in development approach. While many major programmes still follow the WID approach, a new framework of ten "special projects" reflects an increasing importance according to GAD approach (UNESCO 2000a: 16). Initially the effort was directed to clarifying the importance of the shift in approach and its methodological implications to the

UNESCO Secretariat and its partners. Gender mainstreaming tools such as gender-neutral terminology and other means to eliminate sexist stereotypes, the use of sex-disaggregated data and statistics, and development of gender sensitive indicators, amongst others, were seen as the first steps in implementing GAD.

Promoting the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) of 1981 by distributing a “Passport to Equality” has been another initiative in the direction of GAD. UNESCO reports to the CEDAW Committee on the progress of the implementation of the Article. CEDAW is an important international convention for supporting women’s equality and eliminating women’s discrimination (UNESCO Sources 2000b: 4-5). UNESCO is viewed as the lead agency for promoting Article 10 of the Convention which calls for “*appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education ...*” (UNESCO 2000a: 46).

UNESCO’s stand on gender issues has been reflected in its policy outlines: UNESCO’s Medium-Term Strategy 1996-2001, its commitment to the United Nations System-Wide Medium-Term Plan for the Advancement of Women 1996-2001 (SWMTP), the Beijing Platform for Action and its regional platforms for action, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the major UN conferences in Rio, Cairo and Copenhagen, and the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women. All have expressed its commitment to improving the status of women (UNESCO 2001b: 1). UNESCO’s policy objectives and commitment to gender equality were also expressed in the UNESCO Agenda for Gender Equality, a position paper tabled by the Director General of UNESCO at the fourth conference on Women, Beijing 1995. Its agenda may be summarised:

It proposes a three-pronged approach was formulated to address women in the development process and may be paraphrased :

Mainstreaming as a gender perspective

UNESCO aims at mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policy-planning, programming, implementation and evaluation activities.

Women's participation, priorities and perspectives

It promotes the participation of women at all levels and fields of activity, giving particular attention to women's own priorities and perspectives in redefining both the goals and means of development.

Specific programmes, projects and activities

It aims at developing specific programmes and activities for the benefit of girls and women, that promote equality, endogenous capacity-building and full citizenship.

(UNESCO 1998: 2)

This new understanding of development goes beyond economic development. It involves all social, political and cultural aspects of human development. UNESCO is thereby committed in its fields of competence - education, social and natural sciences, communication -to create a culture which supports the development of women to their full potential.

The ten special projects of UNESCO in favour of women and girls express UNESCO's special commitment to the Beijing Platform for Action. These projects also reflect the emerging GAD approach of UNESCO's attitude to development.

- Education and training for women and girls in Africa.
- Scientific, technical and vocational education of girls in Africa.
- Women, higher education and development.
- Women, science and technology.
- Supply and use of water resources by women.
- Women speaking to women: Women's rural community radio in least developed countries.
- Woman the service of civil peace.
- Empowering women: Community development programmes in rural areas.
- Women on the Net.
- Women and a Culture of Peace in Africa.

(UNESCO 2000a: 25)

Education has been identified as the key objective of UNESCO in the alleviation and eradication of poverty. Furthermore, women and girls have been identified as priority groups. Therefore education systems need to be transformed in such a way that the shortcomings of conventional education systems can be overcome. Women and girls have often not benefited from education due to their heavy daily workloads, the school curricula not being adapted to girls' needs and possibilities, and other impeding factors. Furthermore, it is argued by UNESCO that the gender gap in enrolment to primary as well as secondary schools needs to be addressed. Education is seen as a life long process and not something confined to the early years of childhood. Education for all therefore involves combining formal traditional schooling with non-formal delivery systems in order to ensure equal access to education for all (UNESCO 2000a: 26).

Whereas the UNESCO's Paris office concentrates on formal schooling, its satellite in Hamburg deals with adult education. Because the UIE is part of the UNESCO, the emergence of policies in UNESCO is of direct relevance to the analysis of the role of gender within the UIE.

The policy of UNESCO with regard to gender has not only been confined to formal policy statements. It must be recognised that UNESCO operates also as a forum where ideas are generated and disseminated. This takes place in conferences which draw a range of parties, including NGOs and government officials. For example, since the 1980s, the UIE has been researching and promoting literacy projects. This has been an essential part of its commitment to life-long learning (Medel-Anonuevo 2002a: 141-172). Its mission has been understood as promoting learning in adulthood, learning for life and throughout the whole life-span. Within the context of life-long education it has initiated programmes and campaigns, all with a developmental aim. It has in the recent past actively been involved in organising two major conferences within adult education: the Fifth International Conference on Adult education (CONFITEA V) in 1997, and the Dakar World Education Forum (WEF) in 2000.

In CONFITEA V it provided women from different backgrounds with a chance to have their voices heard under the banner of gender justice. In this way it offered

some women's organisations and networks a chance to influence the preparation of the conference and to participate actively in it. The conference's themes covered adult learning, gender equality and equity, and the empowerment of women. Among the participants was Sara Longwe who presented a paper on women's education and empowerment entitled, "Two different voices on education for women's empowerment" (1999b). In 1999, the UIE organised an international seminar on "Monitoring and Evaluation of Adult Education from a Gender Perspective". Longwe contributed to the seminar by her presentation, "Monitoring and Evaluating Women's Educational Programmes: Concepts and Methodological Issues" (1999a), in which she gave further insight on how to apply the Women's Empowerment Framework within the context of literacy education, monitoring and evaluation.

Longwe's Framework has been especially designed for planning, monitoring and evaluation of literacy programmes. Monitoring and evaluation are essential for gaining an understanding of a programme's potential to achieve its objectives. Evaluation is about using data to determine and influence the progress of the programme (Longwe 1999a: 5). Because of these beneficial features and because of her relationship to UNESCO and the UIE, her work will form an important part of the analysis of evaluations in chapter 4.

2.5 The Women's Empowerment Framework outlined and compared with other gender perspectives used in literacy evaluations

2.5.1 Historical location and theoretical background to the Women's Empowerment Framework

In the women and development (WID) perspective since the 1970s, empowerment has mainly been understood in terms of "power over". Women are to be empowered to participate in the prevailing economic and political structures of the society.

Women need to be brought into the development process which is often viewed as synonymous with Westernisation (Rowlands 1991: 12).

According to Longwe (Longwe 1997: 23) women's empowerment can only take place if the social system is transformed. Any real empowerment will therefore imply that women's participation and control of development projects will need to be enhanced by transforming the social system.

Development in the Third World, according to this approach, is not only confined to economic development or increased productivity and welfare. It also involves increasing participation and equality of those who are most in need. Poverty is not so much seen as the result of low productivity but as being due to oppression and exploitation. In this context the primary concern is not to increase women's productivity or efficiency but to promote women's empowerment. Women's development entails the recognition of the following essential aspects: 1) women have different and special needs, 2) they are disadvantaged in terms of welfare, access to and control of factors of production relative to men, 3) its aim is to increase women's equality and empowerment relative to men (Longwe 1991: 150).

Women's empowerment in Longwe's discourse (Longwe 1999b: 14) implies that women work collectively together for empowerment. They function as a team with common goals. They are aware of gender discrimination and reject it. They analyse the present social system and identify the factors that lead to inequality of opportunity. They acknowledge that patriarchal political and economic interests do not coincide with women's interests. They are aware that there will be resistance to change and that they must therefore devise methods to counter patriarchal resistance. They thus seek to increase their control over the allocation of resources as well as their representation in bodies making the decisions. Mobilisation becomes an important means to gain political influence in order to end discriminatory practices.

2.5.2 Outline of the Women's Empowerment Framework

This approach was developed by Sara Longwe, the chairperson of the African Women's Development and Communication Network (FEMNET) based in Zambia.

FEMNET's mission is to support African NGOs concerned with women's development, and to create a forum to share information and ideas between NGOs and governments in Africa. The framework was created for gaining greater precision in planning, monitoring and evaluation. It allows users to question an intervention's transformatory potential. The framework was outlined by Longwe in 1991 "Gender awareness: the missing element in the Third World development project" in Wallace & March (eds) *Changing perceptions: Writings on Gender and Development* (1991: 149-157). It has been used in the *Oxfam Gender Training Manual* (Williams et al.1994), and expanded in March, Smyth & Mukhopadhyay (1999). Longwe has also published seminal articles in the field of gender and literacy, which will be discussed in detail below, in chapter 3.

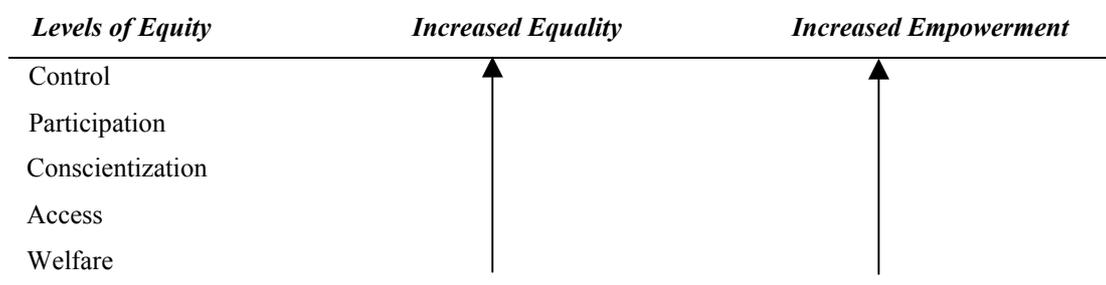
The Women's Empowerment Framework is based, first of all, on the notion that there are five different levels of equality in terms of progress towards women's development: welfare, access, conscientisation, participation/mobilisation, and control. Firstly, these criteria have a hierarchical order so that the level of equity and empowerment increases as we move from welfare to access, and so on. These levels show the extent to which women are equal with men and are empowered. If the development project is only operating on the welfare level then it is most likely not empowering at all. Projects that operate on the higher levels will have a greater empowering effect on women.

Secondly, the framework is based on the notion of "women's issues" as defined by Longwe (Longwe 1991: 150). A project's commitment to empowerment can be analysed by analysing the project's objectives in terms of their levels of recognition of women's issues. "Women's issues" are, in contrast to "women's concerns", issues that address women's equality.

a) The different levels of equality

The lowest level of equality is the welfare level. The second level is the access level. After access level comes the conscientisation level which is followed by the participation/ mobilisation level and the highest level is the control level. These five

levels demonstrate the different extent or degree of women's empowerment addressed by a development project. Ideally a project will involve the highest levels.



(Longwe 1991: 151)

Welfare Level

The welfare level, the lowest of the five levels, is concerned with women's material welfare relative to men. It sets out to ensure that women have equal access to food, income and medical care.

Access Level

The next level is concerned with women's access to resources such as factors of production: land, labour, credit or capital relative to men. It is also concerned with women's access to training, marketing facilities and public goods and services. It is about enhancing the equality of opportunity by means of laws and administrative practices.

Conscientisation Level

This level involves an understanding of the difference between sex and gender roles. Gender roles are cultural and can therefore be changed, which is not the case with sexual roles. No sex should dominate, politically or economically. Sexual division of labour should be fair. Through empowerment, women will become aware that women's subordination is not a given but is something that can be changed collectively. Conscientisation involves becoming aware that discrimination is socially constructed. The problems women face in development are due to institutionalised discrimination rather than personal inadequacies. Women need collectively to

come to an understanding of their role, their worth and their rights, without needing to seek success on men's terms.

Participation/Mobilisation Level

This level emphasises the need for women's participation at all stages in development projects: needs assessment, project formulation, implementation, and evaluation. It is about equality of participation in relation to their proportion in the community. Through getting together women will gain strength to challenge and analyse discriminatory practices. Mobilisation is also essential for achieving participation in the development process and in the transforming of the society.

Control Level

The goal is to achieve equality of control whereby neither men nor women dominate the other. Through increasing women's participation in decision-making levels and through conscientisation and mobilisation, women will be enabled to achieve equality of control over factors of production, resources and the distribution of benefits.

These five levels are helpful in critically analysing projects to assess whether they are leading to women's development. The framework also gives information on which level these projects operate. For example, it pinpoints whether the project only works on the lower levels such as welfare and access or whether it does indeed lead to conscientisation, participation and control of factors of production. It helps us to critically distinguish between programmes that have properly integrated women's concerns and those that have them just added as an appendage (Himmelstrand 1997: 128).

The framework clearly regards the higher levels more favourably. While it recognises that the lower levels may have a supportive character, this does not mean that projects would necessarily meet the requirements of each level, even though they meet the highest level.

b) "Women's concerns" versus "women's issues"

As has been noted, development projects often do not lead to women's development, instead they often reinforce women's subordination. In the 1970s women were treated as invisible and their needs were not at all addressed. Later, many development projects addressed only women's concerns rather than women's issues. The question of inequality was consequently not addressed. There therefore is an important distinction between the two.

Women's development involves addressing "women's issues" in contrast to "women's concerns". "Women's issues" deal with equality with men in any social and economic role, and involve any of the five levels of equality: welfare, access, conscientisation, participation, or control. "Women's concerns" on the other hand, are due to women's sex roles, traditional and subordinating sex-stereotype and gender roles. The main idea with the five levels in the Women's Empowerment Framework is to uncover whether we are dealing with "women's issues" or "women's concerns" (Longwe 1991: 152).

The degree to which a project is seen as potentially empowering for women depends on the extent to which it addresses women's issues. In their application of a women's empowerment framework March, Smyth, Mukhopadhyay (1999: 95) argue that there are three levels of recognition of women's issues in project design: negative level, neutral level and positive level.

- Negative level: "Women's issues" are not recognised or mentioned in the project's objectives. Most likely women will be left worse than before by such a project.
- Neutral level: "Women's issues" are recognised but the main aim is to ensure that women are not left worse off than before.
- Positive level: "Women's issues" are recognised and the objective of the project is to address these and to increase women's equality relative to men.

In terms of this model it is important to recognise women's issues *at every stage* of a development programme: assessment, project identification, project design, implementation and evaluation. Women's issues can be effectively scrutinised by

means of such an analytical framework. Longwe's five criteria can then be used to look at the levels of empowerment achieved at each particular stage.

2.5.3 Assessment of the Women's Empowerment Framework

The argument that empowerment and development are not anything that can be done "to" people or "for" people, is a compelling one. It is a process of change with justice as the driving force (Rowlands 1991: 30). The Women's Empowerment Framework provides us with criteria for monitoring this process of empowerment. It offers an important tool for assessment of impact. This is especially helpful in the present situation where there are still significant constraints to measuring "empowerment".

The framework can be useful for the planning, monitoring and evaluation of development programmes in general, and literacy programmes in particular, in that it helps to analyse their transformatory potential (March et al. 1999: 99). It furthermore facilitates critical analysis of a programme's effect on women and pinpoints those that are only empowering in their rhetoric.

It also promotes analysis of a development organisation's degree of commitment to women's equality and empowerment, by identifying the levels of equality addressed by that organisation's projects, and serves as a means of establishing whether "women's issues", as defined by Longwe, are recognised (March et al. 1999: 94).

2.6 Conclusion

The conceptual frameworks of different development approaches to women and gender are helpful in highlighting the different perspectives and understandings of women and development. They reflect also how the different macroeconomic policies have influenced the perception of the role of women in development. The early approaches emphasised that women had been overlooked in their important role as agents of development, and hence maintained that they needed to be integrated into the development process. These in turn were criticised by development thinking

that highlighted the importance of *gender* and development. It raised the awareness of the way in which gender is socially constructed.

Development policies can therefore either attempt to change gender relations or to support the traditional ones. The debate also raised a new awareness that no policies are gender neutral and highlighted the need for gender training within development organisations. There are still many policies and programmes that superficially address women, while there are others which set out to address women's discrimination in order to achieve equity. With the help of the analytic frameworks discussed above it becomes easier to see through the different organisations' approaches to gender in development. Furthermore, they facilitate clear recognition of the different policy approaches of different literacy programmes and their relationship to gender.

This type of analysis is especially important in view of the fact that so many development organisations proclaim empowerment as one of their most important goals, apparently without giving much thought as to how to achieve it. Within many donor nations, who had adopted the OECD/DAC Guiding Principles to Aid Agencies for Supporting the Role of Women in Development, it in practise has been translated only to mean that the number of women was to be increased in the existing policies and programmes (Andersen & Baud 1987, quoted in Moser 1993: 65).

