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SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND

PILOTING THE REFLECT APPROACH WITH A RWANDAN POTTER COMMUNITY



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A Thesis submitted to the School of Education, Faculty of Humanities,
of the University of the Witwatersrand
in fulfilment of the requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education

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Abstract

In order to see if the Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques (Reflect) approach could be appropriate for educating disadvantaged people, I conducted a pilot study of the Reflect approach with a group of Rwandan Potters during one year from June 2010 to May 2011, and in so doing addressed the following questions:

- How did a selected group of Rwandan Potters respond to the Reflect approach?
- What literacy and other educational interests and needs within this group were identified and addressed using the Reflect approach?
- Is the Reflect approach sensitive to gender based decision making among the Rwandan Potter Community?
- Did the Reflect approach strengthen the capacity of Rwandan Potters in decision making and action for development?
- What challenges were encountered when using the Reflect approach and how were they managed?

The present study encompasses eight chapters. The first chapter is an introduction to the entire study. It presents, on the one hand, indigenous peoples worldwide, and indigenous people of Rwanda who are called Rwandan Potters, on the other hand. They are characterized by illiteracy and live on the margins of society. Reflect, the new approach to literacy which combines Freire‘s theory and Chambers’ Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools for educating adults, was researched to tackle these problems.

The second and third chapters offer theories about development, participation, empowerment and literacy which constitute major elements in eradicating illiteracy, marginalisation and powerlessness by using the Reflect approach (the root element in this study). Chapter 4 is an illustration of the above theories in general, and the Reflect approach in particular. It shows how illiteracy is tackled in practice. In sum, the theoretical framework and literature review indicated the relevant approach (a bottom-up approach) to addressing the problems posed in this study. A bottom-up approach has helped Rwandan Potters to be conscious of the issues they experienced in their lives. It has also helped them to sit together, to share their issues and to search for ways to solve them themselves by performing a common action, as the Rwandan proverb goes: ‘Nta mugabo umwe’ (the union makes strength).

The research design adopted to reach the desired outcomes was Action Research (chapter 5) which consisted of action-reflection, supported by PRA tools and techniques, such as unstructured interviews, participant observation, focus group discussions, photography, field notes and Information Record-Memory Retrievable Dictation (IRMD). The research was conducted with a group of twenty volunteer Rwandan Potters and five facilitators (including

the researcher) who formed a team named Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle in this study. Through this process, data was collected, analysed, interpreted and discussed.

The findings (chapters 6, 7 and 8) revealed that Reflect is a relevant bottom-up approach which could be used to educate adults in general, and poor and marginalized people in particular. It enables facilitators to help Rwandan Potters to recover their voices and to freely discuss issues they encounter in their lives. Rwandan Potters explained their desire to gain literacy skills, which they did. They also showed that they were able to use these skills in confronting other issues in order to begin the process of development. This was observed during actions taken together, such as family planning, subscription to health insurance, combating ignorance related to HIV/AIDS, counteracting malnutrition by planting vegetables and fruits, undertaking small projects to generate income (flower project), mutual funds which allowed them to open up a bank account, daring to take decisions about the management of Modern Pottery Cooperative, and so on.

All these initiatives revealed how members of the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle were empowered and testify to the changes made by acquiring literacy and using it to advance the knowledge which adults can gain through the Reflect approach. Apart from the above actions taken and accomplished, the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle devised its own a framework for empowerment which also contributes to knowledge.

Declaration

I declare that this thesis is my own work through participation in the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle. It is being submitted to the University of the Witwatersrand for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, not to any other university. It has been prepared without any assistance, except the supervision of Prof. P. J. Castle of the University of the Witwatersrand.

Rita Paradie Nimusabe

March 2013

Dedication

To P. J. Castle

To my husband J.L. Barayavuga

To our children P.I. Bonerabose, A.C. Ishimwe, B.B. Baho, and W.S. Abera

Acknowledgements

The end of this thesis gives me an opportunity to thank all those who played a role in finalizing work which permits me to achieve the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

The first acknowledgement goes to Prof. P.J. Castle who raised in value this thesis when she guided my feet toward the achievement of this degree. I will never forget the moments I passed through the supervision of the best educator I have known during my degree course. Her understanding, constant encouragement, sense of commitment, constructive criticism, support in editing of this thesis, and intellectual comments were incomparable help in accomplishing this work. I shall always remember the times we shared together discussing science and life. It was an honour to work with her.

Secondly, I express my gratitude to all the academic staff of the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand for sharing their knowledge and expertise throughout seminars and conferences. My appreciation goes also to Wits administrative staff, to the Government of Rwanda through SFAR funding agency, and to Kigali Institute of Education that ensured that all administrative matters were handled appropriately and in due time.

Thirdly, I appreciate Rwandan Potter Community in general and Rwandan Potters grouped in the Modern Pottery Cooperative who agreed to collaborate with me and to share information, opinions, thoughts and pictures about the problems they faced in their lives and the way they searched together for solutions. The data collected and analysed and the interpretation of results have led to the success of this research project as this work becomes a means of delivering Rwandan Potters from marginalization, powerlessness and illiteracy.

Finally, deep gratitude is expressed to my husband J.L. Barayavuga and to our children P.I. Bonerabose, A.C. Ishimwe, B.B. Baho and W.S. Abera for their love and steady encouragement which made me work confidently. Also my colleagues who helped me with their opinions, scientific thoughts and kindness deserve my gratitude. Thanks go especially to E. Niyibizi, E. Sibomana, J.C. Ndagijimana, S. Maniraho, and M. Mabeta - you were a wonderful team helping me to achieve this thesis.

R.P. NIMUSABE

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Abbreviations

AATG: Action Aid-The Gambia

ADBR: Association for the Global Development of the Batwa of Rwanda

ADF: African Development Forum

AMS: Alliance for Metropolitan Stability

APB: Association for the Promotion of Batwa

APEDE: Association for the Protection of Unaccompanied Children in distress

AR: Action Research

CAURWA: Community of Indigenous Peoples of Rwanda

COPORWA: Rwandan Potters Community

DFID: Department for International Development

EFA: Education for All

ESSP: Education Sector Strategy Plan

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organisation

GAD: Gender and development

GNP: Gross National Product

IDRC: International Development Research Centre

IRMD: Information Record-Memory Retrievable Dictation

MRGI: Minority Rights Group International

MINEDUC: Ministry of Education

MPC: Modern Pottery Cooperative

NFE: Non-Formal Education

NLM: National Literacy Mission

NLS: New Literacy Studies

PA: Participatory Appraisal

PAR: Participatory Action Research

PRA: Participatory Rural Appraisal

REFLECT: Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques

SIL: Safety Integrity Level

UNCTD: United Nations Council on Trade and Development

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNEP: United Nations Environment Programme

UNESCO: United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF: United Nations Children‘s Fund

UNPO: Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation

USAID: United States Agency for International Development

VDGs: Village Development Groups

VSO: Voluntary Service Overseas

WID: Women in Development

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

"Literacy is about empowerment. It increases awareness and influences the behaviour of individuals, families and communities. It improves communication skills, gives access to knowledge and builds self-confidence and self-esteem that are needed to make decisions." (Koïchiro Matsuura Director-General of UNESCO on the occasion of International Literacy Day, 2008 cited in Richmond, Robinson & Sachs-Israel, 2008, p. 21).

Having drawn inspiration from this statement and having been motivated to put it into practice, this study pilots a new approach to literacy called "Reflect" (Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques) in order to gauge its relevance for the empowerment of a Rwandan Potter Community (COPORWA) through literacy.

The problems of marginalisation and illiteracy constitute a major barrier to the Rwandan Potter Community today (African Commission on Human and People's Rights as cited in Donato, 2007; COPORWA, 2009). These problems originate in Rwandan society and they must be solved within the same society. This is why my contribution as a researcher and as a member of Rwandan society is to investigate whether the use of Reflect may help Rwandan Potters to become aware of their problems and begin to search for sustainable solutions in order to overcome them.

Chapter 1 explains the research problem which is illiteracy and marginalisation among Rwandan Potters, the background to the problem, the research context, the rationale, the purpose of the study, the research questions, the research process, the scope and the limitations of the study, as well as the structure of the study.

1.1 Introduction

The study explores the relevance of the Reflect approach for the education of the Rwandan Potter Community. From the outset I want to clarify what the 'Rwandan Potter Community' is. It is a community composed of indigenous people or Pygmies or Twa living in the Great Lakes Region of Africa (Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi and Democratic Republic of Congo). The term 'indigenous' has been defined by different scholars and has been given different

connotations. Indigenous people have been defined as being the first inhabitants of several countries. They are also called the first peoples, tribal peoples, aboriginal peoples, autochthones, and sometimes the 'Fourth World'. Indigenous peoples comprise approximately 300 million of the world's population, and live in more than 70 countries in all continents. They have their own territories; they consider themselves distinct from other members of their society; they have their own cultural patterns; they accept their identification as indigenous; and they live on the margins of society (Cobo, 2004; Pritchard, 2001; COPORWA, 2009; Hanemann, 2005). The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) summarises the definition of marginalised people as follows:

> Marginalized people are those who are denied, or have limited access to, privileges enjoyed by the wider society. They form a marginalized class because they are perceived as deviating from the norm, or lacking desirable traits, and therefore are excluded or ostracized as outsiders. (USAID, 2007, p. 1)

In his book entitled *Cultural Action for Freedom*, Freire (1972a) notes that illiterates have been made marginal and live on the fringes of society. But who is the author of this movement from the centre of the structure to its margins? Do the so-called marginal people, including many illiterates, make a decision to move to the periphery of society? If so, marginality is a choice with all that it involves, such as hunger, sickness, risks, pain, mental illnesses, living death, and crime. In fact, it is difficult to believe that 40% of Brazil's population, almost 90% of that of Haiti, and 60% of that of Bolivia would have made the tragic choice of their own marginality as illiterates. If marginality is not by choice, marginal people have been expelled and excluded from the social system and are therefore the object of violence.

Leonard (1984, p. 180) defines social marginality as "being outside the mainstream of productive activity and/or social reproductive activity". Marginalization is at the centre of exclusion from a full social life at individual, interpersonal and societal levels. Marginalised people have relatively limited access to valuable social resources such as education and health services, housing, income, and work (Kagan & Burton, 2004). In the context of Rwanda, the Rwandan Potters are called historically marginalized people (Lewis, 2000; Thomson, 2009). They have the same characteristics as other indigenous peoples in the world except that they are not excluded because of language.

Lewis (2000) and Thomson (2009) discuss the main causes which clearly explain the marginalization of this group: there are misconceptions of Pygmy people as being, amongst other things, uncivilized, ignorant, unclean and above all sub-human. Such misconceptions have contributed to their exclusion from mainstream society, as was the case in Rwanda for many years. It was considered to be socially unacceptable to share food, socialize or even sit on the same bench with a Mutwa in public places. People could justify not sitting near a Mutwa with reference to them as being dirty, or refuse marriage with a Mutwa because they were probably incestuous and amoral.

Minority Rights Group International (MRGI) (in Unrepresented Nations and People's Organization (UNPO), 2008) and Mugarura and Ndemeye (2002) argue that there are fundamental factors that demonstrate the widespread phenomenon of exclusion and marginalization experienced by Pygmy people, and their continuing alienation from their traditional culture and values. These include the following:

- Only 1.6 per cent of Pygmy people have sufficient land to cultivate, and very few own livestock. Most are squatters or tenants on other people's land.
- Over 91 per cent of Pygmy people have had no formal education.
- The Pygmy people's extreme poverty prevents them from participating effectively in the national economy.

One person who tried to help marginalized people in their development was the Brazilian educator, Paulo Freire. He was known for his thinking about popular education. His target group was composed of illiterates and the poor. The method used to help these people to confront their situation and solve their problems was called 'conscientization'**.** This method focused on reflection on the illiterate people's problems and their lived experience. Specifically, Freire used to organize adult learners in groups (cultural circles) and discuss each and every member's experiences among those groups, analyse the local conditions, and then develop projects (UNESCO, 2003). The method used in those cultural circles has evolved into the Reflect approach introduced by Action Aid in October 1993 (Archer & Cottingham, 1996).

The choice of this particular method rests on the fact that it has proved its relevance in the education of adults (Archer & Cottingham, 1996). This relevance is discussed in Cottingham,

Metcalf, Kate and Phnuyal (1998) where the authors state that the Reflect approach proved to be more effective than primer-based methods (examples are given in chapter 4) for the development of literacy. Phnuyal, Archer and Cottingham (1998) confirm that through the Reflect approach, 60-70% of the enrolled learners learnt to read and write; and literacy was linked to empowerment. Given the fact that the Reflect approach has the potential to be applicable to any social context (Dyer, & Choksi, 1998), it can be adapted for almost every person or group that is oppressed or marginalized and underdeveloped. Therefore, it could be appropriate for educating Rwandan Potters. The challenge is likely to be one of identifying and responding to the underlying causes of these problems.

To achieve this, initiatives are needed in favour of the people concerned through continuous Non-Formal Education (NFE). In this regard, Tight (1996, p. 68) indicates that NFE is about "acknowledging the importance of education, learning and training which takes place outside recognized educational institutions". For the Rwandan Potter Community, NFE presents an opportunity to understand that one path to development and for solving the problem of marginalization in education. To emphasize this idea, the European Commission states that:

> Adult education is a key strategy in the attempt to involve more people in becoming active in social and political development. It is claimed that adult education in a lifelong learning perspective is an essential factor of great value to achieving personal fulfilment and development. It is also essential to attain optimal levels of adult social and political participation. … adult education and lifelong learning are seen as being major instruments against social exclusion and marginalisation. (European Commission, 1997, p. 3)

An adaptation of Freire's approach called Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques (Reflect) which uses participative methodologies such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA), and the Freirean concept of awakening consciousness can be considered as an instrument to tackle illiteracy, which constitutes a major source of marginalisation among the Rwandan Potter Community. The Reflect approach is discussed in detail in chapter 3.

In the light of this introduction, the purpose of my research is to find out whether the Reflect approach is appropriate for educating and empowering the Rwandan Potters. This view is premised on the fact that education is a key strategy to gain knowledge of the world around them. It enables people to be capable of analysing and interpreting things around them and

events in their lives. Through education, they can develop and be transformed socially, culturally, economically and politically.

Before defining the research problem, it is important to present a brief historical background of the Rwandan Potters who are the subjects of this study.

1.2 A brief historical background of the Rwandan Potter Community

Before presenting the historical background of the Rwandan Potter Community, it has to be explained from the outset that the Rwandan Potters have formed a cooperative called 'COPORWA' which has the same name as the community itself because all Rwandan Potters are members of this cooperative.

As I noted earlier in the introduction, Rwandan Potters are also called 'Batwa'. According to Thomson (2009), the Batwa, forest people of Rwanda, are recognized as having been the first indigenous inhabitants of the land. The Batwa are the indigenous inhabitants of Rwanda in Central East Africa, the Pygmy people who traditionally lived as hunter-gatherers in the forests of Rwanda. Today, pottery is their common cultural practice. The following map shows the locations populated by Rwandan potters. It dates from 2000 before the restructuring of the Rwandan administrative entities into new districts and provinces.



Map 1: Location of Rwandan Potter Community (Mugarura & Ndemeye, 2002, n.p.)

Note: Since January 2006, Rwanda has had four provinces: the Western Province (former provinces of Cyangugu, Kibuye, Gisenyi and a part of Gitarama and Ruhengeri); the Southern Province (Gikongoro, Butare and Gitarama); the Northern Province (Ruhengeri and Byumba and a part of Kigali Rural); the Eastern Province (Kibungo, Umutara and a part of Kigali Rural and Byumba and the city of Kigali which is the capital of Rwanda).

Traditionally, the Batwa were the forest hunter-gatherers, living throughout Rwanda; but this map shows us that the majority of indigenous people in Rwanda are potters. As the long

process of appropriation of Batwa land took place, Batwa found a means to supplement their hunter-gathering lifestyle. Pottery became central to the identity of many Batwa communities: the term 'potters' also carries connotations of the protection, labour and entertainment services that the Batwa offered to their neighbours as they diversified (Warrilow, 2008).

Batwa potters value their skills, and are proud of demonstrating to visitors how pots are made. But the pottery industry has waned in the face of a barrage of obstacles, including the availability of cheap, durable plastic and metal products, the rising price of clay and, specifically in Rwanda, the environmental protection laws against burning wood. Land shortages have led to the draining of marshlands to increase farmlands, depriving the Batwa of the clay (Warrilow, 2008).

According to Thomson (2009), in the 1970s, Rwanda's legislation outlawed hunting, and this threatened the Batwa's way of life. By the 1990s, the Batwa population, who were bound to practice clandestine hunting and gathering, were forcefully expelled from their ancestral forests in order to plan for national parks and military training areas. With no compensation and no alternative livelihoods, most of them became beggars and landless labourers.

In 1991, a handful of educated Batwa created the Association for the Promotion of Batwa (APB). APB's aims were to protect the rights and interests of the Batwa of Rwanda, to act as advocates for the Batwa community in its contacts with national and local administrative authorities, to promote socio-economic and political development of the Batwa, with emphasis on primary health care, education and employment, as well as to promote the Batwa's culture. In January 1993 the Batwa of Rwanda, represented by APB, became members of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO) (Thomson, 2009).

In 1995, the Batwa founded the Community of Indigenous Peoples of Rwanda (CAURWA) uniting three existing Batwa organizations, namely the Association for the Promotion of Batwa (APB), the Association for the Global Development of the Batwa of Rwanda (ADBR) and the Association for the Protection of Unaccompanied Children in Distress (APEDE). Through CAURWA, different Batwa organizations have put aside their differences and have joined forces in the struggle for the rights of the Batwa community. Today, CAURWA is working with more than 70 local Batwa associations in Rwanda to develop, amongst other things, alternative sources of income for the Batwa (Thomson, 2009).

In 1999, the policy of national unity and reconciliation, with its denial of individual ethnic identity, obliged CAURWA (Communauté des Autochtones Rwandais in French, or in English, Community of Indigenous Peoples of Rwanda), the first civil society organization in Rwanda that represented Twa interests, to change its name. In 2004, the Ministry of Justice ordered CAURWA to change its name to COPORWA (Communauté des Potiers Rwandais in French, or Rwandan Potters Community in English), or risk being accused of ethnic division by including the word 'indigenous' (autochthones) in its title (Thomson, 2009, p. 319).

Even today, the Pygmy people form an isolated and marginalized group in Rwandan society. Other groups look down on them as backward and dirty. As a result, they have been excluded from education, health care and media. They have been discriminated against in the job market and have suffered from being removed from their land (Overeem, 1994; Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization **(**UNPO), 2008). In short, they are considered citizens of a separate world.

Illiteracy and lack of access to education have contributed to the Rwandan Potters' isolation and marginalization. Walter-Keleher (2006) and Torres and Okech (2005) present this situation below:

- Before the colonial period, education was informal and provided by the family.
- During the colonial period, schools were created primarily to serve the interests of the missionaries, the colonizers, and the indigenous group in power. The Rwandan Potters were not represented in schools.
- After independence in 1962, a system of quotas perpetuated marginalisation. To enrol in Rwandan secondary schools, the number of students depended on the proportion an ethnic group represented in the overall population. According to Lewis (2000), the Batwa are a minority numerically and politically, making up between 0.02 and 0.7 per cent of the total population in the various countries they occupy. Then, the Rwandan Potters, a tiny minority, were not represented in secondary education.
- The current situation is described by Torres and Okechq (2005). According to them, great efforts need to be made in the field of Non-Formal Education (NFE) because the majority of adult Rwandan Potters did not attend school. Rwandan Potters are still poorly represented in primary and secondary schools.

This situation constitutes a challenge for me and is the starting point for this research study. The following section identifies the research problem to be analysed.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

In many countries, marginalized groups have a lower standard of education than other groups of people. They are almost invariably characterized by higher rates of illiteracy than other privileged regions and sections of the overall population (Cobo, 2004; UNESCO, 2000; Pritchard, 2001; Jackson, 2003; Hanemann, 2005; Hayman, 2007; Prah, 2007; Anaquot 2008; Warrilow, 2008).

Rwandan Potters are particularly affected by the problems associated with low literacy levels (less than 1% of children of Rwandan Potters are in secondary schools and over 91% of them have had no formal education) as reported by COPORWA (2009) and Mugarura and Ndemeye (2002). They suffer from extreme poverty, marginalization and discrimination (African Commission on Human and People‘s Rights, as cited in Donato, 2007).

However, to my knowledge, no research has been carried out with Rwandan Potters in an attempt to raise to awareness of the benefits of education. This study focuses on piloting a recent approach to literacy, “Reflect”, with Potters who are grouped in the Modern Pottery Cooperative, in Gataba Village, Kacyiru Sector, and Gasabo District in Kigali marginal areas.

1.4 The Context

In this section I provide a brief description of historical and educational contexts of Rwanda, the research context and my interest as a researcher in working with the Rwandan Potter Community.

1.4.1 Brief description of historical and educational contexts of Rwanda

Rwanda is a landlocked country in the Great Lakes Region of central Africa covering roughly 25,000 square kilometres of land and 1,400 square kilometres of water (Akodjenou, 1995). In April 2011, Rwanda’s population was estimated at 11, 4 million. (http://www.pmi.gov, 6th October 2011).

Historically, according to Akodjenou (1995), the population of Rwanda was divided into three ethnic groups: the Hutu, the Tutsis and the Twa. All three groups speak the same language, Kinyarwanda. In cases of mixed marriages, children belong to their father's ethnic group. Traditionally, the Hutus were farmers whereas the Tutsis were cattle breeders and grazers. In the past it was possible to pass from one group to another: a Hutu who acquired a great number of cattle could be assimilated to the Tutsi, whereas a Tutsi who lost his cattle could be considered a Hutu. Later, Belgian protectorate authorities decreed that identity cards should indicate the bearer's ethnic group. From that time, ethnic identity became a fact in administrative life. The Tutsis dominated the country's political and economic life until 1959, when the Hutus' 'social revolution' ended the monarchy. The Batwa (Rwandan Potters) have always been, and continue to be marginalised, when compared to the majority of the Rwandan population. They are dissociated from the country's social and economic activities. But today, in order to avoid divisions among Rwandans and due to the promotion of unity and reconciliation, there is no mention of ethnicity on identity cards.

With regard to education, Rwanda wants to eradicate illiteracy among its population in order to achieve Education For All (EFA) goals. Even though the government provides free mandatory primary education for all children (National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda, 2006), non-formal education is still neglected, as noted by Torres and Okech (2005) in their survey conducted in Rwanda. The general objective of the National Literacy Policy is "to improve the education for all Rwandans through adequate programmes of literacy, and the quantified objective of the Government is to increase the rate of literacy from 34.7% (EICV II 2005/2006) to 80% of the population by 2010" (Torres & Okech, 2005, p. 15). To achieve this, it would have been necessary to train about 500,000 people every year until 2010. The aims of the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) have not been achieved within the allocated time. The following analysis of the situation by Torres and Okech (2005) shows major obstacles to the planned increase in the rate of literacy by 2010. Their survey revealed that there are no specific venues formally designed for youth and adult literacy education. The instructors interviewed held classes in churches/mosques (33%); district offices (26%); school classrooms (13%); under a tree (13%); special shelters (6%); someone's home (4%); and other (4%). On the other hand, while Rwanda's Education Sector Strategy Plan (ESSP, 2004-2008) has an encouraging financial projection for adult literacy, the budget for adult literacy managed by MINEDUC is not meant to be used for implementing literacy education, but rather for the production of materials, training of trainers, monitoring and other activities

at the central government level. In spite of this budgetary allocation, no adult literacy materials were produced during 2004. The money for production was not available (Torres & Okech, 2005). Consequently, one can predict that if Non Formal Education (NFE) is neglected, adult Rwandan Potters could not benefit from it because they have always been marginalised and forgotten.

1.4.2 Description of the research context

In this section, a brief description of the study area is provided. For the purpose of this study, the District of Gasabo in the Republic of Rwanda has been selected because it includes Gataba village, which is based in Kacyiru sector (where Rwandan Potters grouped in 'the Modern Pottery Cooperative' were based when I began my research). The location of Gasabo District and a typical homestead of Rwandan Potters in my study is described below.

Gasabo District

General Overview

Gasabo District is one of the 30 Districts of the Republic of Rwanda and one of the three Districts constituting Kigali City, the Capital of Rwanda (Rurangwa, 2007). With a surface area of 429.266 km^2 and a population of 410,485, Gasabo District is the biggest District of Kigali City and the most densely populated. The administrative entities of Gasabo district comprise 15 sectors, 73 cells and 501 villages (Imidugudu). Gasabo district has characteristics of both urban and rural life. Only six of its sectors are completely urban and they are the smallest, although they are the most densely populated. The remaining nine, the largest ones, still have rural characteristics, but they will be urbanized and become 'The New Kigali', as Kigali City is growing towards those areas. The following is the map of the study area, i.e. Gasabo District (in red) located in Rwanda**.**



Map 2: Map of Rwanda showing Gasabo District, the research terrain (Rurangwa, 2007, p. 33)

Location

Gasabo District is located in the North East of Kigali City and shares borders with the Districts of Nyarugenge and Kicukiro of Kigali City in the South, the District of Rwamagana of Eastern Province in the East, the District of Rulindo and Gicumbi of Northern Province in the North and again the Districts of Rulindo and Nyarugenge in the West (Rurangwa, 2007, p. 33).

The next paragraphs provide a brief description of a typical Rwandan Potter homestead. A photograph reveals a great deal about the living conditions of these people.

Rwandan Potter homes

When I started my research study at Gataba village where the Modern Pottery Cooperative is located, I visited some Rwandan Potters' homes and found that the houses where they live were in a precarious condition. Most shelters were made of natural materials (timber,

thatched roofs and string). There was no electricity, no running water, no sanitation, and no land for cultivation. This photograph illustrates a typical homestead of many Rwandan Potter Community‘s families.



Photograph 1: Home belonging to a Rwandan Potter in my study (May 2010)

A house like the one in the above picture is not appropriate to assure a decent shelter. Its occupants do not live in hygienic conditions, and are affected by the bad weather. People living under these housing conditions often suffer from various diseases such us malaria, worms, and dysentery.

1.5 The Researcher’s interest in working with the Rwandan Potter Community

As a Rwandan citizen, I have been motivated to conduct this research for two reasons: First, I know Rwanda well and I live in the country. Second, I have experience in the education sector and I want to make an intellectual contribution to strengthen the Rwandan education system, especially non-formal adult education which has been neglected (see the statement of the research problem).

Since 2008 I have been interested in Paulo Freire‘s writings, especially the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. One day I met some Rwandan Potters and we began to talk about their living conditions which were alarming. I felt concerned by their situation and began to think about what I could do for these people by imitating what Paulo Freire did for poor Brazilians. I started dreaming about improving their living conditions by conducting research in adult education, but I did not know how to start. At that time, I did not have the objective to pursue my PhD studies. However, now that I am sponsored by the Rwandan Government to do a

PhD in adult education, I am interested in applying the Reflect approach because it is a new approach to literacy which takes into account Freire's theory and Chambers' participative tools for educating adults. I believe that if Rwandan Potters learn to read the word and the world (according to Freire), they will be empowered socially, politically, culturally, and economically (Freire & Macedo, 1987).

Having read some literature related to Freire and his followers' writings, I understand that the Reflect approach offers a plausible route for empowering the Rwandan Potters. My interest in this study grew because this approach fitted well with my topic; and because Reflect is an approach which can be adapted to many situations, and has been used in situations of marginalised and oppressed people.

1.6 Researcher's interest in the Reflect approach and the choice of facilitators' trainers

I encountered Reflect several times in my undergraduate and postgraduate studies in the field of education, and I took part in the Training for Transformation (TfT) course where a Freirean approach to Reflect was promoted. I also worked as a Training Officer in an NGO called 'Duterimbere' for two years where I carried out training sessions and seminars using participative research methods including MARP (Méthode Accélérée de Recherché Participative) to empower participants in entrepreneurship. Apart from my academic and work experience related to Reflect, I gained knowledge of Reflect through my own readings and exchanges with partners in Duterimbere such as Action Aid Rwanda, Oxfam-Quebec and PROFEMMES-TWESE-HAMWE (a Rwandan women's network), and by training people on the ground using contemporary methods of educating adults.

Reflect circles were launched in Rwanda in 1999 following the training of trainers and of facilitators. ActionAid Rwanda, the pioneer of Reflect in Rwanda, began by strengthening four existing adult literacy circles which were using a functional adult literacy approach. At the beginning, these circles had 118 participants, but the number increased by 100 when Reflect was introduced. There is also a Reflect circle in Kigali which consists of 20 women who are members of a development association which focuses on agriculture and pottery (http://www.reflect:action.org/rwanda).

In 2000 Action Aid Rwanda organized a three-day refresher course to criticize, appreciate and correct what had been done, introduce new PRA tools, and discuss gender and development issues related to the promotion of peace. In early 2001, the Reflect Regional Coordination Unit visited Rwanda to support Rwandan staff in training basic PRA techniques, provide technical support for the start up and scale up of Reflect, and conduct a mini evaluation of their Reflect programme (http://www.reflect:action.org/rwanda).

When I contacted ActionAid Rwanda to request assistance with training facilitators for my Action Research project, I was referred to two people experienced in training facilitators of Reflect circles. They helped me with the management of what became my Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle. The two trainers were offered accommodation and a stipend for their work by the researcher.

1.7 Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is to find out whether the Reflect approach is appropriate for educating and empowering a group of Rwandan Potters. To meet this aim, I intend to pilot the Reflect approach and in so doing answer the following questions:

1.8 Research Questions

1. How did a select group of Rwandan Potters respond to the Reflect approach?

2. What literacy and other educational interests and needs within this group were identified and addressed using the Reflect approach?

3. Is the Reflect approach sensitive to gender based decision making among Rwandan Potters?

4. Did the Reflect approach strengthen the capacity of Rwandan Potters in decision making and action for development?

5. What challenges were encountered when using the Reflect approach and how were they managed?

1.9 Rationale

While other approaches are imposed on learners, the Reflect approach provides a way to shed light on the needs and priorities of a particular group of people. Through this approach, the importance of this study can be anticipated because:

- Rwandan Potters will be involved from the very start, attending meetings to identify problems and causes, to discuss solutions and to select actions to solve them.
- Once applied, this study may inspire other educators and enable them to apply the Reflect approach with other communities of Potters in Rwanda or other disadvantaged people elsewhere.
- Educational leaders, policy-makers and other stakeholders could implement the findings from this study in a literacy programme for adults.
- There are very limited research studies and literature on adult education in Rwanda, and therefore this research will make an important contribution to knowledge about non-formal literacy education for adults.

1.10 Scope and Limitations of the Study

There are several forms of education and methods which contribute to the improvement of different skills for different categories of people. My concern is with the Reflect approach using Action Research (AR) for educating the Rwandan Potter Community. Ideally this study should be conducted with all Rwandan Potters; however it would be impossible for me to conduct a study of the whole country due to distance, time and financial constraints. These constraints did not allow me to extend the research to further zones. Therefore, this research was limited to Kigali City and marginal areas located in Gasabo district, Sector Kacyiru-Gataba village.

In addition to the limited scope of this study, the use of AR has some limitations:

- The results cannot be generalised to other groups, but only to the group studied (Rwandan Potters grouped in Gataba village).
- AR is an approach which requires the researcher to have animation and facilitation skills, and the participants to change the schedule of their activities. That is why Attwood (2007)

says that AR is a very demanding approach in terms of time and commitment. This was exactly the case for this study on the Rwandan Potters. I worked with facilitators who were trained for the first time to guide participants in the Reflect circle; the beginning was very difficult. One year on the ground was not enough to fully explore the potential of Reflect with a group of Rwandan Potters.

- AR is also a demanding approach in terms of financial resources. In this study I was obliged to be an action researcher and a benefactress at the same time. The time available for data collection did not allow me to help the group to seek financial assistance for their projects and access funds on time to solve issues that they were trying to solve. Despite the limited scope and resources, a pilot study was conducted which drew attention to the possibilities of using an adapted Freirean approach, Reflect, with a marginalized and isolated group, the Rwandan Potters.

1.11 Research Process and Organisation of the Study

The following model of research process was adapted from the one proposed by McKenzie and Danforth (2009, pp. 42-43), in order to meet the needs of the present study:

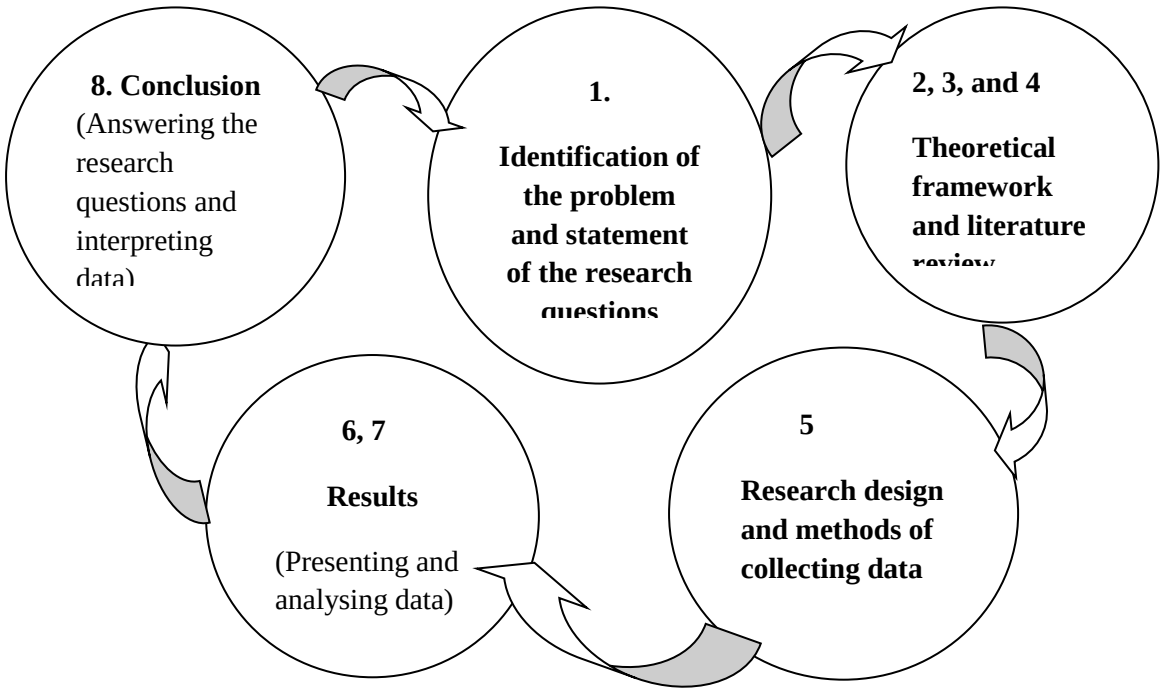


Figure 1: The Research Process (McKenzie & Danforth, 2009, pp. 42-43)

Identification of the problem and statement of the research questions

Defining the problem correctly is the first crucial step in the research process. If the research problem is defined incorrectly, the research questions will also be wrong, and the entire research process will be a waste of time and money. The research process begins with the recognition of a problem (McKenzie & Danforth, 2009) which in this case has been described in this chapter.

As a researcher, I have to be careful to distinguish between symptoms and the real problem. A symptom is a phenomenon that can occur because of the existence of something else. Ensuring that the true problem has been defined is not always easy. I must use creativity and good judgment. Cutting through to the heart of a problem is a bit like peeling an onion - you must take off one layer at a time. One approach to eliminating symptoms is to ask, "What caused this to occur?" When the researcher can no longer answer this question, the real problem is at hand (McKenzie & Danforth, 2009, p. 46).

The culmination of the problem definition process is the statement of the research questions. These questions are stated in terms of precise information that is necessary to address the research problem. Well-formulated questions serve as a road map in pursuing the research project. They also serve as standards that will enable researchers to evaluate the quality and value of the work at a later stage. Research questions must be as specific and unambiguous as possible. It is to be remembered that the entire research effort (in terms of time and money) is geared toward achieving the objectives (McKenzie & Danforth, 2009).

After reading how McKenzie and Danforth described the process of identifying a relevant problem to study, mine was clarified after discussion with some Rwandan Potters about their living situations, and after visiting their homes. Some readings have also guided my choice of a problem which merited research.

Having introduced this study by identifying the problem and describing the research context, my interest in working with the Rwandan Potter Community, the purpose of the study, the research questions, the rationale, the research process and the organisation of the study, the scope and the limitations of the study; the second step will be to discuss the theoretical framework and literature review which underpin the study.

Theoretical framework and literature review

My interest is in theories about development, participation and empowerment on the one hand, and literacy on the other hand, with emphasis on Reflect, which is a new approach to literacy. These theories have inspired me to design the research questions to be addressed by this study. The key concepts reflected in the research questions are listed and defined respectively in chapters 2 and 3; while the literature review described in chapter 4 summarises some findings about the benefits of literacy linked to development, participation, and empowerment in general, and Reflect using PRA tools, in particular.

Research design and methods of collecting data

The third step is about methodology. It consists of working out the research design which is a plan for achieving the research objectives. In essence, the researcher develops a structure or a framework to answer a specific research problem. The present research is an example of qualitative action research. It is descriptive and tries to answer 'who', 'what', 'when', 'where', and 'how' questions as listed by McKenzie and Danforth (2009, p. 46). At this stage I also chose the approach for this research; action research (AR), which is a cyclical process of planning, acting, observing, reflecting and revising plans (Chilisa & Preece, 2005). Attwood (2007) says that AR fits well with a critical theoretical perspective due to its emphasis on problem solving, action and change as well as empowerment of participants. Different techniques applied in AR for gathering and analysing data as well as interpreting results of the study are the following: interviews, participant observation, focus groups, photographs and field notes. These techniques are described in depth in chapter 5.

Presentation and analysis of data

The fourth step concerns the results of the research. Here it is a matter of describing the findings clearly and allowing the data to speak for itself. Photographs which show what was done on the ground are shown and described in detail in chapters 6 and 7 which outline the findings. In these chapters, the concern is to describe and analyse each event that happened during the whole process of Action Research. Chapter 6 is about establishing a Reflect circle in Gataba village (June 2010 to September 2010), and chapter 7 is a decisive phase in implementing Reflect in Gataba village (From October 2010 to June 2011).

Conclusion (Answering the research questions and interpreting the results)

According to McKenzie and Danforth (2009), the final step is to conclude the study (chapter 8). This chapter critically assesses the research done. In other words, it responds to the research questions highlighted in the introduction, interprets the results, and points out their underlying meaning and overall significance. Challenges, perspectives and sustainability of the research project are explained here.

Finally, chapter 8 concludes the study by summarising the findings with critical comments according to the theoretical framework and the review of related literature. The research questions are answered. The issues which arose during the piloting of the Reflect approach are evoked and a suitable approach to educate Rwandan Potters Community is designed.