For example, organisations such as the World Bank have had difficulty in implementing gender equality considerations in their programmes as their deliberations are usually based purely on economic factors. Equality has been considered in these circles as too value-laden and subjective to serve as a motivation (Miller 1998:146). This is especially alarming as the World Bank has in the last few decades, in many ways, taken over from UNESCO the advisory role in education in developing countries by means of its aid conditionality (Brock-Utne 2002: 60).

Empowerment has also often simplistically been assumed to take place automatically. It is also clear that development efforts can equally well be disempowering, for example, if the welfare approach is followed. A case in point is

the export of used old clothing to developing countries where many local textile producers have been hard hit and discouraged from producing for the local market.

Similarly, development efforts that do not incorporate women in their planning often lead to women being worse off than before. Macroeconomic policies are often presented without any reference to gender or sexual division of labour, and the focus is often on indicators which are believed to be gender neutral such as GNP exports and imports (Elson 1991: 40). A gender aware analysis has shown that the belief in neutral development efforts is a fallacy. All development efforts affect women, some to their benefit but many also work against their interests!

Nevertheless, there is also criticism as to the way in which many of the gender terms were introduced. This has contributed to the fact that male-dominated African governments and organisations have easily felt threatened by gender perspectives. Terms such as Women in Development (WID), Women and Development (WAD) and Gender and Development (GAD) were often introduced without prior cultural orientation. These Northern feminist concepts were rejected by many African heads who felt that their supremacy was being challenged. Consequently, programmes for women were rejected also by household heads, and women's participation in women's groups was hindered (Njiri 1999: 47).

To sum up, there has been a shift in gender and development thinking within international organisations such as UNESCO, from only targeting women to advocating for greater gender equality, a shift due to a new awareness that targeting women will not resolve women's discrimination. There has also been an attempt to move from predominantly WID thinking to a GAD approach by means of integrating women into mainstream development. It implies a new, more holistic approach to gender awareness and competence. It is now widely recognised that all development activities can affect women and men differently, and therefore the impact needs to be monitored and evaluated in a gender aware manner. Some guidelines, for example, *Checklist for the Integration of Gender Issues in the Evaluation of UNESCO's Programmes* (UNESCO 1999b) have been developed by the Women and Gender Equality unit for this purpose.

UNESCO has also an important function in raising different questions with regard to gender. The UIE has organised important conferences with the mission of enabling different voices to be heard with regard to gender in the context of literacy promotion. Sara Longwe has been one of these voices, and has contributed a valuable tool for gender aware planning, implementation and evaluation of development programmes: the Women's Empowerment Framework (Longwe 1999a). She has decisively expanded perceptions of how best to measure a programme's effect in terms of women's empowerment.

This measuring of women's benefits is not an easy task but is, however, much easier than trying to measure empowerment. Therefore, many evaluations easily overlook the programme's effect in terms of women's empowerment, rather than seeking to analyse it. The contradictory and complex nature of empowerment should nevertheless not be allowed to overshadow the importance of measuring an intervention's impact in terms of women's empowerment (Dawson 1998: 205).

Many literacy programmes acknowledge empowerment as one of their central goals but few have the tools for measuring it. In the next section the role of gender in literacy projects and in their evaluation will be further analysed.

CHAPTER 3

The Debate about the Role of Gender in Literacy Evaluation

3.1 Introduction

Because the current study is an examination of the phenomenon “programme evaluation” (cf. Babbie 1994: 338-39), it is essential to locate the approach of the UIE within the changing international debate. The UIE has to a considerable extent shaped the international debates, both about the evaluation of literacy programmes, and about the role of gender in such evaluations. This chapter will seek to understand these contributions, first in relation to evaluation and, second, more specifically to the gender question.

3.2 A brief introduction to the debate about the ideal evaluation method: quantitative versus qualitative

There is a widespread acceptance of the principle that development programmes require some form of evaluation. Nevertheless, intensive discussions have taken place among evaluators as to the most suitable approach to evaluation. Furthermore, the merit of qualitative approaches has been radically questioned by proponents of the quantitative approach and vice versa. This particular methodological debate serves to illustrate a much broader philosophical shift that has taken place in Development Studies over the past four decades.

According to Guba & Lincoln (1987) the history of evaluation can be traced by means of categorising four generations of evaluation. (Evaluation methods have more exactly gone through three generations of evaluation, and are at the moment going through a fourth generation.) The first generation of evaluation has its roots in a positivist paradigm. It is about testing a hypothesis composed of variables,

measured in numbers and analysed with statistical procedures. The evaluator's task is to measure the programme's results which are considered as distinct and objectively verifiable (Easton 1996: 87). The evaluator is perceived as the expert or the person with means of accurate measurement procedure, both empirical and statistical, as well as the technical competence in report production (Guba & Lincoln 1987: 220). The second generation evaluation rests on a post-positivist paradigm. It is no longer purely confined to measurement but also emphasises *description* of patterns, and strengths and weaknesses with respect to the stated objectives. The role of the evaluator is that of a *describer* (Guba & Lincoln 1987: 205). The third generation evaluators maintain that evaluation is essentially an effort to arrive at *judgements*. It recognises that all evaluation takes place in a context where the evaluator is expected to make value judgements (Guba & Lincoln 1987: 205). The fourth generation is a fluid mixture of several paradigms. The role of the evaluator is to draw out this value pluralism. The evaluator then becomes a participant who is *collaborator, learner-teacher, mediator and change agent*, in addition to extending the roles of the earlier generation of evaluators (Guba & Lincoln 1987: 206).

Each of these approaches has important consequences for evaluation research and report writing. Evaluation is no longer seen as something that outside experts will only be able to do. Rather it implies applying an insider view in the evaluation. At the same time evaluation is no longer seen as a simple once off act but as a process. In order to gain the valuable information of the insider, evaluators have to hand over some of their own power and make space for information delivered by them.

The experimental mode of the inquiry is often not suitable for measuring the nuances of human behaviour. According to the quantitative paradigm there is one uniform reality, and the researcher's task is to observe the reality by means of rigorous methods and by use of maximum control in his/her research. The aim is to achieve the greatest level of objectivity (Mouton 1996: 31). The researcher will keep distance to the researched and not let personal opinions or values interfere with his/her study (Cresswell 1994: 5).

There has been a realisation that quantitative methods on their own cannot with sufficient precision register the development of a society (Sachs 1996: 5). A critique

from the Third World has shown that history plays such an important role that it should not be overlooked in Development Studies. Furthermore, longitudinal change cannot be dealt with in a quantitative way. At times quantitative research has also been criticised for being so abstract that its relevance becomes questionable or it has just ended up stating obvious truisms (O'Barr, Spain and Tessler 1973: 17).

Against this background, qualitative methods have become more and more accepted and appreciated within social sciences. They are no longer rejected as being subjective and unreliable. The approach rests on a qualitative or naturalistic paradigm. According to it, reality always remains a little bit illusive. A naturalistic evaluator is aware of the fact that every reality is subjective and coloured by the observer. There are multiple realities out there. The researcher, the persons being observed and the reader create their own interpretation of reality (Cresswell 1994: 6). There is also an emphasis on the importance of observing change taking place (Bouma & Atkinson 1995: 201).

In development circles there has been a shift from concentrating exclusively on economic growth to an emphasis on social development and the sustainability of the environment. As the perspective of development agents has broadened, the way of measuring has also expanded. Therefore it is neither any more a question of choosing either one or the other method in evaluation, but of triangulating the methods. Triangulation implies that all data from different sources is checked and rechecked. The quantitative data is thus tested against the qualitative. As the data is interpreted it needs to take account of the context of the project both critically and by exercising common sense. These factors are often also especially necessary when the impact of a programme on gender is investigated. A study by Murphy (1997) of World Bank projects' gender effect, for example, clarified how the quantitative information of the World Bank's Evaluation Unit alone gave very little information on achievements of gender-related initiatives. The best way of determining the Bank's achievements, it was recognised, was by means of combining methods: the qualitative data supplemented by new qualitative data (Murphy 1997: 258).

The debate between quantitative and qualitative evaluation methods well illustrates the character of decisive changes taking place in the philosophy of development

itself. The debates within UNESCO have been very influenced by the trends we have just outlined, and indeed it also itself played an active role in shaping them.

3.3 The philosophy of evaluation within UNESCO

According to a widely used UIE handbook (Bhola 1990: 9) a central function of evaluation is finding out about and judging the merit or value of a programme. It is about collecting information that can be useful for improving a programme, in its planning or in its implementation. The aims of evaluation are to provide those in charge of the programme, both funders, and beneficiaries, an opportunity to make choices, learn from experience and to provide explanations, to determine the importance of the programme and enable them to modify the programme (UNESCO n.d.2).

In this context, evaluation is important for the actual learning process of a programme. It is not only about reflecting the results or products of a programme. It is much more about contributing to the learning process of the programme. Evaluation can therefore be defined as:

The systematic process of collecting and analysing data in order to determine whether and to what degree objectives have been, or are being achieved. To evaluate is to determine the value of something. Something has value if it is necessary, desirable, useful or important. It is also of value if it can serve a purpose or cause an effect (UNESCO 2000a: 35).

3.4 The UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE): policy and practice for evaluating literacy

UNESCO has since the late 1950s and 1960s promoted literacy. Initially it was done within Europe as part of post-war reconstruction, but as its membership expanded within newly independent states, its efforts have been spread to the developing world. Literacy promotion is still today one of the main interests of the UIE and its umbrella UNESCO. While there are ongoing internal debates about its identity and

priorities, UNESCO's role has always largely been an advisory one. It has seen its mandate as that of an intergovernmental agency of the UN. It has not functioned as a funding agency nor has it sought such a role (Limage 1999: 77).

The main field of activity for the UIE is to provide its member states with help in evaluation, monitoring and consultancy. The UIE has a wide network of specialists supporting its operations. It has organised international seminars on monitoring and evaluating adult education and literacy programmes, and has produced a number of publications in the field. Furthermore, it has produced handbooks on evaluating literacy projects. Within the series, UIE Handbooks and References Books 3, is the manual *Evaluating "literacy for development": Projects, programs and campaigns* by H.S. Bhola (1990). This is complemented by the UIE Studies 4, *Sharpening our tools; improving evaluation in adult and nonformal education* by Peter A. Easton (1996).

The UIE has also provided training for educational development workers and practitioners in the field of learning strategies, training of middle and grassroots level project staff and evaluation of post-literacy and non-formal basic education programmes. The UIE has, together with the German Foundation for International Development (DSE), pledged support for training of non-formal education evaluators. This is especially important as universities in the developing countries often have limited capacities in providing such training (Easton 1996: 4).

According to Easton there has been a clear shift in the perceived need towards "formative" evaluations instead of purely "summative" ones. The emphasis is now on an empowering evaluation process and to provide information on a regular basis about the programme. Local and international decision-makers have become increasingly interested in the *process* of programme implementation and the options available for improving the programme (Easton 1996: 3).

Bhola (1990) suggests, in accordance with the UIE's research methodology, that this marks a shift from a positivistic paradigm to a naturalistic paradigm. It does not imply that there is no longer any need for summative evaluation or even for quantitative studies. The appropriate approach and methodology depends on what

kind of information is needed. This is, as noted earlier in the chapter, part of the wider debate in social sciences and in Development Studies.

According to Bhola a naturalistic approach to evaluation is often useful, because so-called scientific and objective evaluations are often mainly exercises in “scientificism” without “good sense”. When an evaluation is contextual, responsive and qualitative it is not necessarily weak or unscientific but reflects the field realities. Naturalistic evaluations can for their part be scientific and systematic. Furthermore a naturalistic evaluation can be objective, reliable and valid *in its own terms*. Rationalistic evaluation, it is argued, should be used only when it is best able to meet the high-priority information needs of the evaluation agenda (Bhola 1990: 3).

According to the UIE manuals, a naturalistic paradigm should generally be used when measuring the impact of development, adult literacy, and development training. A rationalistic paradigm has its limitations when applied in the social sciences. Human behaviour and social life do not easily fit into the experimental mode (Bhola 1990: 24). That does not imply for Bhola that rationalistic evaluation should not at all be used in evaluation of educational and developmental programmes. Management Information Systems (MIS), rationalistic evaluation and naturalistic evaluation make up a methodological triangle for evaluation. Thereby the ideal approach to evaluation involves triangulation of MIS, rationalistic evaluation and naturalistic evaluation (Bhola 1990: 151). The results from the three methods are to be compared and tested.

It has been acknowledged that all literacy programmes have an ideological and social context. There are no neutral programmes (Van Zweet 1995: 83). Some have imposed Western values on other cultures in the name of development. Others have entirely served the needs of industrial interests. In line with a broader pattern of change in development policy, there has also been a move within UIE circles towards inclusion of the beneficiaries of programmes in the design and implementation of evaluations. Participatory evaluation is done together by all the stakeholders concerned in co-operation with each other. Participatory evaluation and research is often attributed to Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator and author of *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (Freire 1972). Paulo Freire established the connection between empowerment and the literacy process. Learners are to share their daily

social experience which provides the content of the literacy programme. The needs of the community are identified by means of participatory needs assessment and the community's problems are thus addressed with precision.

An important aim of the literacy programmes becomes to increase political awareness. According to Freire, participatory evaluation is an important means of supporting the process of empowerment. Participatory research is done in-depth, together in collaboration, making the learner the evaluator and the evaluator the learner. It represents a holistic approach to evaluation. In this way participatory evaluation becomes an integral part of initiatives such as literacy programmes that aim at empowering. True participation gives the learners and others concerned greater authority and capacity to decide how resources are to be allocated, what the programme's objectives will be, which methods will be used, and how the results are to be evaluated (Easton 1996: 30). It is however recognised that while many are in principle for participation, in the implementation the outcome may be little more than tokenism. The Freirian understanding has clearly played a significant role in shaping UIE policy with regard to literacy programme evaluation. Freire is regarded as one of the pioneers of the UIE. He was himself "adviser to UNESCO" from 1968 until his death in 1997, and in 1996 he was awarded the "UNESCO Prize for Peace Education" (UIE 2002: 30).

Participatory evaluation requires high competency from the evaluator. To increase empowerment and participation is usually not an easy task. It involves increasing capacity to assess the programme's strengths and weaknesses, and finding out ways to improve it on the part of those involved in the programme. Participatory evaluation requires a great number of different stakeholders in the inquiry design, data analysis, and in the formulation of recommendations resulting from the evaluation. Participatory evaluation design is "a careful 'choreography' of stakeholder groups, information exchanges, and events as it is a set of instruments and analysis procedures per se" (Easton 1996: 40). Furthermore, many European development organisations increasingly place great emphasis upon the principle of the autonomy of the partner, and hence rely heavily on internal evaluations (Borrmann et al. 1999: 292). The approach of the UIE is consistent with this trend.

Furthermore, internal evaluations by literacy workers and development agents are also seen as essential for improving a literacy project's effectiveness. These evaluations can be a very cost-effective way of improving literacy programmes and campaigns. While internal evaluations often enable the practitioners to grow in the process and to take control of the programme, external evaluations also have their place but should not be considered to be inherently more objective (Bhola 1990: 16). Internal evaluations can also often support and make external evaluations easier.

Literacy programmes are often not very suitable for standard evaluation techniques. Research can scare away the participants or distort the data and bias the results of performance (Easton 1996: 225). Therefore participatory evaluation has an important role to play. It nurtures collective consciousness and enables people to find ways to solve problems with the programme in order to build upon its strengths.

For all their emphasis on participatory evaluation, disappointingly, both of these manuals published by UIE make very little reference to gender aspects. A remarkable point, to which we will later return, is that *in spite of a clear policy commitment to gender sensitivity, two important manuals on evaluation do not address the issue with any consistency*. In order to gain a more nuanced insight into gender perspective in evaluation we will need to turn to gender studies.

3.5 Evaluation of literacy programmes from a gender perspective

3.5.1 Historical and theoretical location of women and literacy projects

It is a well registered fact that throughout history women have had less access to education. The proportion of illiterate women to illiterate men, especially in the developing world, is still alarming. An estimated 550 million adult female illiterates and 300 million male adult illiterates exist in developing countries. For this reason

eradicating illiteracy has become one of UNESCO's and other development organisations' prime goals. The World Education Forum has set as its goal to reduce the world's adult illiteracy rate by 50% by 2015. The world's adult illiteracy rate will thereby be reduced from 21% to 10% by 2015 (UNESCO 2001a: 18-19). Gender disaggregated statistics have also revealed that the older generations are more illiterate, especially amongst women. In order to address these gender disparities special efforts need to be made to reach women.

The link between literacy and development has for some time been of great interest to development agencies. Initially literacy was seen as a means to civilise societies, because literate societies were seen as superior to oral societies. A strong correlation was estimated between women's literacy and other development indicators. Accordingly, higher literacy rates among women would contribute, for example, to smaller families, lower infant mortality and better nutrition. Yet, these studies must be approached with care due to the fact that a correlation does not automatically indicate a cause-effect relationship (Robinson-Pant 2001: 3). In order to gain greater understanding of the whole field of women's literacy a more holistic approach is necessary. Purely statistical estimates are unlikely to transmit all the necessary information.

A survey of the development planners' approaches to teaching literacy in the developing world will be helpful in order to gain a fuller understanding of the philosophy behind the different methods applied. According to Rogers (1994), quoted in Robinson-Pant (2001), these planners' assumptions can be organised in the following way:

- The initial approach was based on the notion that literacy is a prerequisite for autonomous learning and development. It was mainly dominated by a top-down approach. The UNESCO's policies of the 1960s followed this track.
- In the 1970s a new approach was initiated under the influence of Freire's thinking. Literacy was to be promoted by disadvantaged groups of people in order to support conscientisation and critical understanding of socio-political forces that influence their illiteracy. Literacy is seen as a means to political action and to the transformation of society. Literacy leads to empowerment in the sense

of supporting a strong self-esteem and contributing to the awareness of seeing themselves as important actors for liberation. The Freireian approach has in common with the human capital approach a strong belief in literacy's potential to transform society and to improve women's position in the society (Yates 1997: 115).

- In the 1980s the New Literacy or socio-cultural approach was developed. It aimed at understanding the cultural context of literacy programmes. There are multiple literacies in a local context. No literacy is without a political, cultural and historical context. In this way the new approach exposed how the early literacy programmes often uncritically contributed to the transmission of Western values and traditions.

Another perspective to governments' and development agencies' approaches to *women's* literacy projects can be achieved by means of Moser's five gender policy approaches referred to in chapter two. The welfare approach supports literacy programmes that concentrate on what is conceived as women's traditional spheres, with emphasis on women's reproductive tasks. The equity approach leads to the introduction of legal literacy programmes (Robinson-Pant 2001: 32). The anti-poverty approach sees an important role for literacy programmes in enhancing women's income-generating projects. The efficiency approach emphasises the importance of women's literacy programmes for making women more effective agents of development. According to the empowerment approach literacy programmes should not contribute to the further oppression of the oppressed but be consciousness raising. The empowerment approach also questions Western feminism and emphasises the role of Third World women (Robinson-Pant 2001: 33).

The criticism of those literacy programmes which have been shaped by empowerment discourses is that they have contributed to the "composite illiterate women" term (Yates 1995). Illiterate women are thus seen as powerless and vulnerable in contrast to literate women. This increases the risk that illiterate women's knowledge will be overlooked and disappear as, increasingly, a one sided emphasis is placed on schooled information and skills (Yates 1997: 115). Therefore, a future discourse needs to take into account women's unique knowledge as well as their needs if it is to be genuinely gender sensitive.

Exactly what is meant by “women’s empowerment” has also been questioned. Women’s empowerment is often referred to by development agents but without any deeper or precise meaning being accorded to the term. Many programmes and organisations use the term in their rhetoric but when it comes to practise the superficiality behind the commitment becomes evident. A USAID survey of its broad spectrum of evaluations in terms of shortcomings in recording gender performance shows the immediate need to make evaluation more gender aware. Of its 532 evaluations, 45 per cent had no gender information and another 17 per cent provided only inadequate gender information (Staudt 1998: 204). This is unfortunately no exception but tends to be the trend within evaluation practice.

UNESCO has in many ways been one of the more progressive international organisation in terms of their commitment to gender studies. There has been a shift in gender and development thinking within UNESCO, from only targeting women to advocating for greater gender equality. This commitment was expressed in its Agenda for Equality at the UN’s fourth conference on women in Beijing in 1995. The move has supported gender mainstreaming in all policy planning, programming and evaluation. Disappointingly, however, also the UIE’s handbooks for evaluation of literacy programme make no effort to include a gender perspective in evaluation, despite the fact that UIE recognises that the end goal of life-long learning is empowerment of women and the transformation of societies, communities and relationships.

Publications of its Lifelong Learning Department have a central role for gender. Monitoring and evaluation in these publications are seen to play a valuable role in the process of empowering women (Medel-Anonuevo 1999b: 3, Medel-Anonuevo 2002b: 39-43). As there is nevertheless no specific handbook from the UIE to follow on evaluating literacy programmes from a gender perspective this study will need to rely on the general guidelines for integrating gender into the evaluation of UNESCO’s programmes.

3.5.2 UNESCO's approach to the integration of gender issues in the evaluation of UNESCO's programmes

The overall strategy of shifting the gender concern from periphery to centre is presented in the publication, *Partnership is Power. Women and Men for Gender Equality (UNESCO's Commitment to Gender Equality)* (UNESCO 1999a). To help to implement UNESCO's commitment to gender equality a checklist was developed to support the Medium Term Strategy to promote gender equality and to mainstream gender into planning, programming, implementation and evaluation. Entitled, *Checklist for the Integration of Gender Issues in the Evaluation of UNESCO's Programmes* (UNESCO 1999b), it argues that in the planning and execution of programme evaluations, a specific gender perspective should be adopted and gender-oriented criteria developed.

The evaluation, the reader is informed, should question how far the planning and implementation of the programme were done in a gender aware manner. The evaluation should be presented in a gender-disaggregated manner with important information made available about women's participation in the different stages of the programme. Furthermore, it should inform how far gender issues were addressed and specify if any gender strategies were applied.

It is also essential to question the programme's relevance in terms of the priorities of specific target groups. Furthermore, it needs to analyse whether the programme evaluated is in the spirit of UNESCO's Agenda for Gender Equality. In other words, as the relevance of a programme is considered it needs to be done in such a manner that the programme's effect on women and response to their specific needs are highlighted.

The evaluation needs also to analyse and report on the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme in gender terms. How far did the objectives achieved have a gender dimension? Was the programme also efficient in terms of women's participation? Did it utilise women's specific competence in the field?

Furthermore, when considering the impact of the programme, reporting needs to be such that it specifically address its effect on women and men separately. It is necessary to report the impact of the programme in a gender disaggregated manner to be able to assess its full impact on the different parties involved. It is important to analyse, for example, whether the programme enhanced women's access to resources such as credit and training, and whether it improved women's status.

The evaluation needs also to establish with precision whether the programme contributed to gender equality. Furthermore, the evaluation needs to list any recommendations and lessons to be learnt from the programme with regard to gender.

Finally, the composition of the evaluation team needs to be carefully monitored so that women and men are represented proportionally. Ideally, one or more gender experts are also to be involved in the evaluation.

The guiding questions (see Appendix A of the present study) were formulated to help evaluating a programme's gender dimension. They can also function as an eye-opener when studying compiled evaluations. Many evaluations, even today, completely or partly, ignore a necessary gender dimension in evaluation. Evaluations are there to measure success and help to formulate new programmes and address failures of old ones. Therefore, where the gender perspective is not clearly present it is doubtful whether there will be any progress in this direction.

Furthermore, the OECD/DAC guidelines require that gender differences should be analysed and described by WID competent teams. In some circles this has been interpreted to mean that at least one woman will have to be in the evaluation team (Staudt 1998:203).

Francis Rubin from Oxfam's Evaluation Unit also points out the importance of the composition of the evaluation team and that gender be an integral part of the terms of reference of evaluations. Furthermore, she emphasises the importance of women evaluators being allowed, on their own, to talk to other women (Rubin 1991:183).

3.6 Literacy Programme evaluation according to Longwe's Women's Empowerment Framework

Literacy programmes are often expected automatically to lead to empowerment and higher productivity. Experience has however shown that this is not necessarily the case. In order to measure a programme's empowering effect, quantitative methods alone are not sufficient. Cost-benefit analysis, which concentrates on the programme's outputs, also only offers one side of the picture. Other qualitative measures are therefore needed to elucidate the social and political processes (Longwe 1991: 155).

A literacy programme, it is argued, can be schematically illustrated with the help of an input-output process model:

INPUT — PROCESS — OUTPUT

Input: illiterate adults, teachers, curriculum material

Process: literacy curriculum, as a sequence of learning activities

Output: literate adults

The quality of the process is particularly vital in education for women's empowerment. Will the process enable women to adapt to the given patriarchal world or will it lead to conscientisation by reinterpreting and problematising the patriarchal world (Longwe 1999a: 8)?

According to Longwe (1991) the key question in the context of monitoring literacy programmes is the question whether the programme delivers education for subordination or for empowerment. The empowerment framework is one way of monitoring the programme's empowering effect.

Evaluating women's empowerment must not only be a quantifiable measurement of the closing of the gender gap, that is, change per year in percentage of illiterates in the female and male adult population. One needs to look deeper for qualitative information of discriminatory practices, in other words, the causes of gender gaps.

One needs to question why the literacy programme only superficially addresses the gender gap without addressing its underlying causes. It is here that the Framework demonstrates its investigation capacity.

a) Analysis of levels

Welfare Level

Longwe suggests that with regard to the welfare aspect one needs to monitor the level of women's literacy. In this case, level of women's literacy is defined as the percentage of literate in the population of adult women. The evaluation question then is:

- “Has the programme reached its target in increasing the proportion of literate women and in reducing gender gaps in literacy?”

The gender gap here is defined in terms of whether women are mere statistics or passive recipients of welfare instead of functioning as active participants. At the welfare level the empowering aspect is that literate women are assumed to be more self-reliant and more independent.

Access Level

At the access level one needs to monitor women's access to resources. In the context of literacy programmes this implies monitoring the increase in women's access to primary schooling and adult literacy classes. The evaluation questions suggested by Longwe are:

- “What is the progress in women's enrolment in literacy classes?”
- “What are the barriers to women's access to literacy classes?”

Women might be hindered from attending the classes, for example, due to lack of time or the distance to the classes. These obstacles to women's attendance need attention. A provision of more flexible hours at a more convenient location might be necessary to overcome the discrimination with regard to access. It may also be necessary to build into the course structure the seasonal work patterns of female farmers.

Conscientisation Level

The conscientisation level implies becoming aware of the reality that women's lower socio-economic position is nothing given or static. This means creating awareness that a gender division of labour is a social construction that can be altered. Being able critically to analyse the society and point out discriminatory practices is a further competence. One needs to monitor whether the literacy programme supports a discriminatory oppressive world view or whether it contributes to women becoming more conscious of discriminatory practices. The evaluation questions to ask are:

- “Does the curriculum enable and facilitate the discussion of local gender issues?”
- “Have women increased their sense of injustice and their willingness to take action?”

The material used, teaching methods and attitudes of teachers, for example, can either enhance or counter discrimination. Ideally, the literacy course discusses gender relations, contributes to an awareness of human rights and dignity, and supports women in realising that discrimination is nothing that has to be accepted as a given.

Participation Level

The participation/mobilisation level is about collective action and participation in the decision-making process. One needs to monitor whether the literacy programme contributes to women being able, through mobilisation to encounter these discriminatory practices and overcome them. Does it provide the means to analyse and address gender issues? Will the progress in literacy also contribute to furthering discussion and mobilisation, for example, flip-chart discussions, records of meetings, notices of meetings, communication with other groups? The evaluation questions here are:

- “Are class members taking follow-up action outside the classroom?”

- “Has progress on addressing the gender issue become a focus of classroom discussion?”

Literacy classes can serve as means to mobilise and take action against discrimination and challenge current traditions that serve discrimination against women.

Control Level

The fifth level of equality of control implies that there is a balance in power between men and women. Are women in charge of the activities of the literacy programme and do they determine the interests of the programme? Is the material such that it supports discussion around gender issues? Does the programme support women to take charge of their lives by gaining more control over resources such as land and household income? The evaluation question suggested is:

- “In what way have women class members increased their control within particular aspects of gender relations outside the classroom?”

Literacy classes can support women’s action to gain decision-making power in the community in their fight for equality of power. Furthermore, they need to enjoy the decision-making power over the literacy curriculum.

Only when the higher levels are addressed, can there be talk of gender justice. (See, for further details, *Appendix B.*)

b) Recognition of gender issues

The reality of many literacy programmes is that they often have a positive impact on the attending women’s self-confidence and self-esteem. These are important features of empowerment but should not be confused with political empowerment (cf. Strömquist 1999: 29). Therefore, it is also important to critically analyse the objectives of the literacy programme. Does the programme aim at empowerment, and if so, does it recognise the importance of attending to gender issues, or does it only concentrate on meeting “women’s concerns”? Longwe suggests the following interrogatory questions to be asked:

- “Do the programme’s objectives also address the underlying gender issues that stand in the way of women’s literacy and their retention of literacy?”
- “How is the objective of literacy related to the objective of empowerment?”

Longwe emphasises the reality that not all education is for empowerment. Education can also lead to women’s disempowerment. It is a fallacy to believe that education will automatically lead to equality with men, or to believe that this is all that is needed. For women to gain equality there must be equality of opportunity which can only be achieved by removing gender discrimination. Secondly, there is no way of giving power simply by means of education. For Longwe, power cannot be given, it can only be taken (Longwe 1999b: 7).

3.7 Conclusion

According to the UIE handbooks on evaluation of literacy programmes, both qualitative methods as well as quantitative have, it is argued, proven themselves as valuable evaluation methods. Easton (1996) and Bhola (1990) agree that ideally a triangulation of methods should take place in literacy programme evaluations. However, especially Easton (1996) highlights also the importance of participatory evaluation of literacy programmes for empowerment.

Many organisations say that they intend to evaluate a literacy programme’s gender effect but few seem to know quite how to do it. As gender is often overlooked in evaluations it is important that clear gender guidelines for evaluation to be taken seriously. The evaluation handbooks, *Evaluating “Literacy for development” projects, programs and Campaigns* by Bhola (1990) as well as *Sharpening our tools; improving evaluation in adult and nonformal education* by Easton (1996) did not have any specific gender perspective. For any gender guidelines on evaluation one needed to look to gender studies. UNESCO’s division for Women and Gender has set up a list of questions that can be considered in evaluating a literacy programme. Having to turn to such a checklist for integrating gender into evaluation carries with it a considerable risk that this type of extra list may easily contribute to gender

aspects being overlooked by many evaluations. This is especially problematic, given the fact that organisations such as UNESCO turn out so many publications, and consequently checklists and separate handbooks on gender are easily not read in the vast array of other publications. Ideally, the achievements of a development organisation in gender terms should be a shared responsibility of the entire organisation and not only of the gender units. In other words, mainstreaming of gender has not yet taken place to a sufficient extent within UNESCO itself!

To achieve political empowerment by means of a literacy programme is far more complicated than was initially perceived. Therefore, the present study turned to Sara Longwe, who has been very actively involved as a speaker in the UIE seminars and conferences about monitoring and evaluating women's empowerment of literacy programmes. However, the extent to which the UIE stands behind Longwe's approach to monitoring and evaluation, still remains an open question. In the collection of essays *Breaking through: engendering monitoring and evaluation in adult education* edited by Medel-Anonuevo (1999a), UIE retains its customary ambiguity in its publication details in hesitating to endorse the facts and opinions of the authors. In the *Introduction* it is related that at the conference her framework had set the tone for discussion, but the reader is also cautioned however that it is not meant to be solely definitive (Medel-Anonuevo 1999b: 3).

On the question of differing emphases on the role of gender in literacy programme evaluation there are noticeable differences between the evaluation handbooks published in the early nineties on the one hand and collected essays edited by Carol Medel-Anonuevo on the other. As a Sociologist and gender activist from the Philippines, her presence on the UIE staff in Hamburg in the second half of the nineties seems to have been decisively influential.

The influence of Paolo Freire on the overall policy and practice of the UIE is also noticeable. Literacy programmes, following Freire's philosophy, have pointed to the need for literacy learning being considered as a process for the learners' own interests. If a literacy programme is to further women's equality and empowerment it cannot be planted from outside but needs to be a process that takes into account the historical, social and cultural aspects of the learners. Consistent with this, Longwe

introduces education for empowerment and emphasises that gender inequalities and discrimination must not be considered as “natural” or “normal” (Longwe 1997: 23). The culture that has created the gender differences is also standing in the way of female literacy. The male bias of the development process has contributed to an inadequate attention of female illiteracy (Clarke 1996: 32). Therefore it is important to critically analyse the evaluation reports in the next chapter by means of looking at what the reports let us know about the programmes’ effect on women’s empowerment and what they remain silent about.