1.12 Conclusion

The introduction to this study has shown that something has to be done to empower the Rwandan Potter Community. The statement of the problem has underlined that living conditions of indigenous people all over the world in general and in Rwanda in particular are poor. The majority are illiterate and poor. This results from discrimination and marginalisation that these people face in several countries where they have always been considered as people of a separate world. This is an insult to human beings. How could the situation of these people be improved? A study which could help them become aware of the situation they live in is needed.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK (Part 1): DEVELOPMENT, PARTICIPATION AND EMPOWERMENT

2.1 Introduction

A theoretical framework is like a map which guides a tourist in a strange country to reach an unknown area. In research, a theoretical framework provides important information and perspectives needed to carry out a proposed study. There are different ways of understanding any phenomena which can facilitate the achievement of the researcher's objectives. Attwood (2007, p. 17) states that "Theoretical perspectives have informed my study, influenced my understanding and my interpretation of the research concerns, the research process and the findings of the study". The theoretical and conceptual framework helps in the analysis of the data and the interpretation of the results. Those results that are well interpreted bring a new input to knowledge. Abraham (2008) adds that reflection on theory has advantages for the development and growth of the discipline in which the study is located.

Due to the importance of the main concepts of this study (development, participation, empowerment, literacy and Reflect) and to the length they impose on this work, the theoretical framework is divided into two chapters (chapters 2 & 3). However, the relationship between these concepts obliges me to build the same conceptual model. It appears in the present chapter.

In this study, the figure below is like a map which explains the existence of the problem of illiteracy and which guides me during the process of searching for solutions. It serves at the same time as a basis for conducting research, but also as a way to address this problem. The components mentioned in the figure below constitute the main points from which relevant theories for this study emerge. I present each theory before linking it to a general definition of concepts and then position myself in relation to the problem I am studying.

Conceptual model

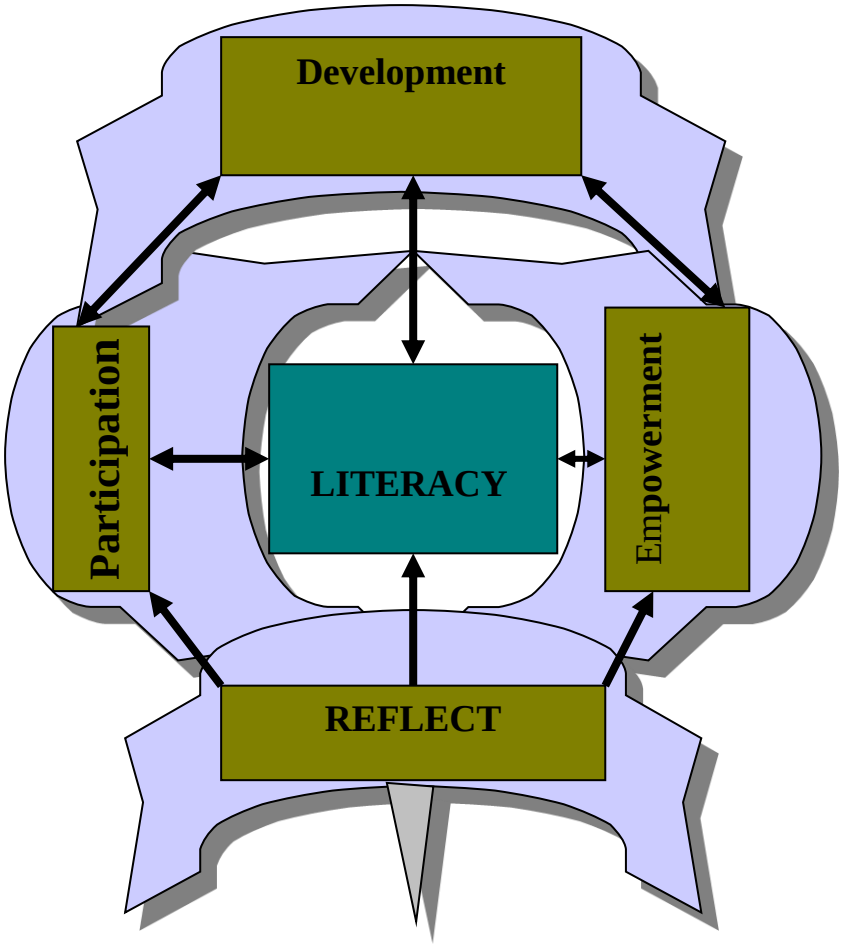


Figure 2: My own model

In this figure, literacy occupies a central place because it suggests an answer to the problem of illiteracy among the Rwandan Potter Community. It cannot be realised without the participation of the group concerned in the study. Participation in the literacy class could empower the members of the group studied, that is, the 'Rwandan Potters'. In this process, two kinds of approaches are complementary in order to address the problem in this study. These approaches are bottom-up and Reflect.

First, a 'bottom-up' approach emphasizes community participation. Participants are free and have the power to make decisions about defining their own problems and to search together for an action which could help them to solve those problems. Governments and other benefactors may intervene with help when needed. But how can this be put into practice?

Second, the Reflect approach using PRA tools is used to invite people who are recognized as marginalized and who do not know how to read and write to sit together and discuss the challenges they face in their community and to take actions to tackle them.

The above description shows how different elements of this model are interrelated (development, participation, empowerment, literacy and Reflect). I begin with the concept of development because it constitutes a core element for discussion worldwide but especially in developing countries in Latin America, Asia and Africa where some communities are still marginalised and under-developed. Thus development and its approaches are discussed, followed by both participation and empowerment as twin concepts for community development in order to help poor and marginalised communities to get involved in improving their situations. As literacy and Reflect constitute the focus of this study, another chapter, chapter 3 is reserved to emphasize the importance of these concepts.

2.2 Development

Today, poverty remains the greatest challenge faced by developing countries in general and marginalised communities in particular. The income gap between rich and marginalised people in many countries is still wide. As this study focuses on a particular community known as 'Rwandan Potters' living in a particular area and in bad situations when compared to other Rwandans, it is relevant to discuss first of all the concept of development and approaches to development.

2.2.1 Defining development

Before choosing a definition which goes with the context in which the term 'development' is used in this study, it is helpful to see how the concept 'development' has evolved.

'Development' in its first modern sense first came to be an official term when it was used by the United States President Truman in 1949 as part of the rationale for post-war reconstruction in 'underdeveloped' areas of the world (Lewis, 2005, n.p.). Rapley (2007) also observes that development became significant in the period immediately following World War II.

‘Development’ has been traditionally measured by Gross National Product (GNP) or the Gross Per Capita income indicator. Societies with sustained growth of GNP are considered to be developed (Hunt, 1989). But can we confirm that developing countries have benefited from the increase of GNP in the eradication of poverty? According to McNamara‘s statement, these benefits have never materialized:

> …. despite a decade of unprecedented increase in the GNP of the developing countries, the poorest segments of their population have received relatively little benefits. (McNamara, 1973, pp. 17, 18)

Furthermore, in many developing countries rapid economic growth has further aggravated the problems of poverty, unemployment, and inequality (Aziz, 1977). This is what Chenery (1974) deplores when he says that the rapid growth in underdeveloped countries has been unequally distributed among countries, regions within countries, and socio-economic groups since 1960.

I argue that conceptualising development in terms of GNP has failed to provide a framework for improving the well-being of people. Thus there is a need for a new conceptualisation of the concept development instead of defining it in terms of GNP. The definition of development in terms of GNP excludes consideration of people as agents of development. I think that development concerns first of all individuals or groups of people before the need for development at national level. The development of individuals or groups of people leads to the development of their countries. It is not the other way around. In this study, development affects the Rwandan Potter Community and it must be planned by that community, for that community.

During the 1970s a new concept of development emerged, where development was conceived as a state of human well-being rather than a state of the national economy. This concept, developed in the “Cocoyoc Declaration”, was adopted by participants in a seminar organised by the United Nations Council on Trade and Development (UNCTD) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in Cocoyoc, Mexico in 1974. The declaration stated the following:

> Our first concern is to redefine the whole purpose of development. This should not be to develop things but to develop man. Human beings have basic needs: food, shelter, clothing, health, and education. Any process of growth that does not lead to their fulfilment or, even worse, disrupts them is a travesty of the idea of development. (Cocoyoc Declaration, quoted in Ghai, 1977, p. 6)

According to the Cocoyoc Declaration, the new approach to development focuses on human-centred development. Human beings are at the centre of development, therefore, they need to be taken into consideration first when it is about problems they face in their lives. The Cocoyoc Declaration guided this study when determining issues in the Rwandan Potter Community and enabled the identification of everyday real issues and the search for solutions that would benefit all members.

The United Nations, Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) reinforce this idea in the following words:

> The ultimate purpose of development is to provide everyone with ever increasing opportunities for a better life. It, therefore, requires an equitable distribution of income and other social resources in order to promote justice and efficient production, to raise levels of employment substantially, to expand and improve facilities for education, health, nutrition, housing and social and cultural well-being. The qualitative and structural changes that development thus imposes on society must go hand in hand with economic progress while racial, ethnic and social inequalities must be substantially reduced. These are decisive factors in hastening development and hence must be handled with dynamism. (FAO, n.d, p. 5)

FAO‘s statement fits well with this study in which the research project aims to work towards improved quality for a Rwandan Potter Community. Countries cannot be developed if some people still live below the poverty line (survival on less than one dollar per day, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 1992). The equitable distribution of income is respected if individuals or groups of people benefit from opportunities which empower them. These opportunities include access to education, literacy, employment, health, housing, and all facilities which promote a better life. To do so, countries have to fight against discrimination around race, gender, ethnic, and regional groups before embarking on development.

Development, thus, can be mainly defined as social development, with emphasis on equitable distribution of goods which improve the living situations of people. Another important element in defining development is the people-centred approach to development. This approach is concerned with the distribution of the benefits of development, in other words, the reduction of inequality between individuals or social groups and inequality between regions, including the gap between urban and rural/marginal areas. Such an approach is regarded as an important and objective criterion for development (Seers, 1969 & 1971). In addition, Seers writes the following in a seminar paper:

> The questions to ask about a country‘s development are therefore: What has been happening to poverty? What has been happening to unemployment? What has been happening to inequality? If all three of these decline from a high level, then beyond doubt this has been a period of development for the country concerned. If one or two of these central problems have been growing worse, especially if all three have, it would be strange to call the result ‘development', even if per capita income doubled. (Seers, 1979, p. 12)

Todaro (1981, p. 30) adopts a similar approach to development when he defines development as “a process that involves major changes in the social structure, popular attitudes, and the national institutions as well as the acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and eradication of absolute poverty.” Some economists like Owen and Shaw (1972), conceptualize development in terms of the participation of underprivileged people in institutions, so that they can gain control over the economic, social and political benefits monopolised by the elites.

All the above-mentioned thinkers illuminate my understanding of development. According to what is said above, the meaning of development has moved from measures of GNP per capita income to include a social dimension and to emphasize people-centred development. I deduce from their definitions that development among Rwandan Potters must be understood as a determined push against illiteracy and marginalisation in order to enable these people to develop by taking up the challenges they encounter in their daily lives, and to make decisions when necessary. But how has the problem of development been approached by different thinkers since it was first seen as an international concern?

2.2.2 Approaches to development

The two dominant conceptions of development focus on modernisation, which is the traditional model of technology transfer associated with the political right; and dependency, which is the model associated with the political left (Hobart, 1993, in Campbell & Jovchelovitch, 2000, pp. 255-270).

Modernisation theory

Modernisation theory gained credibility in the 1960s and 1970s. The explanation of unequal development was that poor countries were merely lagging behind rich countries in terms of economic development. Poor countries were said to be lacking certain essential ingredients which would enable them to catch up. Failure to develop was attributed to internal deficiencies of the countries concerned (Lyster, in Hutton, 1992). This was a call for people from poor countries to engage in the process of transformation in their lives. Webster (1990, cited in Attwood, 2007) argues that modern societies, specifically the industrialised countries of the West, were seen to provide a blueprint for development to the whole world. Can poor countries move towards development by drawing examples from the economics of developed countries?

Ojo (2004, p. 140) tries to answer this question by saying that modernization theory presumes that the transfer of capital goods, technologies, industries and Western norms to the developing countries would bring rapid economic productivity and social development in the developing countries, which were considered to be ancient and primitive. But this is exactly what we insinuate in the Rwandan culture, when we say **"***aho kugira ngo uhe umuntu ifi mwereke uko ayiroba*" (Give me a fish and I eat for a day. Teach me to fish and I eat for a lifetime). That is why people in developing countries continue to stay in such a situation. Some researchers declare that the majority of the population in developing countries cannot read and write, and they lack other literacy skills too (this worry has been explained in the statement of the problem of this study). And literacy has been considered to be a key aspect of development. Anderson (in Street, 1984, as cited in Hutton, 1992, p. 26) analysed conditions in industrialised countries and concluded that a 40% literacy rate was necessary before economic 'take-off' could occur. Lyster (in Hutton, 1992) says that high literacy rates correlate with development and so it is assumed that to speed up modernization, the literacy rate must be improved. Based on the above-mentioned views, can modernization theory bring changes in developing countries? There is little consensus on whether modernization can reduce inequalities between North and South (Breen & Johnson, 2005, as cited in Marks, 2009).

To conclude this point about modernisation theory, I can say that it is good to observe and imitate what happens elsewhere, but it is up to the individual to effect change in his/her own

situation. If illiteracy is a main barrier to development, the first thing to do might be to tackle this issue. Development as a process cannot be achieved without considering men and women as agents of change. In addition, because it is difficult to reach consensus about definitions of development, it is also difficult to plan the development of a country based on the development pattern of another country. Apffel-Marglin and Marglin (1990) argue that development interventions in less developed countries are not just a matter of transferring information and technology from more developed contexts. This top-down approach to development has failed to recognise local resources and the problems involved in the cultural and material differences between contexts. It is important to find other reasons and apply them in order to improve the living situations of people in poor countries. Today, the question of why the Third World continues to copy models drawn from the Western World is still current. Which theory can provide relevant arguments for this interrogation? Let us turn to dependency or underdevelopment theory.

Dependency theory

Dependency theory originates from a criticism of modernization theory. The modernisation theorists argued that poor countries would catch up to the West after imitating what happened in Western countries, but this did not happen. In the 1960s and 1970s, the originators of dependency theory insisted that 'Third World' development should be treated as a historically distinct problem. The idea of dependency emerged from a research report written by a group led by Raul Prebish in the 1950s and an essay by Cardoso and Faletto in the mid-1960s. They were preoccupied, like so many dependency theoreticians, by Latin-America and tried to understand why, after 200 years of pervasive political, economic and cultural interchange with Europe and the United States, the degree of 'underdevelopment' vis-à-vis the advanced industrial countries had changed so little (Cardoso & Faletto, 1967, cited in Vernengo, 2006, p. 1). Thus they developed dependency theory to explain the causes of this stagnation. There are two dependency theory traditions: Structuralist Dependency Theory and Radical Dependency Theory or Marxist Dependency Theory (Todaro, 2003; Dos Santos, 2002).

According to Todaro, Structuralist Dependency Theory, or Singer-Prebisch Theory is connected to the names of Raul Prebisch and Hans Singer. Working in the fifties, Prebisch noticed that economic growth in the North did not seem to lead to growth in the less developed countries, and he found it worrisome. Looking closer, it actually seemed as if

economic activity in the North led to serious problems in the less developed countries. He argues that the difference lies in the types of products the different countries produce. While the less developed countries produce primary goods, the North produces manufactured goods. Over time, the exchange rate between the two will, according to the theory, deteriorate to the advantage of the countries producing manufactured goods. It means that countries in the southern hemisphere have to buy most of the manufactured supplies they need for ever increasing prices (Todaro, 2003).

Radical Dependency Theory or Neo-Colonial Dependency Theory, as termed by Todaro (Todaro, 2003) is associated with German-born Andre Gunther Frank and is similar to Structuralist Dependency Theory, except that it uses Marxist terminology. In Marx‘s view, anyone employing anyone for fixed wages is exploiting them economically, because the surplus taken by the employer is a profit. As soon as the profit outgrows the amount needed for personal survival of the employer, he/she can accumulate the profit and become a capitalist. Therefore, the exploitative relationship does not only continue to exist, but eventually the capitalist will have enough accumulated money to buy even more labour power, machinery and raw material. However, the capitalist relies for this on the existence of a group of people who lack money to start with, so that they have to rely on selling their own labour to the capitalist, rather than buying raw material, machinery and labour power from others. These people are called proletarians (Marx, 1995).

Similarly, the investments made in third world countries by capitalists in the North are meant to create a profit for these capitalists. Therefore, someone in the third world has to be exploited, and a net transfer of wealth towards the North occurs. However, not everybody in the third world is equally exploited. Local elites, whom Marx termed ‘ideological classes’ (Marx, 1995), have a managing function, and are themselves more closely connected to the Western exploiters than to their own populations (Todaro, 2003). Marxists would argue that development in the periphery – meaning fundamentally catching up with the centre – was impossible. Some authors, such as Vernengo (2006), argue that the inability of peripheral countries to borrow in international markets in their own currency is the real obstacle to development.

Freire sees things differently. The problem is located in the ‘culture of silence’ which characterises dependent nations. In this view, he states that “The dependent society is by

definition a silent society" (Freire, 1979, p. 59). He argues that people need to develop a critical consciousness that would enable them to "break out of the culture of silence and win their right to speak" and challenge dominant socio-economic structures (Freire, cited in Attwood, 2007, p. 33).

Todaro gives an alternative answer by giving a new strategy to face this challenge:

> The way to get out of the trap of the developing world, in the view of the advocates of radical dependency theory, is to break completely with the North. The local elites would have to be overthrown through a socialist revolution, as they would side with the Northern capitalists. (Todaro, 2003, p. 124)

Morphet (1987, as cited in Hutton, 1992) emphasizes this problem by saying that obstacles to development are external; countries are not poor because of internal deficiencies. Underdevelopment theory "attempted to define the dynamics of the development process in terms of active exploitation of the underdeveloped regions by the capitalist powers" (Morphet, 1987, as cited in Hutton, 1992, p. 29). This is oppression, according to Freire (1972a), and he gives advice on how to deal with it. Literacy must be used as a tool to organise and empower people to understand the causes of their oppression and to act to change their situations. Many popular education initiatives in South America and radical literacy programmes in South Africa in the 1970s and 1980s understood development and underdevelopment in terms of dependency theory (Lyster, in Hutton, 1992).

Finally, it is important to note that as developing countries are considered to be at the periphery when compared to developed countries; such a comparison can be applicable to poor and marginalized people in developing countries when compared to people with good positions in those countries. We can observe the discrimination, marginalisation, and oppression which poor people encounter. They constitute cheap labour. In sum, a large number of poor and marginalized people are still exploited by the rich, and they suffer from underdevelopment from educational, socio-economic, and cultural viewpoints. It is also important to remember that oppression is still a barrier to development because of external obstacles, such as exploitation of poor countries by the rich ones. However, many poor countries have to face internal oppression which paralyses good initiatives for development.

In most African countries, wars are examples of oppressive acts. Theoretically, people should be empowered and be able to change their living conditions, but this cannot always be achieved. Literacy may be a way toward development but it is not a sine qua non. It is essential to think of development in terms of helping people in their social context, in order for them to be able to take control over their lives and to research how to solve the problems they face, by themselves. An approach which is relevant for this purpose is ‘community development’.

Community development

As the word ‘community' is prefixed to ‘development', it is necessary to examine the definitions used (Asnarulkhadi & Fariborz, 2011, p. 186), which could be particularly relevant to this study.