It has become clear that the approach to literacy programme evaluation has evolved within the UIE over a period of time: thus there are differences between the early nineties and the late nineties. Furthermore, the organisation demonstrates by means of the disclaimer on the page listing publication details an unwillingness to identify itself too closely with any one approach. In this way it is able to sustain a plurality of methods. By using the various approaches which have emerged as part of this broad discourse, in the next chapter programme evaluation reports will be scrutinised from more than one perspective.

CHAPTER 4: Survey of Evaluation reports

4.1 Introduction

The primary concern of this chapter is with a critical analysis of two evaluation reports published by the UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE). While these documents themselves constitute our essential data, it will on occasions also be necessary to look beyond the microscope lens to the phenomena being studied, in this case, the literacy projects themselves. What the reports don't tell the reader can be just as important as what they do. In their evaluations, what are questions that are considered worth asking and worth reporting upon? And, what remains unmentioned? The first evaluation was conducted in 1989-1990 of a regional literacy project in Oyo State in Nigeria. The second is of a national literacy project in Namibia, and was conducted in 1994-1995.

In the following analysis it will be necessary to relate these reports to the general UNESCO guidelines for gender in evaluation. A switch will then be done to the Longwe approach to see whether this is able to provide further insight.

4.2 Literacy Programme, Oyo Province, Nigeria

4.2.1 Background and context of evaluation

The study, *Literacy, Tradition and Progress. Enrolment and Retention in an African Rural Literacy Programme* (Omolewa et al.1998) was published by the UNESCO Institute for Education in Hamburg. As is customary in their publications there is first of all a disclaimer about UNESCO's responsibility for the publication, noting that the Institute is a legally independent entity. Even though its programmes are "established along the lines laid down by the General Conference of UNESCO, the publications of the Institute are issued under its sole responsibility; UNESCO is not responsible for their contents". It then adds: "The points of view, selection of facts, and opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily coincide with

official positions of the UNESCO Institute for Education, Hamburg.” The authors Michael Omolewa, et al. (1998) are, in this case, associated with *The Rural Literacy Study Group* at the University of Ibadan, and happen to be all male! In 1989 the University of Ibadan’s Department for Adult Education was rewarded UNESCO Award for Literacy.

In spite of the techniques of distancing, which one would expect of an international public body, the UIE would be unlikely to publish anything with which they were in complete disagreement. Furthermore, the back cover pays tribute to the fact that the book was “the runner-up for the 1992 International Literacy Research Award of UNESCO” and describes it as presenting “a remarkable study”. This ambiguous presentation of the relationship between UNESCO and the evaluation will provide the starting point of the present study which will itself try to scrutinise the Report from the different perspectives, either official policy of UNESCO, or the more critical voices of those associated with UNESCO such as Sara Longwe (1997, 1999a, 1999b).

Almost two-thirds of the report is devoted to describing the programme itself, and one third to reporting the results of the evaluation in terms of the impact. Both elements are important for the study, particularly because the programme is presented throughout as a model of which the authors fully approve.

The report notes that the literacy programme was conducted in the Ido local government area of Oyo State in Nigeria over a period of 17 months from November 1989 onwards. The programme’s aim was to deliver literacy that would be functional as well as permanent. It sets out by agreeing with a UNESCO notion of 1962, which paraphrased maintains that a person is literate when he is able to acquire knowledge and skills which enable him to get involved in activities for which literacy is essential in order to function in his community, and his knowledge in reading, writing and arithmetic enable him to utilise these skills for his own development as well as his community’s development (Omolewa et al. 1998: 43).

The objectives of the literacy programme were broadly:

1. To identify alternative strategies for promoting literacy in rural settings.
2. To overcome some of the problems faced by previous government literacy programmes: literacy activities had not been able to be replicated, there had been wastage, and learners had been reluctant and even rejected the programmes, or learners had not been asked to take over the literacy programme.
3. To promote learner empowerment as literacy's ultimate goal.

(Omolewa et al. 1998: 9)

Empowerment is defined by the evaluation as follows: "The process and product of transferring the locus of power in literacy promotion activities to learners, so that they can plan and organise it for other members of the community" (Omolewa et al. 1998: 12).

The programme identified traditional African education as the means to achieve greater empowerment. Traditional education systems was seen to promote a life-long learning process. The emphasis was on community participation and its use of knowledge applicable for the particular society. It therefore stood for a holistic approach to teaching and learning and favoured the use of local languages. It recognised that the local people had valuable information and knowledge to share. It supported the idea that learners learn what they want to learn and what they perceive to be valuable knowledge. The content of the material, it was argued, should be closely bound to the local people's experiences and traditions. It thus saw itself as transferring the power to the local people.

Throughout the programme, members of the community were involved. Special literacy committees were formed in the villages, and village heads and chiefs were actively involved. The village committees were involved in the selection of teachers and in the monitoring of their performance.

According to the report, the programme aimed at learners' empowerment by means of the literacy element, improved health and new economic solutions for problems faced by the local people. Post-literacy programmes were also introduced.

4.2.2 Report in relation to formal UNESCO Policy

In accordance with UNESCO recommendations, the evaluation described in the report was conducted by means of quantitative methods as well as qualitative methods. Several attempts at qualitative evaluation were made by means of observation and interviews, and two quantitative surveys were implemented. Quantitative methods were used for recording scores in arithmetic and other subjects, which were systematically arranged in charts for analysis, description and computing. The qualitative evaluations aimed at measuring unquantifiable variables, such as changes to human feeling and complex qualities of human experience (Omolewa et al. 1998: 44). In the qualitative studies 35 learners from 16 different villages were interviewed by members of the study team in order to ascertain the impact of the programme. The qualitative studies recorded skills in writing Yoruba and in arithmetic, the changes in the status of the participants, changes in joining community groups, and changes in their perceptions of themselves.

In order to study the evaluation report critically it will be analysed with help of UNESCO guidelines in accordance with its Medium–Term Strategy to promote gender equality and to mainstreaming a gender perspective in all planning, programming, implementation and evaluation activities. Especial effort will therefore be made to gain a clearer picture of how far the report critically questions the programme’s effect on women, as a gender sensitive evaluation ought to do. Therefore it is important to look at what is, in gender terms, reported about the programme and furthermore, what is reported without any gender considerations. These items of information will help to pin point the gender aspect of the evaluation which could easily otherwise have gone unnoticed. The questions suggested in the *Checklist for the integration of gender issues in the evaluation of UNESCO programmes* (cf. Appendix B) in the different factors of the programme: 1. planning, implementation and participation; 2. relevance; 3. effectiveness and efficiency; 4. impact; 5. recommendation and lessons learnt; and 6. the composition of the evaluation team.

a) Integration of gender into planning, implementation and participation

It is noteworthy that there is in the report no questioning of women’s involvement in the different programme stages: planning, implementation and evaluation. Nor does

the report question whether women's perspectives were taken into account, and if so how was it done. Furthermore, the programme's lack of specific attention to addressing gender issues and identifying women as a target group is not mentioned.

According to the report almost the same proportion of respondents were female as were male in the feasibility study (Omolewa et al. 1998: 30-32). The percentage distribution of respondents by gender was also the only gender-disaggregated data that was collected in the feasibility study. Therefore the gender disaggregated statistics before the programme started were sparse. The report does not pay enough attention to this lack of important basic gender information. No specific attempt, it appears, was made to establish a gender determined division of work or attitudes towards the literacy learning, for example.

In its preparation of teaching materials and aids, the programme recognised the importance of lifelong learning, as recommended by UIE (Omolewa et al. 1998: 33). The information gathered in the feasibility studies was applied in curriculum development. It recognised the target group in terms of their levels of education, where they lived, their socio-cultural values and orientation, religious beliefs, lives and patterns of communication, and political association. An important aspect was also to establish an appropriate time for the classes, as adult learners seldom can attend classes at will.

The evaluation report states that both women and men were taken into account in developing and designing its material for instruction (Omolewa et al. 1998: 51). But no further details are given in which respect this occurred and no clarifying examples are provided of how women, for example, were taken into account. The goal of the primers was to enable learners to improve their farming, promoting economic survival, better nutrition, better health, better sanitation and building the community spirit. There is however no specifically gender aspect amongst the goals listed!

The implementation stage was reported to have achieved many successes in literacy and health (Omolewa et al. 1998: 51). For the mobilisation of learners, village heads, chiefs and other influential individuals, were contacted to discuss the purpose, significance and benefits of the literacy programme; and literacy committees were

founded in the villages. The report does not at all question whether any gender strategies were adopted, and if not, why?

According to the report, participation of the learners in teaching others was evidently one of the programme's strengths. The teachers were selected from the most successful learners and then trained. As they had finished their own literacy training, they participated in a three month long instructors' training workshop, and then themselves for five months ran a literacy course (Omolewa et al. 1998: 35). The gender information in this respect is also very limited, but neither does the report ask for it.

b) The relevance of the programme

When considering the relevance of the programme, a gender dimension needs to be born in mind. In other words, did the report question how far the programme contributed to gender equality? The Oyo literacy programme and its evaluation take no specific consideration of gender imbalances, even though the report does note in passing that most illiterate people in Nigeria are rural women (Omolewa et al. 1998: 56).

The evaluation report concentrates without any gender consideration on reporting the programme's success. It notes that over a period of 17 months altogether about 500 adults from 20 villages were trained, instead of the targeted 1100, and gives as reasons bad and rough roads, domestic problems such as harvesting and planting seasons, cultural celebrations, fasting and other social events, for the lower rate, but not in any gender aware manner. The same applies to the reporting of a slower pace of learning than anticipated (Omolewa et al. 1998: 42), but there is no specific questioning of the success of women and men as separate groups.

The report concentrates on reporting the successes of the programme without any concern for its gender aspects. The programme was also, according to the report, an important step in combining traditional education with conventional methods. The step in training teachers from the newly literate learners was a unique characteristic of the programme. It adapted in this way the indigenous apprenticeship system into the training of new teachers (Omolewa et al. 1998: 46).

In spite of the positive evaluation of the report in terms of achieving a dramatic change in illiteracy, the programme was relatively unsatisfying. It trained less than half of what was initially set as the target. Secondly, it did not contribute noticeably to gender equality. Gender was a topic not discussed in the course even though it aimed at addressing social themes that were relevant to the learners and their lives. One could have expected that gender equity would have been in such a programme a central element. The evaluation report, however, appears to show none of these concerns, and presented instead an undifferentiated and very positive report.

c) The effectiveness and efficiency

When the programme's effectiveness and efficiency is determined it should also be scrutinised in terms of gender. The evaluation concludes that the programme was particularly effective due to its high attendance rates and low drop-out rate (Omolewa et al. 1998: 39).

The report provides detailed information with regard to the programme's effectiveness and efficiency. According to it, the implementation model, for example, enabled the study groups to share ideas, feelings and experiences, and to empathise. This encouraged other illiterates to join the classes (Omolewa et al. 1998: 39). Furthermore, the programme had a lower drop-out ratio than many previous programmes in the area. The programme started with 162 adult learners from six villages and expanded to 492 learners from about 20 different villages, all within 17 months.

The attendance and grading statistics are presented briefly in a gender-disaggregated manner in tabular form in the report (Omolewa et al. 1998: 85-90). What needs to be done is to analyse these from a gender perspective. This reveals that 57% of the initial 162 learners were male (92) while 43% were female (70). Most villages are recorded as having only slightly more males attending than females. Only in one village (Ajibade Village) was the percentage of males to females almost double to that of females. In other words, from the start the course attracted more males than females. There is after all, a 10% difference between female and male learners. After the first nine months only 95 were tested, as 41,9% of the learners could not attend

the test for various reasons. Of the learners that attended the test, 34 were female and 61 were male. Although fewer than half of the female learners made it to the test the report does not pay any specific attention to the trend.

Thirty-six of the 95 qualified with an A Certificate while 59 qualified for a B Certificate, which implied that they had not yet achieved the desired comprehension, numeracy and writing competency. Of the 36 with an A pass, 29 were male and 7 were female. Thirty-two of the 59 who qualified for the B certificate were male and 27 were female. As the report indicates about 80% of the candidates who passed with A certificate were males and 19,5% of them were females. The report concludes from this that males performed better than females, while the distribution of B certificates was relatively equal. Of males 54% received a B certificate and 46% of females (Omolewa et al. 1998: 86).

In the end, altogether 492 learners of the 577 who were enrolled, were according to the report tested. Of these, 176 were female and 316 were male. Once again the report fails to establish the pattern that continued through out the programme that more males tend to be able to attend the test than females. Three hundred and sixty-eight passed with the A certificate. Of these learners, 136 were female and 232 were male. In other words, 63% of them were male and 37% were female. Of those receiving a B certificate 84 were male and 40 female. Calculated out almost 68% were male and 32% were female. The success rate was thus similar to the first testing of the learners.

If one carefully analyses these statistics, which the report does not do, one could also conclude from this that the females who took part in the test were slightly more successful than the male learners. Only about 23% of the female learners that attended the test received a B certificate (40 female out of 176). In other words, 77,2% of them had an A certificate pass. Men on the other hand had a lower 73,4% A certificate pass (232 men out of the 326 men), while 26,5% of them received a B certificate (84 men out of 316 men). Certificate B implied that they had not achieved the desired competency in comprehension, numeracy and writing.

To conclude, there was a clearly skewed gender division in the attendance rate of the course and in the number of females who made the test compared to men, to which the report does not pay any attention. The report gives the impression that men had a higher success rate than women, as men made up the higher percentage of the learners that passed with A (63%). However, careful study of the success rate statistics shows that women indeed had a slightly higher success rate. Fewer of them took part in the test, but many of those who did, achieved an A certificate.

There remains nevertheless serious doubt over the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme in gender terms. Clearly the programme had severe deficiencies in supporting women's literacy progress. The programme reached far more men than women, and far more of them were able to attend the test. What happened or did not happen is only of indirect relevance. Important for the purposes of the present study is the way in which the evaluation team went about its work.

The report does not pay any attention to the gender disparity or question the underlying reasons for it. It only concludes that men had a higher success rate than women, and does not realise that this is only the case if one looks purely at the percentage distribution of the certificates among men and women. As soon as one calculates the success rate of women who attended the test and received an A certificate the success rate becomes more impressive for women. Furthermore, in overall gender terms, the effectiveness and efficiency of the programme was low, but this does not appear to be a concern for the evaluation.

d) The impact of the programme on women and men

The impact of the programme on women and men needs to be analysed in greater detail. The number of women actually benefiting from the literacy programme was decidedly lower. Clearly more men than women learned reading, writing and numeracy skills, as more men than women took part in the course. Yet, it is left open by the report *why* this was the case. Furthermore, many more men took part in the test after the course, and thereby a higher percentage of the ones with A certificate were men. This default was recorded in the evaluation but no explanations were offered as to why this was the case.

The report looks also at the wider impact of the programme on the community. A “feeling” of gaining better status was recorded in the report. For example, one learner had been appointed as a customary judge as he had gained new skills in the programme (Omolewa et al. 1998: 44). Furthermore, it was recorded that people felt after the course more self-confident and had gained optimism for their future. This was reflected in the success stories some of the female learners wrote. Mrs Badamosi’s story, for example, reflects new pride and self-fulfilment in taking care of banking and parenting matters as well as in serving as a teacher to others (Omolewa et al. 1998: 66). But also this is done without any specific gender considerations. Therefore, one cannot conclude whether it had specifically good effect on women as a group or on men as group.

The report also records some advancement in primary health care. The report observes that learners were now more aware of the causes of diseases and the means to their prevention. Also some nutritional improvement was recorded. Food demonstrations had resulted in nursing mothers improving their children’s nutrition. Soya was introduced in milk form and as a protein supplement (Omolewa et al. 1998: 45). This, on the other hand, could imply that women especially gained from these positive effects of the programme, but this it is not analysed more closely in the report.

The report also informs about traditional economic activities that were introduced for women. The traditional adire (tie and dye) and wash printing was reintroduced. Women had given it up earlier as it had no longer been lucrative for them. Furthermore, soap making, a traditional engagement of the women, was reintroduced. Men were also returned to their traditional roles as drummers, etc. Women were recorded as having an increase in their income, based on the fact that they appeared to the evaluators to be more prosperous than before (Omolewa et al. 1998: 46). But the report fails to analyse the deeper effect of the income-generating projects on women. These projects clearly involved extra work for women. Women had earlier given them up due to economic hardship and the need to work harder on their agricultural production. The report should have more critically questioned the success of these income supplementing activities. As discussed in the chapter 2, under the anti-poverty approach, some development measures have only increased

women's already heavy burden but changed the position of women very little. Furthermore, the report records that women felt wealthier after the programme but fails to support these feelings with any concrete statistical data.

The report further maintains that a new feeling of empowerment had arisen amongst learners. Its approach to empowerment therefore comes across as rather superficial. It records that the new empowerment was reflected in the new critical voice of the local newspaper. Furthermore, villagers wrote their village's history. Also at a personal level, some triumph was experience in family life and in their environment (Omolewa et al. 1998: 42). The qualitative approach to evaluation, mainly by means of interviews, illustrated how the participants had gained skills that helped them in money transactions, such as the competence to sign their names in the bank and perform simple calculations (Omolewa et al. 1998: 44). Yet, for all such personal benefits documented in the report, this does not mean that equality was enhanced. The women's situation or status in relation to men did not necessarily improve. One should not confuse stronger literacy skills, or greater confidence in speaking and dealing with others, necessarily with political empowerment (Strömquist 1999: 29).

The report also records how some learners received training in teaching while attending a literacy course in order to be able to teach others (Omolewa et al. 1998: 50). Adult volunteers that had been selected after having completed a nine month literacy course were trained in a week long workshop. Training was provided in adult psychology, the sociology of learning, adult teaching strategies, learning evaluation and curriculum design. The learners went thereafter into remote villages to run courses, and themselves attended at the same time post-literacy classes. This contributed to the fact that many learners not only attained literacy skills but teaching skills as well. There are no statistics in the report as to how many of the new learners who were selected as teachers were men or how many were women. One could anticipate that more men would have been selected as more men had been awarded an A certificate pass after the initial training. Once again, the report leaves the reader guessing.

e) Recommendations and lessons learnt

Recommendations and lessons learnt is usually one of the most valuable parts of any evaluation report from a development point of view. The report however makes very few gender specific recommendations. This is surprising, given that the highest rate of illiteracy exists among rural women and that this programme especially tried to combat rural illiteracy, at the same time as seeking new perspectives for literacy programmes targeting rural communities. The virtual silence on gender is also surprising, noting the unequal participation rate of women and men, and the gender gap in respect to the learners tested.

There is a need noted for further study of the characteristics, values and concepts of traditional education, and thereafter to revise the curriculum to recognise the problems faced by the adult learners. The report indeed recognises that women, for example, often have limited time to attend the course as their domestic duties place continuous demands on their time. Therefore, every minute counts for them, and no time should be wasted by the instructor. But no other more specific gender recommendation or lessons learnt are mentioned. Women are thus not only largely overlooked, but they continue to be seen in their traditional roles .

f) Composition of the evaluation team

Finally, the composition of the evaluation team does not indicate any specific gender expertise. The authors of the evaluation were all male from the university of Ibadan. There is no mention of any women who would have been involved in the evaluation of the programme. Neither is there anyone acknowledged to have such expertise. It is clear that the gender aspects needed to be reinforced in the evaluation team.

g) Conclusions

When the report is scrutinised by means of the *Checklist for the Integration of Gender Issues in the Evaluation of UNESCO's Programmes* (UNESCO 1999b) it reveals that it failed to ask many of the questions necessary for an adequate treatment of questions of gender. To give them their due, they did provide gender disaggregated data, but unfortunately did not, from a gender perspective, make any

relevant analytical connections. In its limited analysis of data and its strong support for traditional social values, the report succeeds in perpetuating a patriarchal status quo. In order to explore the report further from an empowerment perspective, it will be necessary to turn to the Women's Empowerment Framework for analysing literacy programmes.

4.2.3 Report in relation to the Women's Empowerment Framework

There is a strong belief among development agencies that literacy programmes automatically lead to empowerment. Also the evaluation of the Oyo programme mentions as one of the programme's important goals, "empowerment" (Omolewa et al. 1998: 1). It is clearly arguing on the assumption that literacy will automatically lead to empowerment. There are indeed some social upliftment elements in the programme's health and economic aspects. Longwe questions the causality that literacy programmes automatically lead to empowerment (Longwe 1999a: 27). According to her it is a fallacy to believe that literacy and education will always lead to empowerment, they might just as well lead to subordination (Longwe 1997: 17).

Clearly, empowerment means different things in different circles and in different circumstances. Therefore, it is important to analyse more closely a programme's contribution to empowerment, and to establish what is meant by empowerment within that programme. Furthermore, Longwe's method helps us to analyse the gender dimension of the programme and its evaluation. Women being the biggest group of illiterate in the world, it is important to pin down the gender perspective of empowerment.

An important role of monitoring and evaluation is to identify education systems that support women's empowerment (Longwe 1999a: 27). Therefore, it is important to question critically whether a literacy programme leads to women's subordination or to women's empowerment. The Women's Empowerment Framework provides a means of raising a battery of questions as a means of evaluating the evaluation.

a) The importance of quality of output

Qualitative indicators are important for measuring the quality of the output, as it is not only the emphasis on quantity that matters (Longwe 1999a: 8). Therefore, even if a programme were to record equal numbers of women in relation to men, more questions need to be asked. It is especially important not to take it for granted that the programme is utilising the best methods to achieve its outcome. In other words, it needs to be established whether the method of education is ideal for advancing a certain quality of outcome, for example, empowered literate people. For this purpose qualitative research methods are an essential means of exploring the range of factors influencing women's empowerment, and are central to Longwe's approach.

The use of quantitative as well as qualitative methods for the evaluation gave the report a significant breadth. By means of qualitative methods new insight was gained into changes which are difficult to measure by means of quantitative methods, for example, how people's perception of themselves had changed. Not only were the number of new literate people enumerated but an attempt was made to estimate their empowerment. Unfortunately there was no specific attempt to estimate whether the programme had had a special effect on the question of gender inequality.

b) Education for subordination or empowerment

According to Longwe, a clear distinction can be made between education for subordination and education for empowerment. A programme that emphasises a top-down relationship in the classroom and reinforces the traditional pattern of gender relations will hardly be empowering, but be subordinating instead (Longwe 1999a: 26). Education that is empowering is concerned with the process of enlightenment, conscientisation and collective organisation (Longwe 1997: 17). In this way it reverses values that are connected with conventional schooling.

According to the report, the respondents in the initial household survey wanted to learn from the literacy classes how to read, write and enumerate, to learn about diseases and how to prevent and cure them, about what the local government was doing, to learn to read international and national news, learn about rights and obligations in the society, to keep records, and to read signs and instructions (Omolewa et al 1998: 32). The programme's approach to education was based on so-

called “traditional education” which aims at “empowering”. The programme relied on the notion of a traditional African education (Omolewa et al. 1998: 15), an approach promoted by J.K. Nyerere, the former president of Tanzania (Nyerere 1973). Nyerere’s “education for self-reliance“ approach implies that education is there in order to achieve social change. People’s participation in the planning and decision-making process of their own development is important, and in this view literacy education will contribute to people’s empowerment. Learners, the report argues should learn what they want to learn and feel that it is useful for their lives (Omolewa et al. 1998: 15). Similar ideas are also in the work of Paul Freire who emphasised the importance of linking learners daily experiences with the literacy course.

This Oyo literacy programme as described in the report was an attempt to combine traditional learning and culture with more formal education. It was participatory in the sense that traditional education is assumed to be. Local strategies were applied for reaching consensus on the most suitable education. This implied a shift in the locus of power. It was also participatory in terms of local learners’ involvement in the development of material. The content of the instruction was connected to the life of learners, and teachers trained were local learners who had passed the course.

The report argues that a holistic approach was applied. It involved the use of the local language as medium of teaching. Every attempt was made to root the programme within the local community. When developing the principles of the programme, sensitivity was shown to traditional culture and knowledge by deriving the ideas to a large extent from traditional African education. The education took place within the community, in learners’ own environment. No one could directly fail the course as the local values do not expect adults to fail a course. The programme was based on the notion of life-long education as well as traditional education (Omolewa et al. 1998: 40).

The report also records some of the achievements of the programme. It illustrates how learners had gained confidence in expressing their views in the local newspaper. People now also expressed the need for change in their community, such as more clean water, electricity and better roads (Omolewa et al. 1998: 41). Furthermore, the

evaluation reported how the learners felt empowered due to the new skills in literacy and in creating wealth.

In other words, as reported in the evaluation, the literacy programme had many elements in common with Longwe's (1997) empowering education. Unfortunately, the gender perspective of empowerment was totally ignored. This does not in any sense mean that the programme had no gender impact. On the contrary, it could well have impacted in differing ways on the lives of women and men. The following sections will try to analyse the impact.

c) The level of recognition of women's issues

According to Longwe (1991: 150-153) it is vitally important to address the question of a programme's level of recognition of "women's issues" as the key to analysing the gender perspective of the programme (cf. chapter 2). This will determine how the programme will influence women. Will women end up worse off than before the programme, or better off? These are the key questions addressed by Longwe's Women's Empowerment Framework. By "women's issues" she refers to all issues concerning women's equality in their social and economic role. This does not mean that the programme should only be concerned with women. The programme's objectives need to be analysed in terms of whether they address gender issues or women's concerns. The three levels in the recognition of women's issues are helpful in uncovering information in this regard: the negative level, the neutral level and the positive level.

In the programme which the report describes there is no clear mention of women's issues as its objective. This implies a negative level of recognition of women's issues. Furthermore, there is no conscious attempt to address gender issues that stand in the way of women's literacy, nor is there an attempt to overcome gender discrimination in order to decrease gender inequality.

Women's issues are also ignored through all stages of the programme: planning, implementation and evaluation. Especially alarming for us is that even the programme's evaluation report fails to draw attention to their absence. Therefore the chances for improvement through formative evaluation remain slim.

This highlights the enormous need for gender training within development circles. Skills are needed for including and improving a gender dimension in the planning, implementation and evaluation of programmes. Such competence is needed by everyone involved, from policy makers to the community itself (Longwe 1997: 17). Recognition of women's issues, for Longwe, involves nothing less than conscientisation with regard to gender disparities and the unequal gender division of society.

d) The level of women's empowerment

Women's poverty and low status is not due to women's inability or lack of effort, nor is it due to a lack of literacy or schooling, but is due to gender discrimination and a lack of equal opportunity (Longwe 1997: 19). By means of locating women economically and socially, a programme can become more efficient, but that alone will not tackle inequality. For Longwe (1991: 152) empowerment therefore involves more than self-reliance or economic empowerment or increased productivity and welfare. It involves women's participation in and control of the programme. It challenges the prevailing patriarchal system and opens a way to social transformation.

Education that creates awareness of women's important economic role does not as such necessarily improve women's rights, of which the Oyo evaluation is a case in point. Women's empowerment should not be confused with upliftment. The "levels" in Longwe's Women's Empowerment Framework make it clear that empowerment involves considerably more than this.

A truly critical evaluation involves analysing the programme's impact on women and men. It gives insight into the possible weaknesses of the programme in terms of its gender perspective. By means of Longwe's approach, women's empowerment or lack of it becomes more concrete and easier to observe. It highlights how women's empowerment can easily be confused with welfare measures or economic advancement. Analysis of the report in relation to the lowest level of the Women's Empowerment Framework, the welfare level, is instructive. Whatever the merits or benefits of this level, a programme that meets a lower level of empowerment may be

a building block for higher levels or it may stand alone. With regard to literacy programmes *the welfare level*, can be estimated by means of the level of women's literacy. The level of women's literacy is measured as a percentage of literate women in proportion to all adult women (Longwe 1991: 151). At the welfare level then the main goal is to increase the proportion of literate adult women. This will contribute to the reduction of a gender gap in literacy. Women will thereby also become more self-reliant and more independent.

The numbers of women and men who were tested and passed the test with an A certificate is reported by the evaluation and indicates that the course was better received by men. How can we explain the difference in the numbers between men and women? The evaluation came to the conclusion that men were more successful than women, and left it at that! Was it implying that men were more talented than women or why did women have less success? The evaluation remains silent on these issues. It concludes that the programme was highly effective without further analysing its gender effects.

As indicated in the above analysis based upon UNESCO's guidelines, the women who did manage to attend the course and the test were slightly more successful relative to their male peers. There clearly was some gender bias in the programme which could have been uncovered by a properly nuanced and gender aware evaluation. As a result of the programme the literacy gender gap was not reduced but impact increased! From the start, the programme ignored identifying women as an especially important target in a nation where women are the largest group of illiterates in the rural areas. There were no special attempts to increase women's literacy. Any literacy programme based on the notion of traditional education, which the report praises, was somehow just expected to enhance women's literacy.

Initially, it was related that a survey was made in order to produce information to serve as the basis for accommodating different learner needs and wants. The need for flexible scheduling was indeed registered. The number of hours the learners could attend literacy classes and any specific dates and times preferred for the classes were questions asked. Also any socio-economic or political problems could be recorded (Omolewa et al. 1998: 29). Despite these efforts, women's specific needs and issues

were overlooked. This highlights the importance of gender aware planning, implementation and evaluation. It is not an aspect that can be overlooked or expected to be covered without conscious effort.

With regard to the lowest level of empowerment, *the welfare level*, we can conclude that the programme did to some extent increase some women's welfare. Information was disseminated on nutrition and health-care. A few selected women were trained as instructors and gained economically from it. For all such benefits, the programme really only operated on the first level of empowerment. It did not enable them to get more effectively mobilised, not to talk about gaining control over the programme or over their lives. The programme did not tackle gender inequality, so even if selected women benefited from the programme, it did not have any real gender empowering effect. Its effect remained limited to a welfare effect. A mention to these considerations could have been expected from an evaluation, but the report is silent on them.

4.2.4 Further critique and conclusions

After having critically studied the programme and its evaluation it is clear that a literacy programme needs to have a much stronger gender element in order to fight female illiteracy. A programme that aims at combating female illiteracy cannot ignore gender as an important aspect of the process. With regard to the UNESCO guidelines, *Checklist for the Integration of Gender Issues in the Evaluation of UNESCO's Programmes* (UNESCO 1999b) the evaluation report failed to ask a number of crucial questions. For example, it does not question the low attendance of female learners in the test. This means that the reader can easily overlook the effect of the programme on women in the society.

Women's time constraints and motivational factors for attending the programme were also overlooked. Clearer understanding of women's motivation for attending a literacy course could have been enhanced by discussing gender and class relations. The relevance of the course could then have been reflected in lower drop-out rates and more regular attendance. As women's constraints for attending a programme often cannot be accurately measured, specific instruments and measures would have

been needed. Structured questionnaires, for example, are often difficult for learners with limited education to understand. Furthermore, it is often more difficult to reach women, and they feel often less free to speak in a patriarchal society (Bamberger 1997: 267). Therefore, complementary research methods are often necessary if one wants specifically to find out the real reasons for women's low attendance or high drop-out rates.

Furthermore, one would expect the evaluation to highlight the need for a gender perspective. Evaluations are there to pinpoint the weaknesses and strengths of the programme, to show what there is to learn from the programme and what needs to be improved. One can conclude that both programme and its evaluation have, from a gender perspective of UNESCO's own guidelines, severe limitations. The weaknesses of the programme and its evaluation become even more striking when Longwe's analysis is applied.

The silences, which are also crucial deficiencies in the report, become even louder when the questions of the Women's Empowerment Framework are brought to bear on its evaluation approach. The report applauds the emphasis on indigenous forms of knowledge and education as the key to the success of the programme and the empowerment of people. The formative influence of Julius Nyerere in propagating such an approach to education is acknowledged in the body of the report and in its bibliography which mentions three of Nyerere's publications as well as a wealth of secondary literature on the subject. Nyerere's idea of "education for self-reliance" insists that political liberation from colonialism must include a cultural liberation from the humiliations of the past as well (Nyerere 1973). Empowerment in this sense meant drawing on the resources of pre-colonial traditional African culture. This line of argument was widely accepted and also received a level of acceptance within UNESCO circles. This case is clearly presented in a 1989 UNESCO-UNICEF publication on *African Thoughts on the Prospects of Education for All*, where Obemeata argues strongly for the incorporation of elements of traditional principles and practices into modern education in Africa (Obemeata 1989).

Such affirmations of "indigenous knowledge" have become widespread in Development Studies. There has however been a persistent voice of criticism from a

gender perspective. In an article entitled *Introduction: Women and identity politics in theoretical and comparative perspective* (Moghadam 1996), the assumption that the restoration of traditional focus is a laudable benefit is profoundly questioned. Indeed, it is argued that such exercises in identity politics have a very negative impact on women.