Defining Community

The word 'community' comes from the Latin 'Communis' meaning public, shared by all or many (Kularatne, n.d., pp. 1-4). The German Sociologist, Ferdinand Tonnies perceives community to be a tighter and more cohesive entity within the context of larger society, due to the presence of a 'Unity of Will'. He adds that family and kinship are the perfect expression of community but that other shared characteristics, such as place or belief, can also result in community (Tonnies, 1887, p. 22). Tonnies‘s definition is similar to the one given by Frank and Smith (1999, p. 7): “Communities can be defined by common cultural heritage, language, and beliefs or shared interests.”

Then among several definitions given to community, Asnarulkhadi and Fariborz (2011) point out that the territorial community that shares and lives in a common residential or geographical area contains the localized interest of communities, at least in terms of sharing some of their common problems or expectations. Asnarulkhadi and Fariborz add that community can be referred to as a social unit where the locality in which people reside is an integral part; within which members interact together to do things and to achieve what they want. By participating in various groups and collective action, communities are able to act together in regard to the common concerns of their lives. This definition of community is particularly relevant to this study in terms of the four basic components that are included in

the concept, i.e. people, area, interaction and interest. In this study, the definition of community refers to individuals and groups who live together in a defined geographical area which has its own vision to work together to achieve their common objectives in the process of improving their living situations.

From the above-mentioned definitions, Garcia, Giuliani and Wiesefeld (1999) underline two major characteristics of community, that is:

a. structural characteristics, i.e. people and physical environment and
b. functional characteristics as a result of structural patterning such as social networks generated in everyday community life.

Up to today, Rwandan Potters consider themselves as people who share a common territory, interest and culture. It is a particular community which is not integrated in wider Rwandan society.

Defining community development

According to Frances (1990), the concept of community development was first introduced by the British government in 1942 to inform a movement linked to local governments to promote better living situations for the whole community with active participation, and if possible, initiatives of the community, when necessary by the use of techniques for arousing and stimulating active and enthusiastic response. Frank and Smith agree saying that:

> A community development is the planned evolution of all aspects of community well-being (economic, social, environmental and cultural). It is a process whereby community members come together to take collective action and generate solutions to common problems. (Frank & Smith, 1999, p. 6)

Soubbotina and Sheram (2000) add that community development means improving the quality of people's lives and expanding their ability to shape their own futures through improving their access to opportunities to better themselves. The Copenhagen Declaration (1995) introduces important requirements in order to meet the welfare of everybody, such as the presence of democratic institutions, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, increased and equal opportunities, the rule of law, promotion of respect for cultural diversity

and rights of the people belonging to minorities, as well as an active involvement of civil society (Wanigaratne, 2003).

In this perspective, community development aims at building active and influential communities based on specific values of participation, empowerment, collective action, justice, equality and mutual respect, and which is committed to challenge oppression and tackle poverty and inequality (Komolafe, 2009).

However, having people involved in the actions described above is not enough. In community development, it is important to have the right people in the right jobs with the right skills, knowledge and abilities. This is not an easy matter as often we are not sure who should be doing what, what the required skills are, or where to get the necessary skills if they are lacking (Frank & Smith, 1999). Frank and Smith's worries are significant in the case of this study. The majority of the Rwandan Potters grouped in the Modern Pottery Cooperative are involved in their cooperative's activities but they lack literacy skills. Nikkhah and Redzuan (2009, p. 171) advise: "The major emphasis in community development is upon helping communities to change and develop in ways which they themselves desire, and with material aid of which they are willing to make effective use".

To summarise the relevant definition of community development in relation to this study, Combat Poverty understands community development as a "process whereby those who are marginalised and excluded are enabled to gain in self confidence, to join with others and to participate in actions to change their situation and to tackle the problems that face their community" (Combat Poverty, 2000, in Motherway, 2006, p. 2). "The essence of community development is well captured in the Budapest Declaration, which emphasises strengthening civil society, empowerment and an agenda of social change" (Motherway, 2006, p. 3). Participants in the above Declaration reinforce this idea by stating that: "Community development plays a crucial role in supporting active democratic life by promoting the autonomous voice of disadvantaged and vulnerable communities" (Motherway, 2006, p. 3). It is also a discourse of social action informed by communitarian values that aims to promote social inclusion and democratic participation (Powell & Geoghegan, 2005).
I agree with the arguments given by Lee who states that community development:

> … is rooted in a broad understanding of citizenship that sees people as having a right to influence and participate in the decisions that affect them and to have their experiences and views listened to and acted on. Community development is potentially 'a means' or a process whereby people can achieve this right. (Lee, 2003, p. 1)

To conclude this section, it is important to note that community development has two basic goals (or two basic purposes): first, to improve the quality of life of all members of the community, and second, to involve all members of the community in the process. Furthermore, sustainability and effectiveness of community development depends on the level of the participation of community members. This assumes that the community development approach will determine the level of participation and empowerment of the community (Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2009). It is clear that definitions given by the above thinkers about community development are relevant for the Rwandan Potter Community in this study. The key word 'community development' meets my own intention to help the Rwandan Potter community to improve their living conditions by empowering them with literacy skills that are needed for their daily life. But how do they approach this situation?

Types of Community Development

Conyers (1986, cited in Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2009 p. 171) classifies community development into three types: Top-down, bottom-up and partnership approaches.

1) Top-down approach

In the top-down approach to community development, the main activity of development is initiated by the government or authority. In fact, in this approach everything is managed by the government, and the community members are passive. The top-down approach emphasizes central planning (Conyers, 1986, as cited in Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2009). For this study, a top-down approach is not helpful.

2) Bottom-up approach

The bottom-up approach to community development is initiated and managed by the community for the community. Government and service providers play a supportive role as facilitators and consultants. In other words, the active role in the process of development is played or initiated by the community itself (Conyers, 1986, as cited in Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2009).

Each approach can be applied in different ways and in different conditions. When people are able to define their own problems and have the ability and capacity to solve them through their own organization and participation, the bottom-up approach to community development can be used. According to Finger (1994), the bottom-up approach emphasizes community participation, grassroots movements and local decision making.

It is clear that the bottom-up approach is appropriate to this study because it emphasizes community participation. Participants are free to act, from defining their own problems, to taking action to solve those problems.

3) *Partnership approach*

A partnership approach to community development can be initiated when a government authority is linked to a bottom-up approach initiated by a group to promote better living situations for the whole community, with active participation of community members. However, community development is much closer to bottom-up or change from the bottom than the other approaches (Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2009). People are involved by participating actively in all activities. The government and national or international agencies intervene to provide facilitation, advice or finance. This means that all approaches to community development are complementary, but a particular emphasis is placed on a bottom-up approach. But how is participation viewed?

2.3 Participation

Participation is the main driver of community development. Without participation and empowerment, community development cannot be achieved (Asnarulkhadi & Fariborz, 2011). Asnarulkhadi & Fariborz's statement reveals the relationship between community development, participation and empowerment. These three components are connected. Each one cannot work on its own. This is what Cole (2007) confirms when he says that participation and empowerment are considered necessary to get community support for community development projects. I will begin by defining the role of participation in developing communities.

2.3.1 Defining participation

The concept of participation has been one of the most important subject matters discussed in community development (Abbott, 1995; Lackery & Dershem, 1992; Goulet, 1989; Oakley & Marsden, 1984; Gilbert & Ward, 1984; Smith & Jones, 1981; Galjart, 1981a & 1981b; Wandersman, 1981). The importance of participation has also been also recognized for a long time as a human right in development. This was highlighted at the FAO Conference on Agrarian Reform and Rural Development in 1979, and in publications such as those by Crowley (1985) and Nyerere (1973). As Asnarulkhadi and Fariborz (2011) advise, the concept of participation is used to describe activities and processes initiated by people, by themselves, to promote social development and improvement for the betterment of community members.

The literature gives a series of definitions of participation ranging from "token involvement of people" to "autonomous decision making by popular organizations at local level" (Brehony, 1989, p. 26). According to Martin and Quinney (cited in Platt, 1996), participation is 'to take part' - yet this is very simplistic and implies that everyone is participating at some level in every action. If we are to understand participation, we need to explore beyond 'taking part' and look to other commentators who have explored the extent and nature to which people 'take part'. Platt (1996) refers to the three types of participation of local communities and individuals as proposed by Astorga. Those types are: Physical participation – being present, using one's skills and efforts; Mental participation - conceptualizing the activity, decision making, organization and management; and Emotional participation – assuming responsibility, power and authority.

As a definition, Astorga's types of participation do not provide us with a means of analysing its quality. Brehony, in his thesis (1989), quotes Castillo who suggests four levels of participation: deciding what a project should be, implementing a project, evaluation, and control over long term direction. By combining Astorga and Castillo‘s levels of participation, it is possible to assess the level of participation in any given activity.

Similarly, Wanyande (1986) tries to operationalize the concept of participation by distinguishing three further levels at which people may begin to participate in the development process. According to him, people may participate at the level of identification of their own development needs and priorities without any outside or external interference. This is equated to Oakley‘s (1987) empowerment approach where people identify, plan and implement their own development projects. The second level is the one where grass-roots participation begins to operate after the development needs, priorities and programme have been drawn up for the people by an outside agent such as central government or a foreign donor: the initial idea may not have come from the people but they are involved in making some important decisions relating to the project implementation. The third level according to Wanyande is the form of participation in which grass-roots participants do not take part either in the identification of the project or in the discussions about implementation. In this form, grass-roots participants only begin to get involved at the actual implementation stage and then only provide labour.

As this study promotes the full participation of the beneficiaries of development, the first level (the empowerment approach of Oakley) outlined by Wanyande is suitable. Combined with those of Oakley, Astorga and Castillo, participation can be understood as an important element for sustainable development which is profitable for the whole community. People take part/are involved in action from its implementation to its evaluation. Decisions are made by them. This is similar to the bottom-up approach described in community development. UNESCO states that participation is a “collective sustained activity for the purpose of achieving some common objectives, especially a more equitable distribution of the benefits of development” (1979, p. 15). In this form of participation, a minor role is given to other stakeholders who intervene when needed, for example for financing a project, training, facilitation, and so on.

To summarize the above processes, participation is considered as a process which includes people‘s involvement in decision-making processes, in implementing programmes, in sharing the benefits of development programmes and in efforts to evaluate such programmes (Cohen and Uphoff, 1977, cited in Nikkhah and Redzuan, 2009, p. 172). In this regard, participation is viewed as an active process in which the participants take initiatives and actions that are stimulated by their own thinking.

Nikkhah and Redzuan argue that:

> Most important agencies of development emphasis (sic) on participation as a key concept on development, and they believe that without participation sustainable development wouldn‘t be achieved. Meanwhile, participation occupies a central place in development thinking and practice. (Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2009, p. 172)

Governments, funding agencies, donors, and civil society actors including NGOs and multilateral agencies like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have all arrived at a near consensus that development cannot be sustainable and long-lasting without considering people’s participation in decision-making, in programme implementation and evaluation (Cohen & Uphoff, 1980, in Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2009). Consequently, two major aspects of participation are studied in order to choose which could be relevant to this research, ranging from participation as a means to participation as an end.

2.3.2 Aspects of participation

Oakley and Marsden (1984) have outlined different interpretations ranging from participation as a means and/or as an end.

Participation as a means

As a means, participation is considered as:

> A voluntary contribution by the people to one or another of the public programs supposed to contribute to national development but the people are not expected to take part in shaping the program or criticizing its content. (Oakley & Marsden, 1984, p. 19)

Oakley and Marsden explain that participation as a means is perceived as a vehicle to achieve predetermined objectives or goals which may or may not be congruent with the needs of

participants. In this situation, the aim of achieving pre-set objectives determined by the government or other external bodies, is more important than the act of participation itself.

Therefore, the act of participation in such situations can be considered as "an input into a development program" (Oakley & Marsden, 1984, p. 27) since people are not given the opportunity to decide or influence the decision that has an effect on them later. The mobilization of people in this form of participation is to get things done based on a fixed quantifiable development goal (Moser, 1989) which can be state-directed or externally-directed, that is, the 'top-down' approach to community development. In such a case, participation turns into passive and static events which may be induced or even coerced 'participation' (United Nations, 1981), compulsory 'participation' (Oakley, 1989), or manipulative 'participation' (Midgley, 1986) by the government or other external bodies. It is for this reason that Koneya asserts that:

> 'Citizen participation' is not 'community development', as in the former it is the government which decides to include citizens in government-centred programs, whereas the latter, i.e. community development, 'is a citizen-originated activity' that organizes and uses citizen power to reach upward toward government. (Koneya, 1978, p. 2)

In the context of this study, participation as a means, like the top-down approach, is inappropriate. The Reflect approach to literacy requires active participation of all people in all activities related to their development (the bottom-up approach). Therefore, participation as a means cannot be considered appropriate for this study.

Participation as an end

Participation as an end in itself focuses on participation as a process in which people are directly involved in shaping, deciding and taking part in the development process from the 'bottom-up' perspective (Asnarulkhadi & Fariborz, 2011). Here, the development goal is of secondary importance. The process of participation (Moser, 1989) is much more valued. This is because in a process of the authentic participation (Midgley, 1986), direct participation (Richardson, 1983) or active participation (Gilbert & Ward, 1984) people's confidence and competence are built up. In this situation, participation becomes a process "of achieving greater individual fulfilment, personal development, self-awareness and some immediate satisfaction" (Richardson, 1983, p. 57). It is an active and permanent form of participation in

which the direct involvement of the people does not only help to sustain the life of a project or a group but extends a person‘s involvement in creating or establishing other new projects or community groups. The distinctive features defining participation as a process are that people are given the chance to 'formulate' their own development, to influence or to 'have a say' in the decision making process regarding the programmes or projects initiated by them. In this respect, viewing participation as a process can help to develop people's capacities or abilities to decide and to gain some control over their lives (Asnarulkhadi & Fariborz, 2011).

In participation as an end, emphasis is placed on participation as a process in which confidence and solidarity among people are developed. Participation as a process is a dynamic, unquantifiable and essentially unpredictable element. It is created and shaped by the participants. It is an active form of participation, responding to local needs and changing circumstances (Oakley, 1989, as cited in Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2009).

The definition of participation as an end coincides with the Reflect approach. When participation is an end, people can take increasing power over their lives. They are active and they take decisions about their destiny.

To conclude this section, I can say that in participation as a means, people are passive and they do not have any control over development. But in participation as an end, people are directly involved in the process; they have power and control over decisions that affect their lives. Thus, it is participation as an end that leads to empowerment. This approach is related to the bottom-up approach, because in both of them people get power and control and become directly involved in the development process.

Some scholars and theories assert that empowerment is achieved through the bottom-up approach. According to Abbott (1996), empowerment involves action at the grass-roots level, creating self-awareness and transformation of society, leading to negotiated power-sharing. Finally, as depicted in Table 1, a model could be introduced in relation to the approaches of community development, participation and empowerment (see Table 1).

Approaches to development	Participation	Empowerment
Top-down	Participation as a means (static, passive, controllable)	Low empowerment
Partnership (cooperative)	Working together	Moderate empowerment
Bottom-up	Participation as an end (active, dynamic, and self mobilization)	High empowerment and sustainable development

Table 1: The summary of relationship between approaches to development, participation and level of empowerment (Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2009, p. 174)

It is clear that the bottom-up approach fits well with this study because the intention is for people to be fully engaged in sustainable development, and empowerment can be deduced from actions taken.

2.4 Power and Empowerment (a bottom-up process)

According to Asnarulkhadi and Fariborz (2009), another concept central to community development is empowerment. In fact, as Nikkhah and Redzuan (2009) note, one of the important goals of community development is empowering people to improve the quality of their living conditions. This study describes the concepts of power and empowerment because they are inextricably linked (Asnarulkhadi & Fariborz, 2009). Much of the work on empowerment in the literature has been focused on an understanding of power.

2.4.1 Defining power

Asnarulkhadi and Fariborz (2009) say that in relation to empowerment, there are two ways in which the term 'power' can be conceptualized. First, the notion of power can be referred to as the ability to take the initiative to make something happen that would not otherwise happen. Parsons (1963, cited in Asnarulkhadi & Fariborz, 2009) explains that power is like human ability or capacity to mobilize resources such as skills, knowledge, money or other inputs, or local resources for the achievement of a specific goal. With regard to this, having and gaining this power by an individual would not have a negative effect on others. This interpretation of power is relevant to Parsons' concept of power, in which power is a generalized facility or resource possessed by the society as a whole (Parsons, 1963) and is not owned by certain individuals or groups.

In contrast to the first position, where power is conceptualized not as the 'property of individuals', the second position perceives power as something possessed by individuals or groups. This can be observed in the work of Weber who defines power as "the chance of a man or a number of men to realize their own will even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action" (Weber, 1978, p. 926). In this sense, the exercise of power can be examined in terms of the relationship between two parties. To put it crudely, the amount of power that one has is dependent upon the degree one can and has control over the behaviour of others (Asnarulkhadi & Fariborz, 2009).

More recently, power has been understood as shared with others (Page & Czuba, 1999). One of the many important contributions to an understanding of power is the work of Foucault (1977; 1980; 1982; 1984) which has been applied to organizations by writers such as Knights and colleagues (Knights & Willmott, 1989; Knights & Morgan, 1991; Knights, 1992; Clegg, 1989; Deetz, 1992). A number of important points about power are raised in this work.

Firstly, Foucault's work contests the concept of sovereign power retained by the elites who possess and mobilize a battery of power sources that can be used to produce particular outcomes. Instead, he conceptualizes power as a network of relations (Deetz, 1992). Actors may have intentions concerning outcomes, and may mobilize resources or engage in the management of meaning with the idea of achieving them, even if these desired outcomes are not achieved (Foucault, cited in Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1982).

Secondly, according to Foucault, the individual is not a distinct, autonomous or fixed actor. Instead, the individual is socially constituted and socially recognized. Foucault draws attention to how power is socially produced or devolved to actors by the society (Knights & Willmott, 1989; Knights & Morgan, 1991; Knights, 1992).

Accordingly, power is seen and understood differently by people. I agree with contemporary researchers who have opened new perspectives on power not as a zero-sum, but shared. The process which facilitates shared power is called 'empowerment'.

2.4.2 Understanding empowerment

The 1990s have been called the "empowerment era", (Lincoln, Travers, Ackers & Wilkinson, 2002, p. 1; Hardy & O'Sullivan, 1998, p. 451). But according to Vathsala (1999, n.p.), the term 'empowerment' was first used in the context of political mobilisation in the 1960s by activists of the Black Panther Movement in the US. Since then it has entered many fields of theory and practice. Community psychology is one of the disciplines in which the word 'empowerment' is most frequently used (Hyung Hur, 2006, p. 524). It is also well used in development discourse as evident in the following statement by the World Bank:

> Many basic services ... are best managed at the local level - even the village level - with the central agencies providing only technical advice and specialist inputs. The aims should be to empower ordinary people to take charge of their lives, to make communities more responsible for their development, and to make governments listen to their people. Fostering a more pluralistic structure – including nongovernmental organisations ... - is a means to these ends. (World Bank, 1994, n.p.)

One of the areas where empowerment plays an important role is adult education. Access to literacy is considered to be one of the main features of empowerment. Literacy became the central focus for several strands of the progressive literacy movement in the 1970s inspired by the radical pedagogical movement of Paolo Freire. Extended literacy programmes were designed based on Freire's conscientisation model (Freitag-Rouanet, 1999). Freire's concept focuses on individuals becoming 'subjects' in their own lives and developing a 'critical consciousness' – an understanding of their own living situations and circumstances. This process has acquired different names over time, such as awareness building, adult literacy, consciousness raising, non-formal education, etc. and has been the basis of popular education programmes in many socialist countries such as Tanzania and Nicaragua, especially during the post-liberation phase. The liberating potential of literacy lies in raising the voice of the poor, in gaining self-confidence, in becoming politically conscious and critically aware, and ultimately in becoming independent. Literacy provides access to written knowledge – and knowledge is power. In a nutshell literacy has the potential to empower (Kassam, 1989).