Furthermore, the traditional education is often based on the notion of learning in one of the local languages. In the Nigerian programme currently in discussion took place in Yoruba. The report also sees the use of the local language as medium of teaching as one of the programme's innovations and strengths. On the other hand, one must bear in mind some of the criticism for always giving local language the preference. According to Yates (1995), in Ghana for example, the planners in the capital favour the use of local language while a more careful study among the female learners revealed that they perceived the use of English as their first priority. In other words, especially in literacy courses that aim at empowering women the local language may not necessarily always be the best solution (Yates 1995: 438). This applies especially to countries where English, for example, are the prerequisite for social advancement within the government and for commercial employment. Literacy courses can thus play a crucial role in the provision of the necessary "cultural capital".

An education principle that is based on traditional values will not always necessarily be advantageous for women's advancement. Particularly in times of crisis and transition religious and political-cultural movements have created constructions of gender that have severely limited women's freedom. Many fundamentalist and communalist movements have contributed negatively to changes in laws, institutions, practices, attitudes to gender, and the legal status and social positions of women. This has often been legitimized by means of appealing to traditions and religious texts (Moghadam 1996: 12).

Nigeria has a long history of exclusion of women from politics. The traditional should no longer stand in the way of a rapidly changing society. Johnson and Oyinade (1999: 29) maintain, with regard to Nigeria, that all its people need to be educated, irrespective of gender, both male and female.

What is noteworthy is that the writers of the report do not pay any attention to these voices of criticism. The result is that although both Longwe (1997: 17) and the authors of the report speak of “empowerment” they do so in a very different sense. Traditional education method, in spite of other benefits it may offer, does not necessarily support gender awareness but might very well perpetuate traditional gender roles. It is therefore important to examine by means of comparison how such matters are addressed by another literacy programme in Africa. The national literacy programme in Namibia also sees itself as being rooted in a specific cultural and social context. The precise way in which it does so, and the way in which the evaluation report describes it, will be subject under discussion in the following pages.

4.3 National Literacy Programme in Namibia

4.3.1 Background and context of evaluation

The report (Lind 1996) describes how the National Literacy Programme in Namibia (NLPN) was established directly after Namibian independence in 1990. After consultancy studies on past experiences and a national seminar on a future National Literacy Programme in Namibia, the first major document on the subject was published, “*Guide to NLPN*” (Lind 1996: 9). Literacy was declared a human right and an important tool for achieving empowerment. Furthermore, literacy was seen as a valuable means for community building and socio-economic development. Thereby, illiteracy was proclaimed the enemy of democracy and development. NLPN’s role therefore became to overcome the legacies of apartheid. It set out to provide new skills and confidence for marginalised people to better exercise their newly gained rights and responsibilities in the new Namibian democracy. Also highlighted by the President, Sam Nujoma, as he outlined the objectives of the programme, was the importance of the literacy programme for women in terms of their emancipation and its positive effect on the whole family in educational, health and economic terms (Lind 1996: 17). All this information is provided by the report of the evaluators.

In 1992, after the preparatory phase, the NLPN was launched (Lind 1996: 10). In this subsequent phase, called stage 1, approximately 15000 learners were enrolled, and 78% of these were women. In 1993 the first learners were tested (8439), and 80% passed. In stages 2 and 3, another 34 400 learners enrolled, and 77% of them were female. In 1994 a further 36 107 learners enrolled of which 77% again were female. Their success rate in further tests was also around 80%.

The evaluation process was launched in 1994 in order to determine the effectiveness of the programme and to determine the potential of the programme and how to improve its implementation. It saw itself as engaged in giving the learners and other members of the society a chance to express their opinion about the NLPN. It also aimed at enhancing and sustaining the support and commitment for the programme

(Lind 1996: 7). The formative questions were: What lessons have we learnt? And, what can we do about it? (1996: 105). The evaluation followed closely the common principles of popular adult education and literacy: participatory and action-oriented in its approach to evaluation, in its design and in its implementation.

“Free to Speak Up”. *Overall Evaluation of the National Literacy Programme in Namibia* (Lind 1996) was published in 1996 by the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture of Namibia. The report covers a program launched nationally in 1990, and is based on six sub-studies and a post-graduate research programme (Lind 1996: 4-10). Unlike the evaluators of the Oyo programme in Nigeria who were part of a local research network, this evaluation is the product of co-operation within a team of internal and external evaluators. On the front cover we are told that external evaluators are researchers from the Social Sciences Division (SSD) of the University of Namibia and consultants commissioned by the UNESCO Institute for Education, “in particular Harbans S. Bhola”. Once again the UNESCO Institute has a role as facilitator and resource for expertise, without having to bear all responsibility for the final product. It is worth noting that Bhola had earlier written the UNESCO publication on methodology for evaluating literacy programmes, which was substantially endorsed by the then Director of the UNESCO Institute for Education, Paul Bélanger (Bhola 1990: i-ii).

The report on the Namibian programme is written by Agneta Lind, who was overall co-ordinator of the evaluation, and there is an equal balance of male and female names of other evaluators listed. In an appendix, “Evaluation Approach and Methodology” (Lind 1996: 105-110), details of the practicalities of the evaluation are provided, including a list of the earlier studies on which it was based.

The external sub-studies were commissioned by the Ministry of Basic Education and Culture through UNICEF, and their terms of reference were determined in advance. These were influenced by a participatory workshop, “Brainstorming”, which had discussed the important “Whats”, “Whys” and “Hows” of the evaluation. The first one, *A Community Impact Study of Adult Literacy in Okongo, Northern Namibia* (Maasdorp 1995, cited in Lind 1996: 4) was a case study mainly conducted by means of interviews. It aimed at finding out what had been the immediate benefits of the

programme for the learners and for the community, by comparing learners and non-learners. The second one, *NLPN: A Policy Analysis and Programme Evaluation* (Bhola 1995, cited in Lind 1996: 4) was a policy analysis based on existing documentation, interviews and field visits led by H.S. Bhola. It critically analyses the performance of the Directorate of Adult Basic Education, as well as the achievements of the programme in terms of its coverage and delivery, costs and sustainability.

The internal sub-studies were prepared at workshops with central and regional level NLPN staff; Regional Literacy Officers (RLOs) and some District Literacy Officers, (DLOs). RLOs made in-depth interviews and collected information from learners. A *National Survey of Literacy Promoters* (Tjiho n.d., cited in Lind 1996: 5) was conducted by DLOs, RLOs and Head Office staff. A survey questionnaire was designed in a workshop. It consisted of two parts: part 1 on promoters' information and opinions, part 2 on learners' opinions and experiences. The survey questionnaire consisted of 85 questions and was to be circulated to 2070 promoters and literacy group members. A total of valid 1700 valid questionnaires were collected and summarised by DLOs before they were handed to the RLOs.

The *Tracer Study of Learners who Enrolled in 1992* (Nambira n.d., cited in Lind 1996: 5) was designed so as to concentrate on "motivation", "learning process" and "impact". The survey was conducted by regional and district literacy officers. In the course of a preparatory workshop a question-guide was developed for in-depth recorded interviews with learners. Interviewers were "expected to trace and collect information on learners from two enrolment registers from 1992, when NLPN started" (Lind 1996: 107). Included in this sample were those still attending as well as drop-outs. Of the so interviewed, 36 were female and 14 male. In other words, of the interviewed 72% were female and 28% were male and this ratio correlates relatively well to the overall enrolment ratio. Fifteen of those interviewed were drop-outs. Interviews were conducted in the vernacular, then transcribed and translated into English.

DLOs also conducted *case studies* in selected literacy groups. The case study instruments had been designed in an extensive participatory workshop. The process

consisted of classroom observation, assessment of learners' writing skills, and informal interviews. The case studies were to cover two literacy groups per region. They concentrated on determining attendance patterns and analysing the teaching-learning process. Several of the case studies were constrained by external factors such as the rainy season.

The report also describes an evaluation of the implementation of NLPN at district level. The implementation study was prepared at a small workshop with professional Head Office staff. Each evaluator visited a district over one to two weeks and reported on the DLO's role (Lind 1996: 105-109). The objective of this exercise was to work side by side with local DLOs to gain an impression of what was happening with regard to the implementation of the programme. Reports were written based on these observations.

The "Evaluation Model" ensured that the issues covered by the different sub-studies span a wide spectrum, from policy and political commitment, its socio-cultural context, its resources and curriculum, to the actual process of the programme and its outcome (Lind 1996: 110). The reader of this evaluation cannot fail to be impressed by the thoroughness of the evaluation and the care taken in the report to recount each step. The question now requiring attention is how well the evaluation was able to do its work from a gender perspective.

4.3.2 Report in relation to UNESCO guidelines

Many of the ruling principles of UNESCO with regard to evaluation were met. The evaluation was an effort to learn more and improve the programme. The evaluation followed a participatory and action oriented evaluation approach. Learners identified and analysed social problems they were facing and they were acted upon. The National Literacy Programme in Namibia, (NLPN) provided professional staff at a central and regional level to assist the programme, to identify problems and to suggest improvements. Literacy teachers and learners were involved at the class in the same tasks (Lind 1996: 105). The survey relied on both qualitative and quantitative methods, as recommended by Bhola. The wording in this regard well illustrates the influence of this particular consultant commissioned by UNESCO:

“The overall evaluation combined quantitative and qualitative methods, and built on information developed for continuous monitoring of NLPN. This combination was endorsed by Bhola and identified as an ‘expanded vision of evaluation’” (Lind 1996: 105). Measures were also taken to highlight the importance of incorporating gender criteria in the programme. Especially the evaluation of Bhola pointed out new measures to involve a deeper gender perspective.

It will now be necessary to carefully study the extent to which gender aspects were integrated into the evaluation by means of the checklist for integration of gender issues in the evaluation in relation to UNESCO’s Medium-Term Strategy. This guideline urges that planning, implementation and participation, relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, impact, recommendations and lessons learned, should all be covered and presented in a gender-disaggregated manner in the evaluation report.

a) Integration of gender into planning, implementation and participation

What does the evaluation reveal about the *planning of the programme*? Ideally the planning and implementation of the programme involved both men and women, and included both of their perspectives in the programme. The report does not clearly state how far women’s perspectives were specifically included in the planning stage or to what extent women were involved in the actual planning of the programme. The programme aimed at involving the community in planning, monitoring and evaluation of the programme. The communities, the reader is told, were encouraged to participate in the structures of the programme in order to take full control of the programme and direct it in the ways that would benefit them.

The case studies described in the report throw some light on the *implementation of the programme*. Plans were devised to find out the teaching processes’ strengths and weaknesses. Classroom observations were then used to find out how well the teaching was received and generally how effective the learning was. Problems identified with the implementation of the programme were, for example, the frequent irregularity of learners’ attendance and often late arrival to the classes. Some learners also felt they needed more revision of the work and more time to cope with the material (Lind 1996: 54). Furthermore, some learners experienced problems with

their placement at the different stages. As a means to overcome some of these problems it was suggested that negotiating time needs and holidays with the learners could be considered. As a valuable strength of the teaching method the respect and patience teachers showed for adult learners was identified. The evaluation identified also a need for further training of promoters and DLOs in writing and numeracy. The need for mother tongue handbooks was also pinpointed as the promoters' English often was not strong enough to read them comfortably in English (Lind 1996: 50).

With regard to *women's participation* in the programme, the evaluation reveals that gender disaggregated statistics existed before the programme was launched, thanks to the 1991 Census. Close to half of Namibia's population was estimated to be illiterate (Lind 1996: 112). According to census statistics the national ratio for illiteracy among men and women was very similar, with female illiteracy slightly higher. But there were also big regional differences. In certain region's such as Caprivi and Okavango there were more illiterate women than men. Oshikoto, Oshana, Erongo, Hardap and Karas had a higher rate of illiterate men than women (Lind 1996: 17). The overall literacy rate also varied considerably between the regions. Generally, one can say that in rural areas the rate of illiteracy was higher than in urban areas. Kunene, Ohangwena, Okavango and Omheke had the highest illiteracy rates.

Women were identified as a target group in terms of their potentially positive effect on the whole family. Reaching women was seen as especially beneficial for the society as a whole as it would have a positive effect on the children's life. Literate mothers more easily become aware of the importance of schooling for their children. The health of literate children also often improves in consequence (Lind 1996: 15). Therefore, they were in some sense identified as a target group. The evaluation, however, does not clearly mention whether any special gender strategies were applied, and if so, then which. Especially in the regions with a majority of illiterate women one would have expected measures to rectify the gender imbalances.

The gender balance of the teaching and promoting staff was analysed in the report. It showed that a majority of the teachers were female. Only 28 % of the promoters was male. However among DLOs and RLOs there was a majority of males. This applies also to the senior staff at the central level of NLPN (Lind 1996: 95). Nevertheless,

the evaluation does not give any recommendations about how to achieve a more equitable division of work among women and men. Clearly there is a need for women becoming more involved at the supervisory and senior level. But this the report fails to mention.

b) Integration of gender when considering the relevance of the programme

Gender information involves assessing the relevance of the programme's objectives in relation to goals identified by the donors or the recipient country. Are the objectives relevant and realisable? One needs to question the programme's goals in relation to gender objectives. More specifically, within the context of UNESCO, one needs to ask whether the goals meet the standards of UNESCO's Agenda for Gender Equality (UNESCO 1995b). What relevance did the programme have in terms of furthering gender equality. We then need to ask how the programme responded to identified specific needs and interests of women related to the programme, and how all this is reported by the evaluation.

According to the report, the goal of the programme was individual as well as socio-economic development. Its objectives were to promote social, cultural, political and economic development. Literacy was defined as a human right and an important pillar of democracy. Thereby, NLPN was defined as an important step towards overcoming the legacy of apartheid. It involved, among others things, empowering through reinforcing self-confidence and self-reliance, empowering people to participate in the democratic process and exercise their rights and responsibilities, and fostering equality and understanding between women and men.

The programme thereby aimed at reaching illiterate citizens in order to enable them to operate more easily within a modern society. The newly founded democracy also required active participation of its citizens. Furthermore, literacy was seen as a means to increase the productivity of the labour force. Literate workers are also more easily trained than illiterate ones. The report does not however clearly question how the programme responded to the specific needs and interests of women.

The report however recommends that women's interests should receive more attention. The content of the reading material it notes is too confined to description of

women in their traditional roles. It would be important to discuss more important social issues and specific women's issues. Bhola recommends that traditional female and male roles should be more rigorously questioned. Women's rights and the new Namibian Constitution should be discussed, he argues, in terms of the new opportunities it gives women. Therefore, it is argued, there is an urgent need for rewriting the curriculum material in a more gender aware manner (Lind 1996: 46).

The report does indeed also note some new and interesting gender considerations in the programme with regard to men. A need for targeting men and founding specific groups for men was identified. The high drop-out rate of men and general low performance was particularly identified as being due to gender relationships. More specifically, it observed that the negative attitudes of men and cultural factors hampered men's success in the courses (Lind 1996: 95). The reasons given by promoters for men's low attendance were negative attitudes from other men (36%) and shyness (29%). Men also themselves proposed as one reason, that too many women were in the class (Lind 1996: 26).

c) Requirements for effectiveness and efficiency in terms of gender aspects

By effectiveness one is referring to how far the objectives were achieved. It is often expressed as a relationship between inputs and outputs, but it can also express the quality of the output.

The NLPN was introduced in the context of Namibian independence on March 21, 1990. In 1990 it was estimated that 60% of the Namibian adult population was illiterate. NLPN aimed at achieving 80% literacy by the year 2000 (Lind 1996:14). Later the estimated illiteracy rate was adjusted somewhat lower but the task still remained enormous (Lind 1996: 15).

Were the gender specific objectives achieved? The benefits of specifically training women were identified by the programme, and the enrolment of women in the course was noted by the evaluation to have been higher than that of men. The proportion of women enrolled was high, about 77% throughout the different phases. In some regions such as the Ondangwa region, 85% of all learners were female, and in Windhoek, 54% of all learners were female (Lind 1996: 75).

The report identified some of the reasons for the lower men's enrolment such as difficulty with the time table and lack of interest. Furthermore, shyness and alcohol problems were recorded as factors. A closer analysis of the reasons was recommended by the report, and the need for new ways of reaching and involving men was identified.

The age and gender profile of the learners did not quite correspond to the structure of overall adult illiteracy in the society. Men were almost half of all the illiterates in Namibia but only 23% of the learners were men (Lind 1996: 102). Women of over 44 were more represented than their younger sisters. The reasons identified by the evaluation were the restrictions on younger women's freedom to choose their daily activities as their workload and marital and motherly duties restrict them more than is the case with older women (Lind 1996: 7).