This is explained in the following words:

> Empowerment is the ability of individuals to gain control socially, politically, economically, and psychologically through (1) access to information, knowledge, and skills; (2) decision making; and (3) individual self-efficacy, community participation. (Nikkhah, Redzuan & Aku-Samah, 2011, p. 181)

Similarly, the African Development Forum (ADF VI) (2008, p. v) defines 'empowerment' by saying that it is about people - both women and men - taking control over their lives: setting their own agendas, gaining skills, building self-confidence, solving problems, developing self-reliance, and expressing their voice.

I deduce from the above definitions, that "empowerment is essentially a bottom-up process rather than something that can be formulated as a strategy from top-down" (Zimmerman and Rappaport, 1988, cited in Nikkhah, Redzuan & Aku-Samah, 2011, p. 183). They add that empowerment cannot be imposed by outsiders.

These previous statements are in line with my wish to help Rwandan Potters to empower themselves by gaining knowledge in order to take control over their lives. For Weil and Kruzich (1990), the typological approach to the study of empowerment is useful for educators who help the disadvantaged or the oppressed. These people, including the oppressed, the disadvantaged, women and the aged, can actualize the latent powers that an individual or group possesses, or enable them to use their capacities and power more effectively. It is even possible to enlist Government and NGO support. But, in this study the emphasis is on full involvement of people in their development.

2.4.3 Dimensions of empowerment

In the field of education, empowerment is perceived as a means of liberating oppressed people. Freire (1973), one of the founding scholars of empowerment theory in education, presents three progressive steps of empowerment, which are 'conscientizing', 'inspiring', and 'liberating'. According to Freire, the oppressed or the disadvantaged can become empowered by learning about social inequality (i.e. conscientizing), encouraging others by making them feel confident about achieving social equality (i.e. inspiring), and finally liberating them (i.e. liberating). Reinforcing Freire's idea, Parpart, Rai and Staudt (2003, p. 4) state that "empowerment must be understood as including both individual conscientization and alongside politicized power with others, which provides the power to bring about change". Their progressive steps of empowerment are identical to those of Freire. "Power within" is consistent with conscientizing; "power with" is compatible with inspiring. This is possible according to Freire.

In brief, Freire‘s notion of empowerment is about enabling the oppressed and disenfranchised members of society to gain access to structures of oppression and to take action to overcome their problems (Attwood, 2007). Singh and Titi (1995) identify the following elements as necessary conditions for empowerment:

- Local self-reliance, autonomy in the decision-making processes of communities at the village level;
- Provision of space for cultural assertion, spiritual welfare and experiential social learning;
- Access to land and other resources, education for change, and housing and health facilities;
- Access to knowledge and skills (both endogenous and external) for the maintenance of constant natural capital stock;
- Access to skills training, problem solving techniques, and the best available appropriate technologies and information;
- Participation in decision-making processes by all people, particularly women and youth.

According to Singh and Titi (1995), the word ‘empower’ can be interpreted as ‘to enable’, ‘to give’, ‘to gain’, or ‘to take over power’. Literally, therefore, empowerment is the process whereby power is developed, promoted, gained, shared, facilitated, or adjusted by the individual or group members in their social interaction through which they are able to exercise their capabilities to make, effect and bring about changes in the community, as the product of being empowered. Thus, the central theme of empowerment can be defined as a process whereby individuals or groups are able to exercise their ability and capacity to understand, interpret the problems they face, define their needs, and then translate those needs into an action process by participating in organizing themselves to decide, influence, demand, negotiate and engage in carrying out activities (Rappaport, 1987; Adams, 1990; Simon, 1990; Staples, 1990; Parsons, 1991; Wallerstein, 1993). In short, empowerment is the ability of individuals, especially disadvantaged groups (Rwandan Potters in this study) to gain power (Nikkhah & Redzuan, 2009) and to have access to information, knowledge, and skills needed to achieve their objectives, focusing on improving their living conditions. But what kind of empowerment do people have to gain when opportunities arise?

2.4.4 Models of empowerment

As this study takes gender (Reflect approach and gender roles in chapter 3) into account, it has used gender and development (GAD) literature in defining models of empowerment. Focusing on the "social relationships between men and women" (Moser, 1993, p. 3), GAD scholars argue that development endeavours should aim to change the structural conditions, such as the gender division of labour, that perpetuate gender inequity (Kabeer, 1999; Rathgeber, 1990). In this study, both men's and women's views are considered because their actions shape gender hierarchies (Robinson-Pant, 2005) in the Potter Community. Stromquist's (1995) and Rowlands's (1997) models of empowerment help to understand how empowerment can be obtained (Prins, 2008).

Stromquist's (1995, in Prins, 2008) model of empowerment includes three dimensions. Cognitive empowerment entails understanding "the conditions and causes of women's subordination" and acquiring "new knowledge to create a different understanding of gender relations" (Stromquist, 1995, p. 14 in Prins, 2008, p. 26). The psychological dimension refers to building self-esteem and developing "feelings that women can act upon to improve their condition" (Stromquist, 1995, p. 14 in Prins, 2008, p. 26). Women also need to "engage in a productive [economic] activity that will allow them some degree of autonomy" (Stromquist, 1995, p. 15 in Prins, 2008, p. 26). Finally, political empowerment means "the ability to organize and mobilize for change" (Stromquist, 1995, p. 15 in Prins, 2008, p. 26). This model helps mitigate the tendency to conflate empowerment with self-esteem, participation and consciousness-raising (Le Compte & de Marrais, 1992).

Rowlands' (1997, p. 15, in Prins, 2008, pp. 26, 27) model of personal, relational and collective empowerment assumes that power can be coercive or productive; meaning that individuals and groups can use power to effect change. Personal empowerment (similar to the cognitive and psychological empowerment defined by Stromquist) means "developing a sense of self and individual confidence and capacity, and undoing the effects of internalised oppression" (Rowlands, 1995, p. 15 in Prins, 2008, pp. 26, 27). Relational empowerment entails "developing the ability to negotiate and influence the nature of a relationship and decisions made within it" (Rowlands, 1995, p. 15 in Prins, 2008, pp. 26, 27), for instance, exercising more control over household decision-making. Collective (political in Stromquist)

empowerment happens when people “work together to achieve a more extensive impact than each could have had alone” (Rowlands, 1995, p. 15 in Prins, 2008, pp. 26, 27). Rowlands cautions that changes in one area do not automatically engender changes in another area; for instance, increased self-esteem may not produce collective action. Educators cannot bestow power on others, but they can work to create the conditions that enable participants to exercise more control in their lives.

Asnarulkhadi and Fariborz (2011) see things differently. According to them, the process of achieving goals or objectives, and bringing about change, cannot be attained on an individual basis, instead the problems which need to be addressed are shared between individuals as group members. Staples (1990) and Kieffer (1984) argue that individual empowerment contributes to group empowerment. This takes place in the participation process itself when empowered individuals, who realize their personal responsibility to bring some changes to their social environment, help to enhance the functioning of the group and community members by informing, inviting, encouraging and organizing them to participate in identifying the problem, prioritizing the needs, deciding (making decisions) and taking part in conducting the group activity, project or even action. By mobilizing, integrating, utilizing and coordinating local resources into a self-help effort for community change (Kahn & Bender, 1985) as one collective action, collective empowerment is said to be generated. The ability of individual members to influence their friends and other community members to participate together in pursuing the action process constitutes their interpersonal empowerment. Once these interrelationships are established, collective empowerment is tightened and stabilized, and eventually not only sustains but also encourages individual empowerment to take place (see also Parsons, 1991; Kieffer, 1984; Longres & McLeod, 1980). In other words, when groups are established and members are able to define the boundaries of their actions and activities to meet their shared (felt) needs or to solve common problems, group members can become active participants in implementing decisions and processes which affect them. At the point where they are responsible for making and implementing their own choices and decisions, and are accountable for the actions taken, collective empowerment is exercised. Indeed, empowerment as a process of developing and exercising power - the ability to make decisions and to take the initiative on matters related to their lives - is an ongoing process of developing the 'power to' act to achieve their objectives (Asnarulkhadi & Fariborz, 2011).

An increase in individual empowerment has the ability to promote or build up and generate collective or group empowerment, which can effect change; to improve their living or community life conditions, by providing care or help for the community, setting up community education centres and so forth. At the community level, the effort to bring these changes is related to the objectives of the groups or activities initiated by the empowered individual members. Furthermore, this individual empowerment is reinforced by continued involvement and support from the group (Evans, 1992). Developing and gaining skills, competence and confidence in such a process is, in general, knowledge gathering. Here, the dictum 'knowledge is power' according to Foucault, can promote people's action as a group, when they reflect on past actions and experiences, and identify their capabilities in relation to the social arrangement in which they live. In this regard, collective action can bring collective empowerment (Asnarulkhadi & Fariborz, 2011).

The empowerment process is not a constant, but rather a continuing development that involves many changes, and whereby an individual or a group is able to strengthen and exercise the ability to act to gain control and mastery over individual life, community, and society. As long as empowerment is a process of both thought and action, it is dynamic and constantly evolving (Staples, 1990). It also encourages people to sit together, to think and to act together in order to reach a common goal. This is what we mean in the Rwandan culture when we say "*nta mugabo umwe" (*No man is an island). But, how can we help people to get power and the autonomy to exercise it? To answer this question, let us explore in the next chapter how literacy can empower people in acquiring autonomy in their thinking and actions.

2.5 Conclusion

In this chapter it has been shown that the top-down approach to development rooted in modernisation theory has been unsuccessful. Developing countries continue to lag behind developed countries. Similarly, poor and marginalised people in all continents continue to face endemic poverty. The transfer of capital goods, technologies, industries and Western norms to developing countries has failed to bring rapid economic productivity and social development in the developing countries, which are still considered to be lagging behind.

The bottom-up approach to development based on dependency theory is a response to the question of why developing countries continue to lag behind Western countries or why the poor continue to get poorer. The active exploitation of underdeveloped regions of the periphery by capitalists constitutes a huge barrier. To handle such a situation, researchers have proposed theories which focus on the well-being of people in their communities by participating in actions which arouse their desire for development. The concept 'community development' has become part of development discourse, joined by participation and empowerment.

It has been shown that in the process of participation, people are empowered and can be empowered, and the central theme of people's empowerment is their increased ability to make changes, based on their own needs after identification of the problems they face. Hence, within these prescribed circumstances, individuals interact and influence each other, mobilize and organize themselves to decide, to perform and take collective action to solve common problem(s) and to achieve their goals (Asnarulkhadi & Fariborz, 2011).

To develop at the community level, it is important to encourage all members of the community to participate fully in actions which provide them with the skills needed for development. Then when these skills are acquired, they are likely to begin to raise their voices and struggle for their rights. They also become increasingly able to solve their problems by themselves.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK (Part 2): LITERACY

3.1 Introduction

The theme of literacy has a central place in the theoretical model described in chapter 2. This is why chapter 3 is reserved to discuss literacy and approaches to literacy. In this chapter I intend to define literacy in a way which relates to my study and to clarify the process of Reflect (Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques).

As I deal with people who cannot read and write, it seems important to focus on literacy and its approaches. It has been demonstrated that literacy is linked to development (Robinson-Pant, 2000; Aitchison, 2003; SIL (Safety Integrity Level) international website, 2009; UNESCO, 2000; 2006; 2008; Rogers, 2004). However, this relationship is given new emphasis by Reflect, a new approach to literacy. That is why Reflect is given special attention in this theoretical framework. Also, literacy using the Reflect approach has underpinned the relationship between literacy and empowerment especially with women and other disadvantaged groups (Duffy, Fransman & Pearce, 2008), in this study, the Rwandan Potters.

3.2 Defining Literacy

Since ancient times, literate and illiterate people were divided and placed into two separate worlds: a world for educated people who are able to contribute actively in every sector of life; and a world of people who are ignorant, marginal, or unaware of the problems in their society. In short, as Collinson (2009) states, the concept of literacy is equated with civilisation and intelligence; while illiteracy is equated with a kind of pathology.

According to Harris (1989) and Millender (2001), literacy and illiteracy constitute two different worlds. Harris (1989, p. 5) notes that the Greek term ‘agrammatos’ and the Latin term ‘illitteratus‘, though sometimes vague in meaning, can be translated as both ‘incapable of reading and writing’ and ‘uncultured’. He also argues that Aristotle used ‘agrammatos’ to mean animals that are unable to articulate sounds. Millender (2001) demonstrates how ancient Athenian writers used the growing ideological importance of literacy in Athens, from

the fifth century, as a means of self-identity; and how illiteracy was used to define the 'other', in this case the Athenians' enemies, who were the Spartans. Millender's work demonstrates the ideological origins of these attitudes toward literacy and illiteracy in the western world. It is this classical tradition of thought that has dominated western thinking ever since.

These preconceptions show us the limitations in defining literacy today. Literacy is not only the ability to read and to write, but the term also embraces other abilities and can be understood differently according to different cultures. Consequently, should we characterise those who cannot read or write as illiterate, ignorant, marginal or sub-human? And can we find a category of people with all abilities which confer on them the elite status of civilisation and full citizenship? There are multiple literacies (Richmond, Robinson & Sachs-Israel, 2008) and there is no one who can perform perfectly in all literacies. Each person can be literate in some domains and illiterate in others, because literacy evolves and there are always new literacies. Today we cannot continue to treat people who cannot read and write as illiterate because literacy is not only reading and writing. I will interrogate different definitions of literacy, and then propose one which is appropriate for this study.

According to Ntilema (2009), while all approaches to literacy are related to the ability to understand and communicate via written text, there is no international standard definition of literacy that captures all its facets. Over the past fifty years, several definitions of literacy have evolved. Lyster (as cited in Hutton, 1992) argues that definitions of literacy have changed over time according to different agendas. More recent definitions incorporate reading, writing and numeracy, as well as many other areas of skills, behaviour and knowledge (for example, critical consciousness, participation, action, development, and human relations). Literacy empowers people who gain critical consciousness and participate actively in their development.

While UNESCO's definition of literacy is similar to that of Lyster (cited in Hutton, 1992) this definition adds something new about the context in which literacy is used, by saying that the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written texts is associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning in enabling individuals to achieve his or her goals, to develop his or her knowledge and potential and participate fully in community and wider society (UNESCO, 2005a).

Recognizing that people acquire and apply literacy for different purposes in different situations, and that literacy is not uniform, but culturally and linguistically diverse, UNESCO today views literacy as a pluralistic concept. UNESCO recognizes that skills for written expression and comprehension are related to particular contexts and languages, and that the value of these skills lies in the ability to apply them in a beneficial way. The word literacy is often used today as a substitute for the word 'ability' or 'competency'. For example, computer literacy is the ability to use computers and access and create information through a computer (Ntilema, 2009, p. 2).

Ntilema (2009, p. 3) gives same examples of new uses of the word 'Literacy':

- Information literacy: the skills required to organize and search for information, while also analyzing that information.
- Critical literacy: the ability to engage in critical thinking, and judge the intention, content and possible effects of written material.
- Mobile literacy: the ability to use mobile technology, such as a mobile phone and its non-voice features.
- Media literacy and research literacy: the ability to be a discerning reader and the ability to find various types of information.
- Cultural literacy: the ability to understand cultural, social and ideological values in a given context.
- Legal literacy: the knowledge of basic legal rights and how to protect those rights.
- Visual literacy: the interpretation of images, signs, pictures and non-verbal (body) language.

While the abilities listed above, such as 'computer literacy' and 'information literacy' are necessary skills to cultivate in emerging knowledge societies, the ability to read and write is a prerequisite for gaining many of these abilities (Ntilema, 2009, p. 3).

In this study where I deal with adult participants who have never attended school, I myself define literacy as the ability to read, to write and calculate in the mother tongue of the Rwandan Potter Community (i.e. Kinyarwanda); and to be able to use these competencies in everyday life when they are required in developmental activities. Here development concerns

knowledge (see UNESCO, 2005a), and activities which permit people to improve their living situations, such as having a decent shelter, access to education, employment, health, and so on. Numeracy, which is generally understood as mathematical skills that are needed for active participation in daily life (Castle, in Hutton, 1992), is as important as reading and writing in this study. This is to emphasize the importance of literacy in raising awareness and understanding of the causes of development problems, as well as searching for solutions. This implies the role of literacy in developing individuals, communities, countries, and how to put it into practice. To do so, this study focuses not only on 'reading, writing and counting' as a basis for other literacies, but also it embraces other activities chosen by the participants themselves in order to solve problems they face in their everyday life. Duffy, Fransman and Pearce (2008) argue that literacy is the continuing process of acquiring and using reading, writing and numeracy skills together with the critical understanding of the political, social and economic environment which contributes to personal and community development.

Based on advice from the Department for International Development (DFID) (2008, p. 1), I prefer to use the term 'adults who cannot read and write', as the term 'illiterate' tends to imply ignorance and the lack of social and other skills. Nobody can be considered totally literate (Bhola & Gomez, 2008) and there is no fully illiterate person in the world. Wagner (2000, p. 2) argues that "There is no single level of skill or knowledge that qualifies a person as literate, but rather there are multiple levels and kinds of literacy (e.g. numeracy, technological literacy)", and all levels of literacy are achieved through the effective participation of the beneficiaries (individuals or communities). Richmond, Robinson and Sachs-Israel (2008, p. 9) also consider that there is no single notion of literacy as a skill which people either possess or do not, but multiple literacies at different stages of our lives. The concept of 'situated literacies' draws our attention to how the social, cultural and political context shapes the ways in which people acquire and use literacy.

3.3 Literacy causes development and empowerment?

Literacy is not the simple reading of words or a set of associated symbols and sounds, but an act of critical understanding of the situation in the world. Literacy is not an end in itself but a means of extending individuals' efforts towards education, involving overall interdisciplinary responses to problems. This is underlined by Duffy, Fransman & Pearce (2008) who say that

literacy is more than the acquisition of the skills of reading, writing and numeracy; it also involves the functional use of these skills. It also encompasses a range of social and cultural practices and can be a tool for critical reflection and action.

To underline the relationship between literacy and other concepts of community development; some researchers such as Ntilema (2009); Robinson-Pant (2004); Aitchison (2003); King and Hill (1993); Freire (1972a); Partridge (1999); UNESCO (2005a; 2006; 2008); Rogers (2004); Attwood (2007); Patel (2005); Rogers (2001); Richmond, Robinson and Sachs-Israel (2008); Duffy, Fransman and Pearce (2008) give their point of view.

During a workshop held in South Africa, Aitchison stated that:

> It is very important for the people of our country to develop their knowledge and skills so that they can collectively help improve the lives of all who live in this country. South Africa has suffered greatly in the past because of apartheid policies, political turmoil and violence. We all know of the low levels of education that resulted from this. Millions of people need to gain basic skills so that they can manage their lives better. If people are illiterate they will have less chance of getting information about health issues, about jobs and economic opportunities. They will also not be able to help their children with their education. This will result in many more people not having the means to lead a healthy and productive life. (Aitchison, 2003, p. 11)

Reading this statement, we can believe that participation in literacy education could lead to development and empowerment. If there is development of the individual, s/he will be capable of participating in the development of the community in the form of economic, social, political and cultural activities (Aitchison, 2003). For example, reading and writing become meaningful and important skills for personal reasons such as writing letters to friends or in more formal situations such as when dealing with legal matters. In addition, individuals and communities learn to direct their own development, by themselves. Therefore in literacy classes, the notion of human development becomes central in social development (Partridge, 1999) by taking into account people‘s contexts.

Literacy leads to empowerment (Richmond et al., 2008) when people acquire the essential knowledge and skills which enable them to engage in activities and know how to use these skills for their own and for their community’s development.

For Richmond et al. (2008) literacy is a means for development as it enables people to access new opportunities and to participate in society in new ways. For this reason, literacy is also a core component of the Education for All (EFA) programme. As stated by UNESCO:

> A good quality basic education equips pupils with literacy skills for life and further learning: literate parents are more likely to send their children to school: literate people are better able to access continuing education opportunities; and literate societies are better geared to meet pressing development challenges. (UNESCO, 2005, p. 4)

King and Hill also argue that:

> A better educated mother has fewer and better educated children. She is more productive at home and in the workplace. And she raises a healthier family since she can better apply improved hygiene and nutritional practices. (King & Hill, 1993, p. 12)

The United Nations Education for All (EFA) recognises the importance of education for everyone (UNESCO, 2000; 2006; 2008). Literacy enables people to develop themselves and their countries. Development is likely to be more difficulty if illiteracy is not addressed. Two of UNESCO‘s time-worn slogans are “Without literacy, there is no development” and “literacy is the key to health, wealth and happiness” (Rogers, 2004). According to Attwood (2007), these views are echoed by the president of the Commonwealth of Learning, Sir John Daniels who says that literacy, whether achieved through childhood schooling or through learning in later life, is the passport that allows individuals to participate in contemporary social, economic and political development.

According to Limage, Aoyagi, Aksornkool and Rahman (2005, pp. 1-2), adult literacy is a key component of an individual‘s self-confidence and participation in society. EFA Goal 4, which is “achieving a 50 per cent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults”, needs further focus and emphasis because it has been neglected in the past years.

Does literacy cause development and empowerment in all cases? One answer is given by Prins (2008) who says that it is a question of how empowerment is defined and whether literacy inherently causes empowerment and development (Patel, 2005; Robinson-Pant, 2004; Rogers, 2001). In her overview of conceptions of empowerment in women’s literacy, Robinson-Pant (2004, p. 23) argues that international aid agencies view empowerment as a

"development benefit that can be measured in the same way as child mortality or family size", resulting in "technicist attempts" to measure statistical indicators such as women's control of household income (see also Leve, 2001) and an emphasis on "functional aims, such as learning to keep written accounts" (p. 23). Such definitions are "based on a static view of power relations, where women are able to gain the power to challenge men's authority through literacy education" (p. 23), but do not examine gender relations among men and women or the structural causes of women's subordination.

From this critical perspective, literacy is a source of power, not for improving national development indicators or performing traditional gender roles more efficiently (Moser, 1993), but rather for working co-operatively towards social and political transformation (Freire, 1973).

Viewing literacy as a social practice embedded in power relations and mediated by institutions and social structures, New Literacy Studies (NLS) scholars emphasise that literacy does not have uniform effects on individuals, communities or societies (Betts, 2003; Robinson-Pant, 2004; Street, 2001). Rather, they argue for adapting literacy programmes to the existing and desired literacy practices of participants (Rogers, 2001).

Prins (2008) supports Stacki and Monkman's (2003) position that empowerment is still a useful concept which can help scholars discern how literacy programmes serve to perpetuate and/or ameliorate inequities at micro and macro levels, and to conceptualise how people might use literacy to exercise power in their daily lives (see Maddox, 2007). Stacki and Monkman claim that "Education focused on social justice and equity attempts to change institutions and the distribution of power, promoting new behaviours, relations, and ways of viewing the world" (Monkman, 2003, p. 173, cited in Prins, 2008, p. 26).

To emphasize the above conceptions about the way power can be gained, I cannot conclude this discussion about the relationship between literacy, development, participation and empowerment without highlighting the main feature that is sometimes forgotten in literacy classes. Freire (1972a) and Partridge (1999) say clearly that literacy is not just the process of learning the skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, rather literacy can equip marginalised groups to analyse the causes of oppression and to create more just, equitable communities

and societies (Freire, 1973; Maruatona & Cervero, 2004). Freire (1972a) emphasizes that literacy must be a contribution to the liberation of people and their full development. Rogers (2001) adds that critical literacy education is a prerequisite for liberation. With literacy, people should be able to identify the aims and contradictions of the society they live in, and be critically aware of the need for change. Literacy should stimulate a person‘s initiative and encourage him or her to create projects to change the world around him/her. Literacy should help people feel free to say how they want to develop themselves, and give them ways to relate effectively to other people. Partridge (1999) argues that there is a mistaken but common belief that being able to read and write in itself is the key to all progress. Literacy work with illiterate communities in India shows that women in these communities need numeracy more than reading and writing skills in order to deal with authorities. They have developed intricate methods of keeping accounts, using embroidery stitches to record relevant information. Both Freire and Partridge want to emphasize that it is important to encourage the participation of people in their learning. In this perspective, the Reflect approach to adult literacy programme seems to be an approach which could help people to identify and to solve the problems they face in their life.

3.4 Roots of Reflect

The Reflect approach has its roots in various models such as Paulo Freire‘s method of teaching literacy, the ideological model of literacy, the transformative model of literacy, and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA).

3.4.1 Paulo Freire’s method of literacy teaching

Before describing Paulo Freire‘s method of teaching literacy, it is important to know more about the man. According to Bartlett (2008), Paulo Freire (1921-1997) was one of the best known and most influential radical education theorists in the 20th century. His impact on peace education, adult education, non-formal education, and critical literacy has been incalculable. Born in 1921 in Recife, in the Brazilian north-east, Freire grew up in a middle class family that encountered hard times during the Great Depression. As a result, Freire experienced directly the impact of poverty on educational opportunities in a way that marked his entire career. Freire‘s participation in Recife‘s Movement for Popular Culture and his

work for the University of Recife‘s Cultural Extension department greatly influenced his critique of educational inequalities and his remarkable approach to pedagogy.

Freire‘s method of teaching literacy originated from the problems faced by people who could not read and write in Latin America. The consequences of this situation included the fact that they were considered as marginalised or outsiders to the society whose voices are silenced as Freire noted in most of his works.

Historical context

Martinez (1993) and Alliance for Metropolitan Stability (AMS) (2009) present the historical context in which Freire’s methodology was created. Freire started a national literacy programme for peasants and slum dwellers in the 1950s and 1960s in Brazil. One of the most active organizations was Catholic Action, including mainly the Catholic University Students and the Catholic Workers’ Youth (JUC and JOC). Catholic Action used a very efficient method for analysing their reality as well as the action of transforming this reality into 3 basic steps, namely:

- To see the situation experienced by the participants.
- To analyze this situation, analyzing the root causes (socio-economic, political, cultural, and so on.)
- To act to change this situation, following the precepts of Social Justice.

According to Martinez (1993), members of Catholic Action were organized in small groups, who held weekly meetings, where they used the method, analysing their situation at that moment, and planning their action in the workplace, in the universities, in the neighbourhoods, in the political parties and in the Workers’ Unions. Many members of Catholic Action went to work among the illiterate workers of Brazil, teaching them to read and write, and organizing them so that they could take an active role in the country‘s destiny. This group of educators had a double task: to develop an efficient literacy method for adults, and to raise the social consciousness of the Brazilian workers. They found out that the workers were fatalists, resigned to their situation in society and thought that it was impossible to change their position in society. In their experience with workers, Paulo Freire and his group of educators used the Catholic Action method, that is to see, to analyze, to act – and

discovered that when the people began to talk about their problems in a community, and began to plan some actions about those problems, they began to free themselves from their fatalism, or internal oppression. The educators also discovered that the most efficient literacy method was the use of the generative word/theme, that is, to use words and themes about the daily lives of the learners, words and themes that held a vital interest for them. The educators developed the technique of dividing the generative word into syllables ("chunks of words") and combining these syllables with the vowels. The learners memorized the various "chunks of words" and put them together to form new words. An example: the generative word "favela" (shanty town) was the first one used in all literacy classes in shanty towns. From this practice emerged the theory which informs Paulo Freire methodology of literacy teaching (Martinez, 1993, pp. 1-2).

For Martinez (1993), some key points of Freire's conceptual framework include the following:

- Knowledge is not neutral; it is the expression of historical moments where some groups exercise dominant power over others.
- Oppressed groups of individuals often experience life as 'objects' being acted upon rather than 'subjects' of their own lives.
- 'Objects' often lack certain critical skills essential for influencing the institutions that have control over their lives.
- 'Subjects' not only have skills for influencing institutions, but also have the opportunity to exercise these skills.
- The learners are the subjects in the learning process and not the objects – as they have to be subjects of their destiny.
- The learners and educators are equal participants in the learning process; this process is developed by a continuous dialogue between the educators and learners.
- Through dialogue, learners or subjects are able to focus their attention on the reality which mediates them and which - posed as a problem - challenges them. The response to that challenge is the action of dialogical subjects upon reality in order to transform it.
- The objective of the learning process is to liberate the participants from their external and internal oppression; to facilitate learners becoming capable of changing their lives and the society they live in (Freire, 1971).

As summarized by Martinez (1993) & AMS (2009), Freire‘s methodology can be outlined as follows:

- Identify the problems: this includes knowing about the issues the learners face.
- Produce the codes: learners can create a drawing which represents the issues. The group creates one list of problems that represents all group members’ concerns.
- See the situation as experienced by the participants: learners describe the situation shown in the picture to the educator.
- Analyze the situation: learners and educators ask themselves why this is happening and what the immediate and root causes of these problems are. Afterwards, they draw a problem tree. The trunk represents a specific problem the group has agreed upon, the leaves represent immediate consequences, and the roots represent the root causes. Then individuals or groups present the results of their analysis.
- Act to change the situation: the final step involves participants in discussion of an immediate plan to solve the problems and a long-term plan of action.

Freire believed that this process, which he described as praxis, led to ‘conscientisation’, which deals with the development of critical consciousness.

Conscientization

For Freire (1972a), conscientization referred to the process in which men (sic), not as recipients, but as knowing subjects, achieve a deepening awareness of the socio-cultural reality which shapes their lives and their capacity to transform the reality.

The term ‘conscientization’ was coined by Freire, as the following researchers noted in their studies: Cullen, Hadjivassiliou, Hamilton, Kelleher, Sommerlad, Stern (2002); Berta-Ávila (2003); Van Winkle (2003) and Roberts (2007).

According to Cullen et al. (2002, p. 5), conscientization is an approach rooted in community-based education and notions of ‘listening to the community’. The reason for collaboration is to work with the least powerful to gain more autonomy and independence, more control over their own lives, and to bring about change in the interests of greater equality and social justice.

According to the importance of the process of conscientization which enables people to have a voice in their society, Freire emphasizes the necessity for people to enter into a state which he calls conscientization (Van Winkle, 2003). Berta-Avila (2003, p. 122) poses the question, "How does the process of conscientization come to be?" Does a person wake up one day and decide he/she is living a false reality and want to change it? Peruvian indigenous theory (Paiva, 1992, in Berta-Avila, 2003) suggests that a person experiences a moment in his life in which all that he or she knows, believes, or feels comes to a sudden halt. The classroom environment, at any level, can be the awakening moment which begins the process of conscientization described by Van Winkle (2003) and Roberts (2007) as follows:

For Van Winkle (2003, p. 31), during the first state of 'semi-transitivity', a person's perception is limited. His goal is simply survival. Van Winkle's view is similar to that of Roberts (2007). When the former uses semi-transitivity, the latter uses "magical consciousness" to mean that people struggle for survival. Roberts adds that "magical consciousness prevailed among rural peasant communities, and people were characterised by a fatalistic attitude, a lack of historical awareness about their problems" (2007, p. 511).

The second stage of consciousness, according to both Van Winkle and Roberts, is "naïve Transitivity" (Van Winkle, 2003, p. 31; Roberts, 2007, p. 511). This is the stage in which the oppressed oversimplify their problems. It is a difficult stage when people reflect on the past and have nostalgic recollections of how things used to be. This is also the stage when people tend to lose interest in their goals. They forget what they are working for and begin to fantasize about their reality. This part of the learning process is common to everyone. Most of us can relate to the feeling which Freire characterizes as 'naive transitivity' because we have all set goals for ourselves and come to a point when we say it is just too difficult. At this stage we begin to invent reasons as to why we should discontinue our quest to achieve our goal and attempt to justify giving up (Van Winkle, 2003).

The third and final stage on the road to conscientization is 'critical transitivity'. This is the stage in which people begin to truly understand and interpret their problems. People become subjects rather than objects and begin to act pro-actively in order to reject the old and incorporate new ideas. The oppressed begin to see themselves as actors and players in their own reality. Not only does this stage promote personal transitivity, it also paves the road for dialogue. At this stage, people begin to ask and answer questions. Instead of listening and

obeying, they listen and question. This is important because dialogue is the most humanizing act and it promotes liberation (Van Winkle, 2003; Roberts, 2007). This stage summarizes conscientization as a process of reflection and action. Thomas (2009) adds to Van Winkle‘s view that Freire's theoretical work can contribute to the literature regarding possibilities for more participatory, democratic and bottom-up struggles for social justice and liberation.

Following the description of Freire‘s method of literacy teaching, it is important to know how it was judged by others. Freire‘s methods have been the subject of much criticism. Some people did not understand what he wanted to reveal and others disagreed. According to Zacharakis-Jutz (1988) since the first publication in English of *Freire"s Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in 1970, adult education has emerged, not only as an acceptable field of study, but as one of esteem embraced by universities in an effort to further the ‘war’ against illiteracy, ignorance and human inefficiency.

Personally, I agree that Freire has proposed a method that can be useful for adult education. It creates awareness in people about problems they face in their everyday lives, but I recognise that his method has some limitations, which are presented below.

Limitations and distortions of Freire’s methodology

Authors such as Archer (1995) and Archer and Cottingham (1996) outline both some of the limitations of Freire’s theories and method and distorted applications of these. According to Archer (1995), most literacy programmes around the world that claim to use Freire’s methods are in fact seriously distorting both his theory and his methods. These pseudo Freirean programmes have reduced his method to the use of a literacy ‘primer’ (or textbook) which has a series of photographs or pictures on social issues linked to words that are regarded by literacy planners as socially relevant. Most primers are produced in urban areas or after surveys in rural areas and are then generalised for whole regions or countries. This is recognized by Archer and Cottingham (1996) who say that ironically the Freirean approach has become the traditional approach.

Although there have been many new ideas and methodologies developed since Freire‘s day, Freire still remains the most widely quoted and referred to educationist. But in most cases this can be described as “pseudo Freireanism”, stripped of its radical potential. Why? Archer

(1995) and Archer and Cottingham (1996) give reasons for this distortion. Archer (1995) says that in his experience there is no dialogue in about 95% of literacy classes. Literacy has become detached from other development programmes and there is widespread doubt about the value of adult literacy. Most programmes fail even to teach basic literacy skills. A recent World Bank discussion paper estimates that literacy programmes over the past 30 years have had an effectiveness rate of just 12.5% (Archer, 1995).

For Archer and Cottingham (1996), those who now claim to use Freirean methods have simply replaced 'mechanical primers' with more socially-based words, phrases and pictures. It is difficult to develop dialogue. To expect largely untrained teachers to do so with just a picture and a word to structure the process is unrealistic. Teachers might have a list of questions in a guidebook (what do you see in the picture? what does it mean?) but the learners normally shift around awkwardly, look embarrassed, remain silent or give stock responses to the questions (trying to keep the teacher happy or give the 'right' answer). Even if the codifications have been skilfully developed locally and the questions are poignant, developing a dialogue is still not easy. The primer appears in the class from 'outside' and feels 'external' to the lives of the learners (Archer & Cottingham, 1996).

The result of this lack of dialogue is that literacy becomes a technical process of teaching syllables (often with rote chanting) and other mechanical aspects of reading and writing. Lacking a viable alternative, teachers re-enact their own experiences of education in primary school and treat the adult learners like children. There is no link to local issues, local development or social change. Learners get bored. Many drop out and others struggle on but fail to learn because reading and writing is not meaningfully related to their lives (Archer & Cottingham, 1996).

Feminists have also condemned Freire for his persistent references to 'Man' when he is referring to 'people' or 'humanity' (and although this is more a matter of linguistic convention than sexism, Freire certainly fails to address gender issues in his earlier work) (Archer & Cottingham, 1996).

Despite these shortcomings, Freire's approach has a lot to offer. The most serious problems lie with Freire's failure to formulate an effective literacy methodology (Archer & Cottingham, 1996). According to Archer (1995), Freire's work is notoriously difficult to read. A good

foundation in political philosophy helps before reading key words like *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* or *Cultural Action for Freedom*. It is therefore not surprising that most people who refer to Freire have not actually read his work. This has led to widespread distortions and abuse. That is why Reflect, the new approach to literacy, was designed. Before presenting it, let me emphasize first participant-centred methodology, such as Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA).

3.4.2 Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

Origins of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

Chambers (1983; 1993) is the key figure behind PRA, and he has done extensive writing and training. He refers to Freire's work on dialogue and conscientization as one of the central influences on his work, saying that:

> Participatory Rural Appraisal belongs to, draws on, and overlaps with other members of a family of approaches that have been or are participatory in various ways. These include the community development of the 1950s and 1960s, the dialogics and conscientization of Paulo Freire, participatory action research, and the work of activist NGOs. (Chambers, 1991, in Archer & Cottingham, 1996, p. 14)

PRA was created in response to criticism of traditional approaches of teaching literacy which failed to stimulate full participation of people in their learning. The concept of participatory research evolved from various directions. On the one hand, development agencies and policy-makers who sought quick access to socio-economic data were responding to critiques of trickle-down economic development theory and concerns about top-down development without consultation with local communities (Campbell 2002; Hayward, Simpson & Wood, 2004). On the other hand, communities themselves increased their demand to be included in decisions affecting their daily lives (Hayward et al., 2004). According to Chambers and Mayoux (2005), collaboration and participation have now become ethical issues in their own right, particularly for the poor and the marginalised, as illustrated in the following statement:

> In order for pro-poor development to become a reality, poor people themselves must be not only involved as respondents, but also have access to the information generated, a role in its analysis and in identifying the practical implications for change. (Chambers & Mayoux, 2005, p. 7)

People taught by Chambers and Mayoux are found in developing countries such as Latin America and Africa. In this regard, Mulenga stated that:

> Critics of African development such as Julius Nyerere of Tanzania argued that any meaningful development could only be achieved if the people's culture and popular knowledge were integrated into the process. (Mulenga, 1999, p. 3)

To facilitate this process, participatory rural appraisal was offered as a response to policy-maker and aid agency needs for quick access to socio-economic data at local levels (Campbell, 2002). Drawing on Chambers's work, Campbell states that the goal of PRA is to maximise the skills, knowledge, expertise and analytical skills of village communities through a process of data collection, discussion of issues and possible solutions, as well as the creation of an agreed community action plan.

The people engaged in PRA are not necessarily trained researchers. It is sometimes argued that the main gain from this process is what the researcher-facilitators learn about their clients' own skills and understanding, rather than new technical knowledge that can guide the goal for change or development (Doyle & Krasny, 2003).