The evaluation also reported a strong inconsistency between enrolment rates and attendance rates. There were also drastic differences between men's and women's drop-out rates. The Tracer Study, for example, reported that in Ondangwa and Khorixas, men had in 1992-1995 a far higher drop-out rate than women. In Khorixas 50% of the learners who had enrolled in 1992 had dropped out in 1995, in other words only 1 out of the original 5 men was still attending. Only 15% of women dropped out while 86% of men dropped out in Odangwa (Lind 1996: 70)!

Comparing pass rates of those who attended the test is another way of measuring internal efficiency. The internal efficiency rate recorded was thus 55%, which as such is high for a literacy programme. In other words, 55% of the learners who took part in the test passed it in 1992/1993 and 1993/1994. Furthermore, the drop-out rate was recorded at around 30% or less (Lind 1996: 70).

Bhola's study of gender differences in test achievements (Bhola 1995, cited in Lind 1996: 79), revealed that the pass rate among women was much higher than among men. Women's success rate was also uniform in different regions while men's success rate varied. In Okongo in 1993/94 the first stage was tested: of female learners, 68% passed, while only 31% of the male learners managed to achieve the

same. The reason for this offered by the evaluation is that women attended the classes more regularly.

The evaluation sought to establish which factors affected the effectiveness of the programme. Constraints faced by women for regular attendance were also explored. Dropping out or not attending regularly were, for example, a consequence of husbands not letting their wives attend the programme, or because no one would be there to look after their children. In Katimo Mulilo the most common reason was husbands' resistance (42%). The evaluation report acknowledges that these reasons need to be addressed in new mobilisation efforts by NLPN (Lind 1996: 27).

d) Impact of the programme on women and men

The next question is about determining the impact of the programme on women and men, each considered separately. Did the programme enhance the status of either men or women?

The evaluation established that the programme had an empowering effect on the learners. It increased awareness, community participation, self-esteem and respect (Lind 1996: 85). According to the evaluation there was a clear difference between the female learners and other illiterate women's knowledge and information on regional and national issues. Among men the difference was less obvious. The difference in awareness of local, national and international events was small. Yet at the same time, the participants often expressed relief at finally having an easier time to cope with societal matters. They felt they had come out of darkness.

Many of the interviewed also said that they now felt more self-confident. From the examples the report creates the impression that this was especially the case among women. The programme also had a positive effect on the rest of the family's education. Parents gained greater understanding of the need for education of their children. Children, as a result, had an easier time to get time off from house duties in order to study. Also, some women reported that they had gained more respect from their partners once they have learnt to read.

The evaluation was also able to establish whether the programme had had an effect on learners' participation in community groups, organisations and programmes. It found that literacy did not automatically lead to learners joining more organisations, but it did increase participation levels as it had increased self-esteem. Some female learners felt more confident to express their opinions in meetings than before. There were also illiterate women interviewed who felt that they were not expected to express their opinions because they were illiterate. Nevertheless, it remained clear that gender roles still determined to a large extent the participation in the meetings. Women were not expected to express opinions, many saw it as men's domain (Lind 1996: 88).

The report relates that learners felt more respected by the community members once they became literate. This had boosted their self-confidence to participate in the community. DLOs also reported that some learners, although limited in number, had become more actively involved in income generating programmes.

Interestingly, the evaluation also reports that the literacy programme did have some positive effect on awareness of women's issues and to a certain extent had increased women's status in the community. Some female learners were elected by their community to represent them in organisations such as the Drought Relief Committee. Others had also become involved in women's organisations. One of them had been elected as the deputy treasurer of the regional branch of the Namibia National Women's Organization (Lind 1996: 89).

According to the report the programme had also had a positive impact on the promoters of the programme. It created new employment opportunities as promoters and DLOs. Promoters also reported that it had improved their ability to communicate and work with people (30%); made financial gain and improved their living standard (20%); increased knowledge (16%); gained experience in adult teaching (12%); gained independence/maturity and positive attitude to life (10%); and lead to respect in the community and for human beings (6%). As most of the promoters were women, this implied that it had a positive impact on many women especially.

The report concludes that one of the most important effects the programme had was its empowerment of women. It had an empowering effect on them as learners and promoters and on their families (Lind 1996: 90). Their self-confidence increased, it is argued, through access to literacy and numeracy skills and increased knowledge.

e) Lessons to be learnt and recommendations

The programme reached many and gave them an opportunity to gain literacy. This has especially been the case with regard to women. The evaluation also recommends that the programme needs to be renewed and that professional development be emphasised, otherwise the programme might become too bureaucratised.

The evaluation makes an important recommendation with regard to the programme's empowerment and the socio-economic development objectives. According to the report there is a risk that these objectives will remain policy objectives without effective application. Therefore, the programme needs to be linked in practice even more to national reconciliation and to social issues such as women's rights (Lind 1996: 93). The learning material, according to the report, needs to address with greater rigour women's issues and other important social concerns. The effectiveness of curriculum material in addressing social concerns, however, often depends on its gender sensitivity. In campaigns against AIDS, for example, the gender sensitivity of the material used is of extreme importance (Medel-Anonuevo 2002b: 39-40).

In order to promote more equal participation of women and men it recommends that separate classes should be offered for men led by male promoters (Lind 1996: 95). Also new methods need to be found to address reasons for men not attending the classes.

The evaluation recommends that all staff receive more professional training. The gender imbalance in women performing mainly as promoters while men being mainly occupied in the senior positions is mentioned, but no specific recommendations are made to improve the situation.

f) The composition of the evaluation team

Both men and women were involved in the evaluation, which is valuable for gaining a broader understanding of the programme. However it remains silent about the extent to which any gender experts were consulted. Many of the gender recommendations were made by Bhola's policy analysis and programme evaluation (Lind 1996: passim). Also the survey of literacy promoters provided important gender disaggregated information on the reasons for women's and men's low attendance and high drop-out rates. More reference to gender would however have been desirable in order to gain a deeper understanding of the programme's impact on women and men. A stronger gender analysis would also have been helpful in order to provide more detailed information as to how the programme enhanced women's empowerment. To specifically analyse the extent the programme addressed women's issues and supported women's empowerment it will be necessary to turn to the Women's Empowerment Framework.

4.3.3 Report in relation to the Women's Empowerment Framework

The first step in the application of Longwe's analysis is to determine whether the programme recognises women's issues. Are underlying gender issues that stand in the way of women's literacy addressed? How is the objective of empowerment related to literacy? Attention to these will make it possible to determine the extent to which the evaluation pays attention to these important issues, and where it stands in its gender awareness.

The report under discussion recognises empowerment as an important objective of the programme. It notes the objectives of the literacy programme as being to further the rights of marginalised people in the newly democratised Namibia (Lind 1996: 12). Furthermore, literacy is specifically seen as an important aspect of women's emancipation.

It reports that the programme saw women as an especially important target group, both because their literacy was known to have many good effects on their families, and in order to support women in coping with the new rights provided by the new constitution to gain a more important role in the newly democratic Namibia (Lind 1996: 17). The programme was introduced in Namibia as it was becoming a

democratic nation, with the aim of supporting the process of democratisation and in order to overcome the legacies of the apartheid era (Lind 1996: 14). However, there is no concrete mention of how to address women's issues or how to further gender equity. The intention of the programme, according to the report is to recognise gender issues, however the concrete steps for doing so are not evident. In terms of Longwe's three levels for the recognition of gender issues, the programme evidently intends to meet the third level, the positive level. It wants to be positively concerned with gender issues, but it achieves, according to the data presented in the report, more concretely the second level, the neutral level.

The evaluation does not very clearly point out the differences in the programme's intention and actual practical measures undertaken. The report does nevertheless convey the message that the programme needs to pay more attention in practice to national reconciliation, as well as to social issues such as women's rights (Lind 1996: 93).

As one seeks to understand the programme in relation to the Women's Empowerment Framework it becomes possible more critically to discuss what the evaluation did achieve and what went unnoticed with regard to women's empowerment. The framework specifically highlights women's empowerment aspects, and offers a deeper understanding of what the process involves.

In terms of the first level of the Women's Empowerment Framework, the *welfare level*, it can easily be concluded that the programme as a matter of fact was very successful in achieving a significant level of literacy among women. More women than men participated in the programme. This was especially impressive as more women were represented than men in proportion to their percentage of the illiterate. Also women had a higher success rate than male learners (Lind 1996: 79). In material terms the promoters, which were most of the time women, also gained from the programme (Lind 1996: 33). It employed over 2000 promoters and DLOs. They were given a new a chance to generate income. Many of the promoters came from poverty stricken backgrounds. As the promoters supported on average 9 family members it implied that nearly 20 000 people were provided some additional

resources (Lind 1996: 89). The programme in this way did indeed have a welfare effect on the community.

In analysing the programme to determine whether it met the criteria of the *access level* as needs specifically to consider women's access to the programme. As noted above, women seem to have had reasonably good access to the programme, as their proportion of learners was so high. On the other hand, the report provides important information about the barriers women and men faced in attending the class. Also gender issues that clearly influenced the participation in the programme are reported. It is observed that women sometimes were not allowed to participate as their partners either directly forbid it or did not show any understanding for their spouses' need to attend the courses (Lind 1996: 27). Men were also clearly influenced by stereotypical thinking of women's and men's traditional roles. They felt overwhelmed by attending classes with a majority of women or when other men teased them about the classes (Lind 1996: 26). The report lists the reasons but does not suggest any concrete steps to be taken in order to overcome them. These attitudes clearly needed to be addressed and women's and men's conscientisation would have been necessary.

The third level, the *conscientisation level*, implies that the empowerment of women occurs as women become aware that their lower socio-economic position is not a given to be accepted. Such realisation requires that gender issues be discussed in the class and change strategies be formulated. According to the evaluation report, the programme contributed to women's perception of themselves being changed positively in many cases. It was reported that some women felt as if they had come out of darkness. They felt more self-confident in performing tasks such as handling money and bank forms (Lind 1996: 85). Literate women also felt they had gained more respect from their community members and in some cases from within their family. Therefore, one can conclude that the evaluation reports a certain degree of empowerment, in terms of greater self-reliance that took place, but one still cannot call it conscientisation. This is where the evaluation fails to analyse more critically the programme's empowerment effect. What happened to the programme's objectives such as providing awareness of newly required democratic values and women's rights? The evaluation does point out some of the weaknesses of the

programme in this regard but not as strongly or as clearly as it might have. It does note that the topics discussed were not concerned strongly enough with social issues, but at the same time it fails to notice that the programme actually supports traditional gender roles rather than initiating a more emancipated role for women. There is no discussion of local gender relationships as far as one can establish from the report. Women and men were not made aware that discrimination is nothing natural or unchangeable. A closer analysis, with help of this framework, would have made it very much more obvious.

In seeking to understand the programme in relation to the fourth level, *the participation level*, it is necessary to question whether the programme contributed to increased women's participation in community groups and organisations. Interestingly, the evaluation also asks this question and seeks to find out if the programme had an impact on learner's participation in the community. It reports that participation in organisation projects, political parties and other organisations was not massively influenced by the programme. The difference in the participation rate between learners and illiterate non-learners was very small (Lind 1996: 88). More learners than illiterate non-learners belonged to a political party. Some women became actively involved in women's organisations such as the Namibian National Women's Organisation. Others had been elected to represent their local community in organisations such as the Drought Relief Committee. The DLOs reported that learners participated in community matters more actively than before. On the other hand, Tegborg's study establishes that the attendance rate of learners and illiterate non-learners in community meetings is very similar (Tegborg n.d., cited in Lind 1996: 88). The attendance rate was more influenced by beliefs in traditional gender roles. Men were expected to speak in the meetings (Lind 1996: 87-89). As the programme seems to have had very little effect on women's mobilisation and collective action it is clear that the programme did not have the desired effect on women to act upon gender discrimination. Once again the evaluation gives us the information but concludes very little from it. By means of the Women's Empowerment Framework one can conclude that the programme did not adequately fulfil the criteria of the fourth level. The programme lacked a sufficiently strong gender dimension, which would have helped women to analyse and address gender

issues, and hence its effect on women remained limited. There was also no component that would have supported women's mobilisation outside the class.

With regard to the fifth level, *the control level*, the programme failed to enhance women's control of their lives or the programme. The report fails altogether to ask this question as it does not analyse the programme in sufficient depth with regard to women's empowerment.

To sum up, although the evaluation provides a great deal of important information, nevertheless, with regard to women's empowerment, it is often too uncritical. It does not carefully enough analyse the information or point out weaknesses of the programme in gender terms. This is problematic as gender aspects are often enough understated in evaluation reports. Particularly if formative evaluations do not clearly and sharply express the gender dimensions of a programme, there is a greater possibility that gender dimensions will be ignored in the revision of the programme.

4.3.4 Further critique and conclusions

With regard to the UNESCO guidelines *Checklist for the Integration of Gender Issues in the Evaluation of UNESCO's Programmes* (UNESCO 1999b), the NLPN evaluation report certainly scores better than the Oyo Report. The evaluation is in many respects within the spirit of the UNESCO guidelines and fulfils many of its evaluation recommendations.

The evaluation was participatory and action oriented, and generates thereby a vast amount of useful information. For example, it provides some insight into the problems learners were facing. It is also useful in presenting data in a gender disaggregated manner. The reasons for low attendance among men (Lind 1996: 26) and the reasons for women dropping out or not attending classes are reported separately (Lind 1996: 27). Consequently a much more gender sensitive picture of the situation is made available.

The combination of methodologies and triangulation gives also valuable insight into the programme and increases the evaluation's authority and reliability. It has a

formative and summative nature, and was therefore perceived both as a learning process as well as a review of what had been achieved. It was compiled by a combination of external experts and internal evaluators. A spirit of mutual support dominates the evaluation. It also reports that external evaluators and experts were more than glad to share their expertise in the field. Furthermore, an Evaluation Reference Group consisting of professionals, partners and donors was established to co-ordinate and design the overall evaluation (Lind 1996: 105-106). The information was gathered by means of both quantitative and qualitative research methods, and to certain extent also through NLPN's continuous monitoring.

With regard to the integration of gender into planning and implementation of the programme, and in relation to participation in the programme, the evaluation report provides relatively limited information. It describes the participatory character of the programme and the community involvement. Women are seen as an especially important target group, but there is no mention of specific gender strategies for achieving such an objective.

Women's participation in the programme was remarkably high. On average, in all courses about 77% of the learners were women. This is especially high if one bears in mind that in Namibia illiteracy among women and men is fairly equally spread (Lind 1996: 16). As stated by the Minister of Basic Education and Culture, John Mutorva, one of the programme's main achievements was that it attracted so many women and gave them skills to cope better with the basic needs of their lives. Women also felt more "free to speak up" than before (Lind 1996: Foreword). The report remains silent however about women's or men's participation in real decision-making and the extent to which their competencies and experiences were allowed to influence the programme.

In terms of integrating gender considerations into supporting the programme's relevance it is stated that the programme's objective was to enhance empowerment and women's rights, but there are no concrete measures to achieve this mentioned. The report however does criticise the programme for not in practice doing enough to further these goals, and recommends, therefore that the curriculum be revised in this regard (Lind 1996: 93). The evaluation also offers broad recommendations with

regard to improving the programme. Unfortunately this is done in a rather abstract manner with regard to gender, and all it points out is that the programme's social objectives need to be more decisively implemented.

Such failure to engage in more thorough critique is highlighted by the Women's Empowerment Framework (Longwe 1991). One notices that the report at times provides important information but does not draw many gender considerations from it. Thereby it remains silent about some important gender aspects of the programme and their effect on women's empowerment.

If women are only targeted in order to increase their productivity, the programme clearly then only achieves the welfare level. In the NPLN case, literacy was seen as a helpful means to increase women's productivity but there was also at the same time a much deeper goal of making the women realise their newly acquired rights under the new constitution. Disappointingly, this goal remained more of an abstract concept rather than a practise. In other words, the programme intended to meet women's issues but failed to a large extent. Thereby, one can locate the programme's aims at the third level, the positive level, in recognising women's issues, but in reality the programme only achieved the neutral level. The evaluation report pays scant attention to the way in which its programme failed to meet its empowerment aims, which is a serious problem, bearing in mind the formative expectations of evaluation. The report only hints at this problem but fails to concretely point it out. There is no systematic questioning of the programme's gender awareness, nor is there scrutiny of steps for dealing with women's rights.