PRA evolved into a methodology for use in a variety of situations including urban communities, and it is simply known as participatory appraisal (Peanut, 2005). While its primary goal is to transfer ownership of knowledge creation to communities, it does more than simply gathering data because action is the intended outcome. There is an explicit aim to reduce the distance between the researcher and the researched (Gray, Fitch, Davis & Phillips, 2000) and the research process has come to be defined by Archer and Cottingham as follows:

> Participatory Rural Appraisal has roots in a reaction to the Western model or the "modernisation" approach to development. It is an approach to use against those who believe that there are simple or pre-packaged technological solutions to development which can be imposed by external professionals. (Archer & Cottingham, 1996, p. 13)

From this statement, it is clear that people cannot solve issues related to literacy and development by solutions which come from outside their community. To meet people's needs, Archer and Cottingham (1996, p. 13) recognise that PRA practitioners have a desire to start from the lives of communities themselves. But what tools are there for the poor to find out about their priorities by themselves? PRA practitioners start from the recognition that

poor communities have an abundance of technical and social indigenous knowledge. Through centuries, they have survived in difficult environments with limited resources. What is needed are techniques to enable adults to articulate their knowledge and to apply them to the reality on the ground. This must be the starting point of any effective development programme.

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools

As Barton (1994, in Archer & Cottingham, 1996, p. 14) states, "Learning is the active construction of knowledge." PRA has developed a range of techniques which facilitate this construction. The use of new techniques in adult education is an opportunity to build new knowledge which emerges through people‘s existing knowledge. Barton (1994, in Archer & Cottingham, 1996, p. 14) observes that with PRA techniques, participants discover new knowledge rather than recover and preserve traditional knowledge. PRA tools include maps, calendars, diagrams, matrices and other graphic forms developed by practitioners of PRA. However, many other participatory methods and processes are also used, and these are theatre, role-play, song, dance, video, and photography. Therefore, practitioners are encouraged to use any tool that works to bring out people‘s knowledge and opinions, or to stimulate discussion and analysis. There are no unique ‘Reflect’ tools.

The learners produce a real document instead of copying what the teacher writes. The graphics become a permanent record for communities, giving them a basis for planning their own development. As participants construct their own materials, they take ownership of the issues that come up and often take local action, change their behaviour, or their attitudes (Phnuyal, Archer & Cottingham, 1998). This participation of people in their learning transfers to them power in decision making.

Literacy takes place in social situations and events on the one hand, and enables individuals to lead meaningful lives by acquiring the capabilities to read and write on the other hand. In the next section, I describe the two dimensions of understanding literacy: the autonomous model and the ideological model.

3.4.3 Autonomous versus ideological approaches to literacy

Two major theoretical positions occupy the paradigmatic space that determines how literacy is viewed (Edelsky, 1986, p. 92, cited in Bloch, 2006). Street (1984, cited in Bloch, 2006; 2003, p. 77) coined the concept of 'multiple literacies', which makes a distinction between 'autonomous' and 'ideological' models of literacy. Street (1984, cited in Prinsloo & Breier, 1996) and Gee (1996, as cited in Evans, 2005) state that in an autonomous model, literacy is separated from its social context and is considered as an independent variable. It is possible to associate literacy with symbolic elements such as progress, social mobility and economic stability. The widely entrenched 'autonomous' model views literacy as being unconnected to any specific context. People can only use literacy once they have been taught the component technical skills. The assumption is that literacy by itself has power over people's lives, such as enhancing the cognitive skills of poor people and improving their social and economic conditions (Street 2003). Here literacy (which emphasizes only reading and writing) is given an important place and learners are taught to struggle to acquire it in order to compete in the job market. The autonomous model of literacy implies standardization of competences which promotes competition in order to establish hierarchies (Fransman, 2005). This happens through assessment. Assessment itself is linked to the quantitative aspect. Therefore, the autonomous model interests quantitative researchers. As this study is qualitative, let us view other approaches which could be a better fit with the present case

A growing body of research and scholarship, known as the New Literacy Studies, avoids the pitfalls of the 'literacy myth' by engaging in research that captures the complexity of literacy practices in the social contexts which make them meaningful (Snyder, 2001, in Evans, 2005, p. 3). Street (1984, in Prinsloo & Breier, 1996, p. 18) calls this alternative orientation an 'ideological' view of literacy. According to Fransman (2005), this approach focuses on design over and above competence and critique and is built on the notions of literacy events, practices and domains. Heath (1983, p. 50) characterises a "literacy event" as "any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of the participants' interactions and their interpretative processes". While developing the concept, Street (1984, p. 1) employed the phrase "literacy practices" as a means of focusing on the knowledge and power relations surrounding a literacy event. In addition, Street (1995, p. 2) broadens the scope to "literacy practices" which take into account "the behaviour and the social and cultural

conceptualizations that give meaning to the uses of reading and/or writing". Literacy practices incorporate “literacy events” - those situations where reading or writing are integral to communication - but focus as well on the conceptions people have of those events and the norms, values and beliefs in which those practices are situated (Evans, 2005, p. 4). In this regard, in order to become "literate", one not only needs to acquire language but also the ways of thinking, acting, and believing (Lankshear & Snyder, 2000, cited in Evans, 2005, p. 4). Merrifield (1998, p. 31, cited in Demetrion, 2005, p. 16) defines domains as "the broad contexts of life in which we operate" such as the family, the workplace, the mosque, the school, the market, and the social club. These are "shaped in turn by the broader culture and by class, gender, ethnicity and regional variation". Events, practices and domains illustrate the concept of "multiple-literacies" (Fransman, 2005, n.p.).

The ‘ideological’ model, then, sees literacy as social and cultural in nature and forming part of people‘s daily life practices (Street, 1984; Barton, 1994). The focus is on what people do with literacy from particular political and ideological positions, rather than on what literacy can do for people (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 7).

According to Archer and Cottingham (1996), this ideological approach has certain implications for literacy methodologies. The primer as a prefixed ‘external’ text would appear to limit literacy practices and be consistent with the traditional or autonomous approach, seeing the need for a fixed body of knowledge to be transferred. To be consistent with the ideological approach, methodology would have to, for example, emphasise writing rather than passive reading of fixed texts; to emphasise creative and active involvement of participants; to build on existing knowledge of participants, respecting oral traditions and other ‘literacies’; to focus on learner-generated materials (not pre-packaged texts); and to ensure that the process is responsive and relevant to the local context. Over many years of experimentation, Reflect has attempted to build on these elements in order to develop a methodology which is consistent with the ideological approach (Archer & Cottingham,1996).

However, this approach is not without critics. It tends to over-emphasise local exigencies and insufficiently recognises how external forces (for example, colonial administrations, missionaries, economic globalisation) have impinged on the ‘local’ experiences of specific communities (Brandt & Clinton, 2002; Collins & Blot, 2003). Maddox (2001) and Stromquist (2004) have also questioned the reluctance of advocates to examine the potential of literacy to

help people move out of ‘local’ positions into full economic, social and political participation. An intermediary approach to literacy called the ‘transformative model to literacy’ was created in response to these criticisms.

3.4.4 Transformative model of literacy

The distinction between autonomous and ideological perspectives helps to identify the dominant approach to literacy and to explain its prevalence. A third approach was also identified but does not fit fully into either of the two camps. This approach is intrinsically ideological in nature, but while Street's ideological model represents a socially situated practices approach to literacy, this third approach might be deemed to be a ‘transformative model’ (Fransman, 2005). To understand the interrelationships between these three approaches, a distinction made by Kress (2005, in Fransman, 2005, n.p.) is underlined in the following Table.

Approach	**Political Agenda**	**Focus**	**Methods**
Autonomous	Competition development/equity	Competences	Usually quantitative or at least quantifiable
Social-practices/ ideological	Local knowledge/ contextual relevance	Design	Ethnography research
Transformative	Social transformation	Critique	Action Research/ PRA

Table 2: Distinction between Autonomous, Ideological, and Transformative approaches

As autonomous and ideological approaches are explained above, the next section focuses on the transformative approach.

As Freire (1995) suggests, it is not a matter of speaking first, then developing reading skills, and then learning to write, rather, speaking, reading and writing are interconnected parts of an active learning process and of social transformation. In this approach, literacy acquisition encompasses exploration of the social and political dimensions of learners' experience. The objective here is ‘conscientization’ or becoming critically aware of social, political, economic, and historical forces that shape oppression and, ultimately, action with the purpose of transformative action. What is crucial to Freire's pedagogy is the notion of ‘critical literacy’, partly through engaging with books and other written texts, but more profoundly through ‘reading’ (interpreting, reflecting on, interrogating, theorizing, investigating,

exploring, probing, questioning) and writing (acting on and dialogically transforming) the social world (Roberts, 2000, in Fransman, 2005, n.p.).

The transformative approach is interesting because it can adopt both autonomous and ideological perspectives of literacy. In its vision of an oppressive world, literacy (in terms of autonomous competences) is seen as being denied to the masses and a key objective is therefore to deliver 'it' with praxis, essentially as a pedagogic add-on. At the same time, the approach is extremely power-conscious. In his later years, Freire responded to his critics by reflecting critically on the power relations inherent in his own work. Power-conscious research methods that put the design, implementation and analysis of research into the hands of the research participants (such as Action Research) are compatible with this approach (Fransman, 2005, n.p.).

In fact, most literacy initiatives fuse elements from more than one of these approaches, while overlaps between the three mean that it is difficult to pin a programme to just one approach. One example is Reflect, which is usually described as transformative but has been used in both functional and socially situated ways by different implementing organisations (Fransman, 2005, n.p.).

I cannot conclude this point without emphasizing considerations which promote the marriage of these three approaches (autonomous, ideological and transformative) in implementing literacy programmes. In this study, literacy has been denied to the Rwandan Potter Community. This is a starting section for requesting that literacy programmes be provided to Rwandan Potters as a human right. This request is about proposing that Rwandan Potters need reading, writing and numeracy in order to perform tasks in their cooperative. After the recognition of such a right, action research can help Rwandan Potters to think critically about problems they face in their lives. The literacy programme will be delivered to Rwandan Potters in order to provide them with the skills needed for their development as well as for the development of their country, because a country cannot pretend to be developed when some of its people are lagging behind. During the development of this programme, and with the assistance of the facilitators using action research process, participants take this opportunity to explain issues they face in their lives and in their own understanding and try to solve them in their context. The relevant approach which combines these approaches is Reflect.

3.5 Reflect, a new approach to literacy

Before describing the Reflect approach, it is important to remind the readers about the main criticism of Freire‘s approach to literacy**.** According to Phnuyal:

> Paulo Freire advocated that literacy or illiteracy is a socio-political and structural issue. Illiteracy is a social product and also the result of an oppressive and unjust social mechanism. The Reflect process is in broad agreement with this view. Our experience, however, shows that simply teaching this ‘fact’ to the participants does not work, participants have to internalise this learning in their own context.
> (Phnuyal, 1998, p. 2)

Phnuyal agrees with Freire that illiteracy leads to an oppressive situation, but he realises that teaching literacy is not a sufficient condition for liberation. It is important for people to undertake literacy by themselves in their own context. Reflect is likely to be more helpful in this process.

According to Dyer and Choksi (1998) and Leumer (2002), Reflect (Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques) is an approach to adult literacy teaching and learning that was developed by Action Aid in 1993 and piloted in El Salvador, Bangladesh and Uganda in 1993-1995 and developed further by 350 other organisations in more than 60 countries. Archer (1995), one of the founders of Reflect, says that Reflect uses participatory approaches within an extended educational and development process, managed by the community. Phnuyal, Archer and Cottingham (1998) add that Reflect is a radical new approach to adult literacy and empowerment. The Reflect approach fuses the theoretical framework of the Brazilian Paulo Freire and Chambers‘s Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) to produce a “structured participatory methodology” which can respond to the practical needs of literacy programmes internationally (Archer & Cottingham, 1996). Reflect was developed in response to the excessive standardisation of many traditional literacy programmes, which were based around the use of a literacy primer. The approach evolved through three pilot projects in Uganda, El Salvador and Bangladesh, with the first of these, in Uganda, starting in 1993. An account of these pilot projects is presented in chapter 4. The initial idea was a simple one: to fuse the theoretical thinking of Freire with the practical visualisation methodologies developed within Participatory Rural Appraisal (Duffy, Fransman & Pearce, 2008).

Reflect was recently defined as a structured participatory learning process which facilitates people's critical analysis of their environment, placing empowerment at the centre of sustainable and equitable development. Through the creation of democratic spaces and the construction and interpretation of locally-generated texts, people build their own multi-dimensional analysis of local and global reality, challenging dominant development paradigms and redefining power relationships in both public and private spheres. Based on ongoing processes of reflection and action, people empower themselves to work for a more just and equitable society (Phnuyal et al., 1998). To help people construct their own knowledge by using local materials, they are involved in searching for their own learning materials from the beginning. Phnuyal et al. (1998) argue that in a Reflect programme, there is no textbook - no literacy 'primer' - no pre-printed materials other than a guide for the facilitators that is produced locally. Each literacy circle develops its own learning materials by using PRA tools that represent local reality based on the existing knowledge of learners and on local issues.

3.5.1 Reflect, power and participation

According to Phnuyal (1998), all development organisations and professionals now recognize the importance of participation and participatory methods. Participation has become a fashion and there are many interpretations of what a participatory development process means. One core element of a participatory process is to contribute to the positive transformation of power relations, which is at the centre of empowerment. Only when oppressed and marginalised classes, sexes (especially women) or ethnic groups of people gain new power (physical or psychological, economic or cultural) at individual and societal level, can they participate effectively in the decision making process.

Some practitioners use the physical involvement of people in a particular activity as an indicator of participation. Yet what may be more important is to see who designed the activity and how it affects power relations. If some 'beneficiaries' simply participate in implementing a project activity which was not planned by them, and if they have never analysed its impact, then the 'benefit' may not empower them. In this case, participation is cosmetic, rather than genuine participation. In Reflect, participants are involved in a thorough analysis of their reality, including an analysis of power relations, and plan their action for change (Phnuyal, 1998).

3.5.2 The Reflect process and facilitation

According to Cottingham, Metcalf and Phnuyal (1998), Reflect sessions are run in circles as follows: First, the topic for discussion is selected by both the facilitator and participants; it should be a significant issue, relevant for participants at that time. Examples of topics which might be discussed are the history of the community; the number of people and land ownership in the community; patterns of agricultural work throughout the year; division of labour between women and men; causes of conflict; causes of ill health; environmental problems; increases in rent in the area; children's workload; the number of schools in the area; human rights abuses; and experiences of childbirth. Then, the objective of discussing the topic is set; for example, the topic of general environmental degradation might be linked to a current shortage of fuel. The Reflect circle uses a tool from Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) to pool information and organise ideas.

There are many PRA tools, but the types used here are 'information-gatherers' such as a map and/or a calendar, and tools for analysis, for example the preference ranking matrix, and the Venn diagram. The facilitators choose the appropriate tool, frequently using meetings with other facilitators to discuss the selection of both the topic and the tool and share experience of what has worked well (Cottingham, Metcalf & Phnuyal, 1998).

Participants construct the diagram on the ground, making use of any local materials they feel comfortable with, to represent issues under discussion. The facilitator asks probing questions, for example, about root causes or about different experiences of women and men; and recapitulates and summarises contributions so that the participants reach a satisfactory conclusion to their discussion. Other members of the community are often attracted to these discussions, which take place in an open place, as the topic is likely to be of general interest (Cottingham, Metcalf & Phnuyal, 1998).

Pictures are drawn on cards and labelled in the mother tongue of participants as part of the process, and when the whole graphic is drawn, it is transferred onto a large piece of paper and displayed. This serves as a record of discussion, a tool for negotiating with outside agencies, such as NGOs and local government authorities, for assistance; it also serves as a basis for literacy and numeracy. Participants copy it into their exercise books, selecting the written

words and numbers on which they wish to focus their learning. They may also agree on a short text summarising their discussion and agreed actions. This graphic, with all the associated writing and numeracy, replaces the textbook (usually called a 'primer' in adult literacy programmes) (Cottingham et al., 1998).

From the point of view of literacy, the emphasis in the Reflect process is on independent writing. By the end of a course, the aim is that each participant should have a series of 20 to 30 maps and matrices documenting their analysis of local issues. The programme progresses at the pace of the participants, and there is no pressure to cover a set number of topics. The Reflect process is presented below:

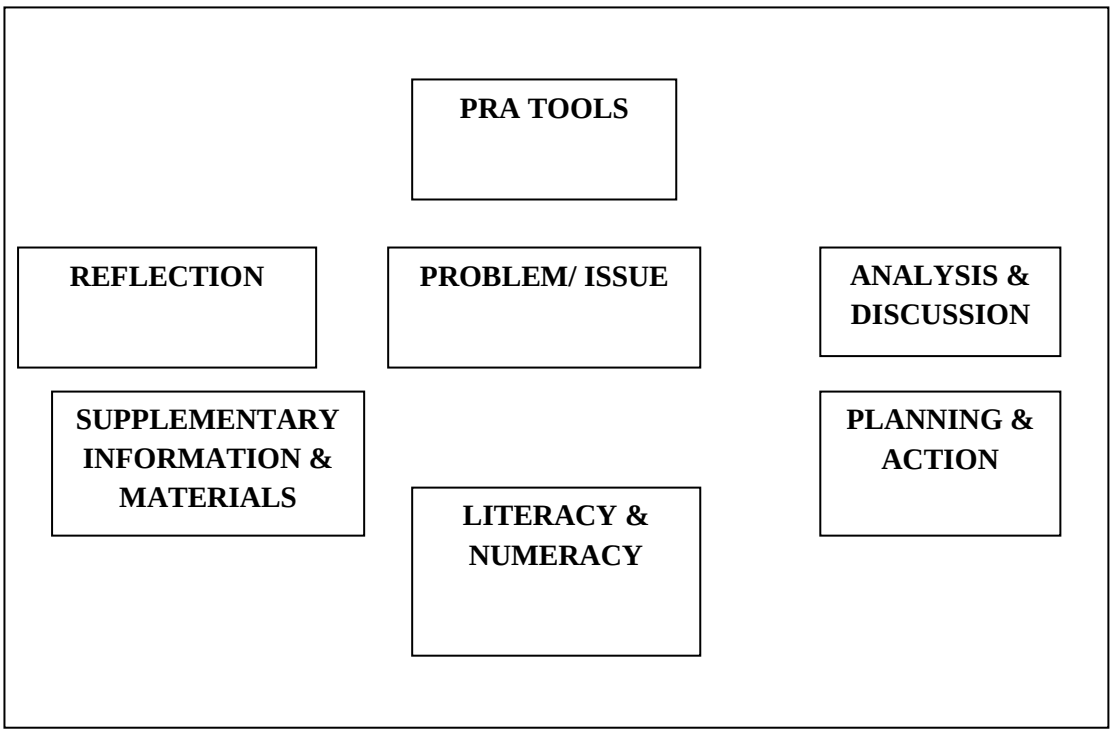


Figure 3: The Reflect Learning Process adapted from Leumer (2002, p. 19)

With regard to this figure, the opportunity is given to a group of the same community to discuss problems or issues encountered by its members in their everyday life. The discussion is based on topics chosen by participants, and they analyse the root causes of these problems and begin to solve them one by one by using PRA tools. At a certain stage, the group evaluates the action undertaken. This stage can bring supplementary information and materials if needed. Once information is available, it is added to the process. The whole process is summarized in two main words, such as reflection-action and guided by a series of principles (Cottingham et al., 1998, p. 28) described below:

- Gender equity is integral to all aspects of Reflect, as it is essential for social transformation
- The Reflect process explores and analyses the causes of power inequalities and oppression.
- Reflect recognises the social stratifications and power relationships which affect everyone involved in the process, and seeks to create a space and process in which they can become the focus for critical analysis.
- Conflict is a reality in people‘s lives, and should be addressed constructively within the Reflect process, not suppressed or avoided.
- Reflect is an evolving process which must be continuously re-created for each new context. Innovation is integral to the process.
- Reflect recognises that individual transformation is as important as collective transformation.
- Reflect recognises that the equitable practice of power at all levels in the process is essential for determining empowerment outcomes. Institutional and individual changes at all levels are an integral part of the process.