In order to systematise a critique of the report in relation to the Women's Empowerment Framework (Longwe 1991) the findings are briefly summarised. With reference to the first level, *the welfare level*, the programme described in the evaluation has certain of these elements. Nevertheless, the emphasis on empowerment would suggest that it better matches a high level. At the second level, *the access level*, the programme provides skills in literacy and numeracy, but still remains vulnerable to criticism. Clearly the programme is able to reach many new women and in this sense is very effective. At this level it is also important to register the barriers for women's and men's access, as the evaluation indeed does. The third

level, *the conscientisation level*, exposes the weaknesses of the programme. The literacy classes did not discuss gender relations and gender discrimination. There are no consciousness raising measures which the report documents to make it clear that existing gender relations ought to be transformed. The evaluation does indeed note that social issues are not dealt with enough in the course, and perhaps women's issues could be seen as part of this vast field. The report also makes a point about the material not being very gender sensitive and therefore needing revision. Nevertheless, the programme itself hardly questions the gender relations. One could conclude that, in a sense, it then supports by default existing gender relations. At the fourth level, *the mobilisation / participation level*, whether the programme contributed to women's mobilisation is a question that must be raised. The evaluation tries to find out whether the programme had any effect on women's participation in political and community organisations. According to the evaluation women's participation rates in organisations was not clearly influenced by the programme and the programme did not noticeably support any mobilisation of women to fight gender discrimination.

Not surprisingly, as no mobilisation takes place, there are no specific attempts to increase women's control as the fifth level, *the control level*, would require. Women's control over their lives and involvement in decision-making was very little influenced if at all by the literacy programme. The programme, it appears also had very little impact on discriminatory practices.

The evaluation fails to point out clearly that some more concrete gender measures are needed in order to further equality between men and women by means of literacy. Neither does it, strongly enough argue that a gender perspective is necessary for achieving the programmes broader goals. The programme's mission in transmitting more equal and democratic values cannot be translated into reality without a stronger gender input.

4.4 General conclusions: Oyo evaluation and NPLN evaluation

There are similarities between the two evaluations, but there are also striking differences. In many respects the NLPN evaluation is very much more rigorous in

posing questions from a gender perspective. This is the case even though in the implementation of the NLPN a considerable effort was made to address gender. Thus even though there was less to criticize, the evaluation appears to have made a more serious attempt at asking questions about gender.

The report of the Oyo literacy programme understood “empowerment” in terms of the programme’s capacity to utilise traditional cultural forms. The potential of such an approach for perpetuating patriarchal values and institutions remains unproblematised. In its stated objectives the NLPN programme saw the potential of literacy for social transformation. Nevertheless, the report fails to propose any concrete steps in this regard.

Care should be taken drawing too easily conclusions based on comparison between two evaluations. Nevertheless, a noticeable difference between them is the composition of the research team: the one was entirely local and male whereas the other was international and gender balanced. The relevance of this for better understanding the way in which the involvement of UNESCO differs from project to project will be discussed in the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER 5: Conclusion

5.1 Objectives and overview of the research

In the last decades empowerment has become an important objective of many international development programmes. In addition, gender analysis in the field of Development Studies has created a new awareness with regard to the importance of women's role in development. Gender Studies has in this way emerged as a key discipline within Development Studies. The focus has thereby moved from only trying to target women to trying to achieve gender sensitive development programmes. The experience has shown that this is often more complicated than anticipated. It is difficult to forecast a programme's gender effect in the initial stages of planning and implementation, and therefore gender sensitive formative evaluations have a very important function. Furthermore, evaluation has the potential to narrow the gap between development policy and development practice.

An objective of the present study has been to discover avenues for achieving gender aware evaluation. It is a field that warrants research, as evaluations, even today, easily overlook the programme's gender effect. Furthermore, being a new and emerging field, research into how to ensure gender aware evaluations is both an exploratory and a very necessary enterprise. In the field of literacy programme evaluation the UIE has played a vital role in generating ideas in the fields of literacy and gender. By means of Historical-Comparative research it is possible to study the nature of its influence over the years. Study of UIE in relation to changing trends in programme evaluation from a gender perspective reveals an organisation which was very much a part of these changes, both influencing them and being influenced by them. In order to establish its influence not only in policy formulation but on the actual practice of programme evaluation, a systematic comparison between two such initiatives was necessary.

The concern of the present study was therefore to analyse two evaluation reports concerning two different literacy programmes in Africa, one in Nigeria and one in

Namibia. These two reports were chosen, amongst other reasons, because they both deal with literacy programmes in Africa. Women, being most disadvantaged in Africa due to lack of education, it is then highly important that any literacy programme run there address the inequality experienced by them. Furthermore, literacy programmes often declare as their objective, “empowerment”. Now if such empowerment is to take place, both implementation and evaluation will have to be conducted in a gender sensitive manner. Therefore, the empowering effect of the programme on women, should be scrutinised especially carefully.

As already mentioned, the interest of the present study is not on the actual programmes as such but on their evaluation reports. Our objective is to analyse the reports, and to point out how these evaluation reports have a socio-political background which is reflected in what is reported about the programme and what is left out. This becomes clear, for example, as we critically analyse what is reported about the relationship between the literacy programmes and their stated empowerment objectives as depicted by the evaluation reports.

For this purpose we have conducted a critical discourse analysis of the reports, first using UNESCO’s guidelines for evaluation, particularly recommendations for integrating gender into evaluation, and then turning to the Women’s Empowerment Framework of Sara Longwe (1991, 1997, 1999a,1999b), which has to the greater extent shaped the method of the present study. UNESCO’s guidelines were chosen due to UNESCO’s firm commitment to gender equality and because of its satellite organisation UIE’s key role in the field of literacy programme evaluation. Sara Longwe’s Women’s Empowerment Framework was chosen on the one hand to gain a more feminist point of reference in the analysis, and on the other, because of her association with the UIE. Therefore in the process of the research it became possible not only to unravel the various trends within UNESCO but to test the proposed methods themselves.

In this research the following steps were taken. Chapter two is a survey into the different approaches towards women and serves as an introduction to some of the central topics in gender studies. Furthermore, it discusses UNESCO’s commitment to furthering gender equality and highlights its important role as a facilitator in raising

important gender questions for transnational discussion. Thereafter Longwe's Women's Empowerment Framework is introduced. The third chapter leads us through the UIE's recommendations with regard to literacy programme evaluation in the form of handbooks. Furthermore, it introduces UNESCO's guidelines for integrating gender into evaluation (UNESCO 1999b) and expands on Longwe's approach (1999a), this time specifically with regard to literacy programmes. In the fourth chapter the evaluation reports are critically analysed, and it is demonstrated how especially the Oyo Report showed strong deficiencies with regard to gender awareness. Also the NLPN Report's silences about many essential gender questions are pointed out.

5.2 The results of the investigation into Evaluation Research

“In its simplest sense, evaluation research is a process of determining whether the intended result was produced” (Babbie 1994: 339). The Oyo Report scores worse than the NLPN, both in terms of the UNESCO guidelines for integrating gender issues in the evaluation and in terms of Longwe's Women's Empowerment Framework (Longwe 1999a, 1999b). When the literacy programmes, as they are reported in the evaluation reports, are analysed the programmes' gender perspectives and potentially empowering effect on women become apparent. The less gender sensitive the programme comes across the more one would have expected the evaluation to pick this up. In both cases the opposite is true. The NLPN programme itself scores better in this regard, and at the same time its evaluation report is more critical about the effect of the programme on women.

In relation to the UNESCO guidelines, from the Oyo Report it is evident that the effectiveness of the programme is very deficient in terms of women's participation in the literacy classes and the tests. However, the report makes no mention of this! It does not question the reasons for it, nor does it seek to address the problem in any other way. It can therefore be concluded that both the programme and the report severely lack a gender perspective. The NLPN programme clearly had greater success with regard to reaching women, as almost 77% of the learners were women. Their report also questions reasons for irregular attendance and the high drop-out

numbers, in a gender disaggregated manner. Furthermore, it notes that women had a higher pass rate than men, while the Oyo Report creates the impression that men were more successful, although in reality, mathematical analysis of the data shows that of those few women who attended test 77,2% achieved an A certificate (136 of 176 female learners). Men's success rate can be calculated at 73,4% (232 of 316 men). The Oyo Report also scores lower in terms of future gender recommendations than does the NLPN. The NLPN Report for its part recommends that women's rights become more central part of the programme.

With regard to Longwe's recognition levels of women's issues, the Oyo programme achieved the lowest level of all, the negative level, but the report failed to recognise gender awareness as a deficiency. The NLPN programme had good intentions with regard to recognising women's issues but achieved in practise less than that. The report is not as specific as it could have been, had it questioned the programme in terms of Longwe's three levels of recognition of women's issues. Nevertheless it does note that there is a need in practise to pay more attention to linking the more effectively literacy to national reconciliation and women's rights. The difference between the two programmes becomes even more obvious in terms of women's empowerment when they are analysed with the help of Longwe's different levels of empowerment (Longwe 1999a). The Oyo programme reaches only the welfare level while the NLPN programme is not confined to this lowest level. Accordingly, one would expect the Oyo evaluation report to have drawn attention to such deficiencies, but it remains silent. The validity of their claim to guarantee empowerment by emphasising traditional culture is not at all questioned in the report. Instead the report supports the assumption. Given the fact that traditional culture is often strongly male and patriarchal, such appeals one questionable.

5.3 The role of the UIE in programme evaluation

The fact that *both* evaluations were acknowledged favourably in UNESCO's International Literacy Research Awards, and that both were published by the UIE, is a striking inconsistency. Furthermore, critical study of the UIE's role revealed that despite the organisation's strong commitment to gender and women's empowerment,

its published evaluation handbooks (Bhola 1990, Easton 1996) did not have any gender specific considerations. In order to gain a gender perspective to the evaluation of literacy programme one needed to turn to UNESCO's separate guidelines for integrating gender into the evaluation. Nevertheless, a commitment to furthering international discussion of gender and evaluation has given the opportunity to many more feministically oriented voices to be heard. Within this context of a transnational discourse created by its various consultations, also the valuable Longwe Women's Empowerment Framework was introduced. Her contribution indeed appears in several UIE publications (1997, 1999a, 1999b)! The Women's Empowerment Framework, as has been demonstrated above, turned out to be particularly helpful in pinpointing the weaknesses and strengths of the reports with regard to the programmes' empowerment effect.

The UIE both generates policy discourse and exercises some influence over evaluation of literacy programmes. Its role in these matters is far from easy to analyse. To begin with, policy is not static and there have been definite shifts over time. A strong gender lobby emerged in the UIE towards the end of the nineties when Carol Medel-Anonuevo (cf. 1999a, 1999b) became responsible for the Lifelong Learning Department, and this helps to explain the difference in emphasis between publications from the early nineties and those of a decade later. Furthermore, the precise nature of the UIE's involvement varies not just over time but in relation to particular programme evaluations. In some cases it is involved in the sense of having its staff members participating in the actual evaluation and in other cases their only direct role is as publishers of the evaluation report. It is also important to bear in mind that the UIE is simply one of the actors in a constellation which can include local universities, government departments and other international consultants.

A cursory study of the collected essays published by the UIE (for example, Medel-Anonuevo 1999a and 1999b) well illustrates a conscious practice of both providing a broad direction and at the same time creating space for different voices. These people are invited to conferences and have their contributions made available. While the conferences and publications are under the banner of the UIE, the organisation is very clear about insisting that all the opinions reflected there are not necessarily its

own. In one sense they create a neutral platform from which new ideas may emerge. In another sense, there is also a conscious exercise in choice about who is invited and what is published, which is certainly not neutral. In spite of the mixed messages this may communicate, it is in retaining such a balance that the UIE appears to see its role with regard to gender and literacy programme evaluation.

5.4 Conclusion and suggestions for further research

It can be concluded from the research that the problem of literacy programme evaluations which do not adequately address the gender question remains a significant one. This study has not been satisfied to place blame solely at the door of the programmes themselves, but highlights the crucial contribution of rigorous summative and formative evaluation. It became clear that the discourse of gender empowerment, is something that is easily included in policy formulations for literacy programmes, but in the discourse of the evaluation much of the critical edge is lost. The task of further explaining and reducing the gap between policy and practice is one that awaits further investigation.

The research also revealed the important role of evaluations in order to further gender awareness. Current practise with regard gender awareness in evaluation was criticised and the need for broader critical study of already compiled evaluation reports was identified. The need for further research into the question of gender in evaluation was emphasised as it should have a high priority within all evaluations. Unfortunately this is too often overlooked as the forces that contribute to the inadequacies of literacy programmes in gender terms also often dictate the direction and emphasis of their evaluations.

The Oyo Report (Omolewa et al. 1998) did address the question of gender, except in a very elementary manner. It is reported that in the initial base survey, data was collected in a gender specific manner. Otherwise the actual report makes very little reference to programme's gender effect. It is concerned with the programme's empowerment effect but not specifically in relation to women. With regard to the NLPN Report (Lind 1996), the research demonstrates that it attempted much more

consistently to address gender. It reported valuable information about the programme's success in gender terms, and criticised the programme for not more adequately discussing women's rights, as this had initially been declared as one of the programme's important goals. It also questions in a more critical manner the programme's empowerment effect. Unfortunately though, even this report does not do so as gender specifically as one could have expected. Although at the time when the evaluations were being conducted the UIE's policy on gender was only beginning to shift to GAD, this is not reflected and even the earlier policy of WID is neglected.

The contribution of Gender Analysis to literacy programme evaluation is a perspective which exposes some of the important gaps between programme objectives and programme impact. While the UNESCO guidelines, *Checklist for the integration of gender issues in the evaluation of UNESCO's programmes* (UNESCO 1999b), helped to isolate many inadequacies in the evaluation reports, it is the Women's Empowerment Framework (Longwe 1991) which served to generate questions in a way which was both rigorous and systematic. These methods served not only as tools of analysis in the present study, but they provide an example of the way in which UNESCO and its UIE go about establishing good practice in the field of literacy programme evaluation.

The NLPN evaluation (Lind 1996) through the composition of its team of evaluators, had far greater exposure to international influence. This could be a reason for its greater awareness of gender issues. At the same time such an explanation lacks precision. It would be more accurate to note that the activity in the evaluation team of gender specialists is the decisive factor. Nevertheless, the way in which the UIE has served to promote such ideas cannot be underestimated.

The facilitating role of an international NGO such as the UIE, which results in the generation of a multiplicity of perspectives, is clearly an area that would merit further study. Greater understanding of how such transnational discourses are initiated and sustained would be of considerable interest to Development Studies.

Appendix A: Checklist for the Integration of Gender Issues

The questions suggested by the *Checklist for the integration of gender issues in the evaluation of UNESCO's programmes* (UNESCO 1999b).

a) Planning, implementation and participation

- How were women involved at the planning or formulation stage? How were men?
- Were women's perspectives taken into account when developing the programme?
- What kind of gender strategies were adopted by the programme?
- Were gender issues specifically addressed by the programme? If so, how?
- How was the target group identified? Were specific groups of women identified as a target group?
- Did gender-disaggregated statistics / data exist on the situation before the programme started?

b) Relevance

- How did the programme respond to the identified interests and needs of women related to the programme? To those of men?
- How did the programme respond to the priorities of specific target groups?
- How did the programme contribute to achieving the objectives of UNESCO's Agenda for Gender Equality?

c) Effectiveness and efficiency

- In the case of gender specific objectives, to what extent and how were they achieved?
- How did women participate in programme activities (including training programmes, seminars and meetings)? And men? Were there any specific budget allocations for women?

- Did women face any particular constraints or obstacles in participating in programme activities? Did men ? If so, what kind?
- Did the programme fully utilise the specific competence and experience of women as well as those of men?
- How did women and men participate in the decision-making process related to the programme?

d) Impact

- What is the impact of the programme on women? Impact on men?
- How have women benefited ? And men?
- Is the impact sustainable on the target population? On women?
- Have programme activities promoted women's participation in management and decision-making structures ?
- What are the programme's results with regard to human resources development and capacity building for women? And of men? Have women's situation and status been enhanced as a result of the programme?
- Have programme activities contributed to the enhancement of women's access to resources (education, training, credits etc.)?

e) Recommendations and lessons learnt

- How has the programme contributed to the achievement of gender equality?
- Specific recommendations should be made on: a) how to introduce or develop further a gender perspective in the programme; b) how promote a more equal participation of women and men; and c) how to monitor and measure progress made in this direction.

f) Composition of the team

- A gender expert, or a person knowledgeable about gender issues, should be part of all Major Programme Evaluation teams. An effort should be made to have both men and women represented on these teams.

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