To conclude this point, recreation of Reflect means a process of involving people to do their own analysis and to develop their own vision. We learn from others' practice and we can clarify basic principles of participatory processes through supporting each others' work, but ultimately it is necessary for each person and each circle to recreate Reflect according to the local situation (Phnuyal, 1998). This is what researchers and facilitators were required to do in our Reflect circle.

The role of a facilitator is crucial during the whole process of Reflect. First of all, the idea of facilitation in teaching stems from the work of Rogers (1983), whose humanistic outlook emphasizes the need for student-centred learning climates. Such environments stress the freedom for individual development and, according to him, enable students to become more adaptable and self-directed (Burrows, 1997). For Rogers, empathy, congruence and positive regard are necessary conditions for being a facilitator. Rogers also emphasizes the importance of knowledge being shared through negotiation and of the facilitator being genuine (Burrows, 1997). Facilitation is a key point in applying the Reflect approach, especially when we are dealing with sessions in an adult literacy class. We do not teach, but we facilitate a session. According to Burrows, facilitation is a goal-orientated dynamic process, in which participants

work together in an atmosphere of genuine mutual respect, in order to learn through critical reflection. For the success of this role, as mentioned by Thayer-Hart (2007, p. 1) facilitators have to accomplish the following responsibilities:

> Intervene if the discussion starts to fragment
> Identify and intervene in dysfunctional behaviour
> Prevent dominance and include everyone
> Summarize discussions and conversations
> Bring closure to the meeting with an end result or action

3.5.3 Reflect and gender roles

Since the seventies, gender has become increasingly visible as an issue in development. Development workers became aware that women had been excluded from the benefits of development activity (Akerkar, 2001). This is evidenced by the large number of women worldwide who cannot read and write. This is reported by UNESCO in the following statement:

> Two-thirds of illiterate people are women. Women and out-of-school girls are by far the largest group without access to education. They need focused attention, both for their personal development, their role as mothers, as caregivers for their children, and as active and contributing members of society. (UNESCO, 2007, p. 16)

In response, a 'Women in Development' (WID) agenda was advocated, which aimed to increase local women's involvement in the market economy and project activities. Women were already working hard, particularly poor women, and women's labour was already a part of the economy. However their labour had not necessarily been recognised as such, or remunerated (Akerkar, 2001). The WID described by Akerkar is similar to what Metcalf and Gomez (2001, p. 1) found out that at times, the term 'gender' was used as a synonym for 'women'. It is not surprising to hear people say that they work with the theme of gender because they work with women.

WID had failed to define 'gender'. In the 1990s, 'Gender and Development' (GAD) was known as the new approach which was to overcome the shortcomings of WID. GAD aims to look at the social relations and interactions between women and men, and the contexts and constructions of masculinities and femininities. To some degree the GAD approach has

brought about real change, however in practice some GAD interventions may continue WID‘s distorted focus on women in isolation from their context (Akerkar, 2001, p. 2). From this perspective, Metcalf and Gomez give the recent meaning of gender in the following statement:

> A gender focus implies the redistribution of social powers in order to create a more democratic distribution of power. To work with a gender focus implies [...] to construct a new culture based on relations of equality and equity between men and women. (Metcalf & Gomez, 2001, p. 1)

This definition echoes what the above practitioners of the Reflect approach had tried to explain in their definition of gender. This definition also goes well with what I understand about gender. I believe that men and women are called to share responsibilities and both are able to take decisions concerning their destiny.

3.5.4 Reflect and shared leadership

The ability to organize members in a productive manner emerges when there is a strong leadership base, with current and emerging coalition leaders who have the skills (e.g. communication, conflict resolution, resource development, and administration), relationships (e.g. internal and external), and vision to transform individual interests into a dynamic collective force that achieves targeted outcomes (Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson & Allen, 2001). This statement explains the necessity to share the responsibilities between stakeholders and to act as a team for leading a group of people.

Kocolowski (2010) recognises the difficulty for any single individual to possess all of the skills and abilities required to competently lead an organization today. He explains that to lead requires all the skills enumerated by Foster-Fishman et al. (2001) and no one can possess all of them.

While research indicates that shared leadership has its challenges and can be difficult to implement, overall the benefits of shared leadership hold promise. Sally (2002, p. 84) points out that shared leadership has existed since ancient times: “Republican Rome had a successful system of co-leadership that lasted for over four centuries. This structure of co-

leadership was so effective that it extended from the lower levels of the Roman magistracy to the very top position, that of consul." Then what does shared leadership mean? The quest for developing an integrative definition of shared leadership has been elusive (Kocolowski, 2010). Conger and Pearce (2003, p. 1) consider the concept of 'shared leadership' as a dynamic, interactive influence process among individuals in groups for which the objective is to lead one another to the achievement of group or organizational goals or both. This influence process often involves peer or lateral influence and at other times involves upward or downward hierarchical influence.

Shared leadership is associated with other terms, such as collective leadership, and distributed leadership, which are used interchangeably, while team leadership is commonly viewed as a slightly different stream of research (Avolio, Walumba & Weber, 2009). Shared leadership definitions include also the term team, coupled with the concept of a process, property, or phenomenon. Carson, Tesluk and Marrone (2007, p. 1217) examined antecedent conditions that led to the development of shared leadership in a sample of 59 consulting teams consisting of MBA students and concluded, "Shared leadership refers to a team property whereby leadership is distributed among team members rather than focused on a single designated leader". Furthermore, Bligh, Pearce and Kohles (2006, p. 305) affirm, "Shared leadership thus offers a concept of leadership practice as a team-level phenomenon where behaviors are enacted by multiple individuals rather than solely by those at the top or by those in formal leadership roles". To summarize, a review of the literature reveals shared leadership as a relational, collaborative leadership process or phenomenon involving teams or groups that mutually influence one another and collectively share duties and responsibilities otherwise relegated to a single, central leader.

This definition above fits well with what I do on the ground with the Reflect approach. There is no one leader, rather there is a collaborative group involved in all activities for a common goal discussing issues people face in their community and searching together for solutions which advantage every member. To succeed, facilitators have to continually help participants to build collaborative capacity, and empower them to face new issues raised by inviting them to search for new solutions. Here a strong shared leadership among participants is needed because all progress is in their hands.

In history, most organizations have been led by one central leader in a hierarchical fashion (Wood, 2005), but as I am working with a group of people 'Rwandan Potters' using action research process, I consider the shared leadership approach appropriate to this study. Participants share everything in the Reflect circle. They study a common problem, do a common plan and a common action when solving the said problem, and reach the same results. For the success, each one brings his knowledge and skills to share with others. This is well argued in some examples of the benefits of Shared Leadership underlined in the above declarations: the old adage two heads are better than one seems appropriate. Leaders can utilize their individual strengths (Miles & Watkins, 2007), and organizations can benefit from diversity of thought in decision making. Bligh et al. (2006, p. 306) say that "team members take on the leadership tasks for which they are best suited or are most motivated to accomplish". O'Toole and Lawler (2002, p. 68) note that two or more leaders are better than one when "the challenges faced are so complex that they require a set of skills too broad to be possessed by any one individual".

Moreover, teams often work better when leadership is shared (Carson et al., 2007; Mehra, Smith, Dixon & Robertson, 2006). Finally, Ensley, Hmieleski and Pearce (2006, p. 228) suggest, "Shared leadership appears to be particularly important in the development and growth of new ventures".

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter has focused on literacy and approaches to literacy with emphasis on Reflect, a new approach to literacy. A theoretical model which shows the place of literacy in developing people was presented in chapter 2 and linked to the aims of this study.

In order to develop, people need to participate in identifying problems which affect their lives negatively and begin to search for solutions by themselves. It has been shown that this is possible by using approaches which help people to become critically aware of problems they encounter and how to solve them. Freire's approach to literacy teaching, with its focus on conscientization, has been highly influential. Roberts (2007, p. 512) argues that conscientization came to be seen as a kind of 'magic bullet', that is a revolutionary pedagogical 'method' which was capable of eliminating oppression where other approaches

had failed. Freire himself attributes to this method the power to help people to become literate and to be aware of the problems they face in their daily life. Unfortunately, Freire‘s method of teaching literacy has been distorted. Some people who intended to use his approach transformed it into simply a primer approach. The lack of dialogue in the literacy class did not help participants to talk about the issues they faced or to solve them in order to free themselves as Freire had proposed. Freire himself has failed to take into account gender relations in his literacy work.

However, the Reflect process, a new approach to literacy, which combines Freire‘s theory with the PRA tools of Chambers, emphasizes empowering people, both men and women, to read the world, rather than just the word (Freire in Phnuyal, 1998). This means that in the Reflect approach, the emphasis is not only on reading or writing, but also focuses on understanding problems encountered in the social context. It helps people to find solutions by themselves by planning actions. According to Phnuyal (1998, p. 8), the use of participatory tools helps to structure the analysis in a systematic way. Each participant has the opportunity to contribute in this action. In Reflect, this analysis develops from an individual to a collective experience, from the household to the community level, from local to global and also from simple to complex issues. Therefore it has been shown to be a powerful way to explore the complexity of our environment. Awareness of problems people face is a primary step towards a critical and in-depth analysis of the causes of such a situation. Reflect has the potential to improve the living situations of people. The following chapter shows how the Reflect approach has empowered people in developing countries other than Rwanda.

CHAPTER 4: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

4.1 Introduction

This literature review is mainly based on research studies about the benefits of literacy in general and the use of Reflect, in particular. As Reflect is a core element in this study, it is clear that the literature review focuses on this new approach to literacy. The model of the theoretical and conceptual framework for this chapter appeared in chapter 2. Concepts in both chapters 2 and 3 are linked to one another, and to concepts reviewed in this chapter.

Examples are given of how literacy and Reflect benefit people in developing countries, in Africa, Asia and South America. Before beginning fieldwork, a researcher can benefit from exploring examples which have succeeded and some which have not in order to draw lessons from both cases for the current study.

4.2 Benefits of literacy to individuals, groups of people, communities and nations

The benefits of literacy are varied. Many studies have shown the benefits of literacy to individuals, groups of people, communities and nations.

The first example reviewed here is the case of Lakshmi Devi Kharadi who belonged to a poor Adivasi (Tribal) family of Ratlam district, Madhya Pradesh in India. Her family lived in poverty and eked out a living by selling vegetables and rearing animals. Lakshmi Devi was illiterate but gutsy. Her daily struggle to make ends meet had made her experience ways of life. When the government announced the panchayat elections, the post of Village Sarpanch (President) was reserved for a candidate who was a woman and an Adivasi. Knowing that Lakshmi Devi understood the problems they faced and was bold enough to talk to officials, the village people put her up as a candidate for the election. Lakshmi Devi was elected. Later she was elected president of the district local government. Lakshmi Devi found that her position required her to read a lot of files; money had to be sanctioned for development projects; and people came to her with letters which she could not understand as she was illiterate. Lakshmi Devi now understood the importance of education. She often wondered if

whatever she was sanctioning was right or wrong. In order to educate herself, Lakshmi Devi enrolled in a literacy programme and began to study seriously. In a few months, Lakshmi Devi was reportedly able to read newspapers and official letters. Now she could take decisions on different issues by herself. She was also able to make use of the facilities of the panchayati raj machinery for the development of Ratlam. She attributes her success to the fact that she learnt to read and write in the literacy programme. This made her realise the potential of the facilities offered for development under the panchayati raj system. Thanks to the people‘s support and participation, she has been able to achieve success in development work. The first continuing education centre was also started in her house (NLM, 1997, n.p.).

A second example is referred to in the ‘SIL international website’ (in http://www.sil.org accessed on August 23, 2009) which recognises that learning to read boosts self-esteem and provides important new skills. It is argued on this website that in terms of development, literacy can open new doors, creating new horizons. In Africa for example, farmers have discovered that they can get better prices for their crops when it is evident they can read and write. In the Philippines, newly literate adults have begun opening their own bank accounts and managing their money wisely. In India, newly literate Oriyans now qualify for desirable jobs which were previously occupied by outsiders. Over and over again, literacy transforms people, communities, and entire social structures. Literacy brings a greater sense of personal dignity, additional skills in problem solving, and the respect of others who tend to view the illiterate as an ignorant and marginal person. In this perspective, when literacy is based on personal contexts of people and interpolates their participation, it constitutes a key tool of empowerment.

A third example is mentioned by Robinson-Pant (2000) in her research on women‘s literacy and development in Nepal. She found out that women‘s literacy rates can be correlated with statistical indicators of development, such as women‘s health and empowerment. Furthermore, some statistics show the link between literacy and development. In this regard, statistical analysis shows a significant correlation between women's literacy rates and other indicators of development, for example, an inverse relationship between education and fertility is shown by Cochrane (1982) and a link between women's education and low child mortality by Schultz (1993). Such correlations have been used in a policy context to suggest that "in Africa, for example, increasing female literacy by 10% could lower infant mortality by 10%" (Psacharopoulos, 1995, p. 9). Often the policy implications are stated indirectly,

simply by placing such correlations in policy documents. For instance, "In the Southern Indian state of Kerala where literacy is universal, the infant mortality rate is the lowest in the entire developing world." (UNICEF, 1999, p. 8).

The examples above show that the benefits of literacy to individuals and small groups of people are multiple. Children's health is improved when their mothers are educated; knowing how to read and write transfers power to someone in his/her village and he/she is proud to take decisions when needed; literacy increases social engagement; literacy opens doors to jobs people never got before; newly literate adults have begun to open bank accounts and to manage money. There are plenty of examples which give hope that Rwandan potters can benefit from literacy education.

Even if examples about the benefits of literacy are many, it is also important to note that Robinson-Pant (2004) is critical about the way literacy is used by international aid agencies and governments as a symptom and cause of underdevelopment (see chapter 3 on 'Literacy, development, participation and empowerment'). A study conducted by Prins (2008) shows that literacy does not create empowerment. Based on ethnographic research in rural El Salvador and drawing on New Literacy Studies (NLS) and gender and development (GAD) literature, Prins examined how participation in a Freirean literacy programme fostered and/or limited women's and men's personal, interpersonal and collective empowerment.

From June 2001 to January 2002, Prins (2008) conducted ethnographic research on adult literacy programmes in two Salvadoran villages, Colima and Rosario. Like other Salvadoran campesinos, the inhabitants of these villages confronted social and economic problems such as chronic poverty and unemployment; gender inequality; inequitable access to education, housing and health care; the violent aftermath of the Salvadoran civil war (1980–92) and social disruption resulting from migration. Rural women were doubly disadvantaged by geographic and gender disparities in literacy; for example 78 per cent of women and 84 per cent of men were considered literate at the national level, in comparison with 64 per cent of women and 72 per cent of men in rural areas (PNUD, 2001). Over four months, 27 women and 26 men, aged 13 to 66, regularly attended classes two to three times a week. Having completed between zero and six years of schooling, learners' literacy abilities and motivation for enrolling varied, including the desire to read the Bible, sign their names, obtain employment, complete forms, read and write letters, help their children and families and "to

learn more" (Prins, 2005, in Prins, 2008, p. 28). That is, they believed that attending classes would also help them practise communication and know how to deliver a speech in a meeting (Bartlett, 2001; Prins, 2005, in Prins, 2008).

Participants used a Freirean-inspired curriculum which included generative themes (e.g. education, housing) intended to foster literacy skills and socio-political analysis. Facilitators typically led a discussion on the generative theme, accompanied by a photo or a drawing. Learners then wrote the generative word and syllabic family (e.g. la le li lo lu) and completed practice exercises (e.g. creating new words with syllables) and dictations. Learners and facilitators often encouraged each other with comments like, "we're here to learn" or "don't be embarrassed". Such encouragement, coupled with personal conversations that spilled into class sessions, created an amiable and supportive classroom atmosphere (Prins, 2008, p. 28).

Informed by Rowlands's and Stromquist's conceptual frameworks, Prins designed this study to examine how participating in the programme fostered and/or limited women's and men's personal, interpersonal and collective empowerment. Analytically, she was more interested in how the social and academic *experience* of attending classes affected learners than in their uses of literacy per se. She employed ethnographic research methods to understand how the literacy programme fitted into men's and women's everyday lives in this socio-cultural setting (Tedlock, 2000). She integrated ethnography with interactive research activities based on a participatory, feminist approach (Greenwood & Levin, 1998; Maguire, 1987), believing that this combination would generate more insights, aid analysis of gender inequities, bring more fun and interaction, and benefit learners (e.g. by fostering friendships and reflection on community issues) (Prins, 2008).

The summary of the findings highlights the following changes among participants who attended literacy classes. They are classified into three categories (Prins, 2008, p. 29):

(i) Personal empowerment

The changes identified by participants present several indicators of personal or cognitive empowerment, including self-confidence, self-esteem, dignity and the ability to formulate and express ideas, to participate in and influence new spaces, to learn and analyse, as well as to interact outside the home. Throughout data collection, many learners reported that as a

result of attending classes, *„Se me quitó la pena"* (My shame/timidity/embarrassment left me).

Participants not only felt less *pena* but also claimed that attending classes increased their confidence in reading, speaking and interacting with people in social situations such as classes, churches and meetings (Prins, 2008, p. 29).

(ii) Interpersonal empowerment

In the domain of interpersonal empowerment, learners reported developing new friendships, interacting more respectfully with others and improving relationships with family members (Prins, 2008).

(iii) Collective empowerment

In this research, classes met for only four months, there was little evidence of increased capacity to organise and advocate for participants' shared interests (group efficacy) or expanded political and economic power in their communities. In addition, women's socio-economic position vis-à-vis men did not improve, nor did they organise themselves to solve a problem they deemed important, such as men's excessive drinking (Prins, 2008).

These results reveal that participation in the literacy programme contributed to powerful psycho-social benefits. Nevertheless, there was little evidence of collective action or improved economic well-being or gender equity in the household or the community. According to the learners, attending classes helped them overcome their *pena*, express themselves more confidently, enhance their self-perception, develop friendships and trust, get out of the house (women), avoid wasting time (men), get along better with others and learn socially valued communicative practices. Household gender equity improved when several men gave their wives more money or performed more domestic work. Some Rosario learners and facilitators reported increased participation in community improvement efforts. More importantly, learners attributed these changes specifically to the social space the programme provided (i.e. meeting and communicating with others), as well as to the process of learning, collaborative group work, facilitators' actions, participatory research activities and, in fewer cases, the lesson content (Prins, 2008).

These findings support the previous research showing that Freirean-inspired programmes often present difficulties in enacting mutual dialogue, in-depth social analysis and community action (Bartlett, 2005; Purcell-Gates & Waterman, 2000; Stromquist, 1997). By diluting the content and methods of critical pedagogy, the programme may have limited women‘s and men‘s understanding of economic and gender oppression as well as their ability to make tangible changes in their lives (Prins, 2008).

Several programmatic factors impeded empowerment, including the programme‘s short duration; facilitators’ training which did not fully model participatory teaching methods; facilitators’ limited experience in literacy instruction and leading socio-political discussions; and a curriculum with pre-selected themes; limited focus on gender inequities and few opportunities for learners to read and write their own words (Prins, 2003). While critical pedagogy should not be imposed ideologically (Betts, 2003), we should consider the extent to which literacy programmes nurture or restrict people‘s capacity to claim dignity and exercise power in their relationships, in their communities and societies (Prins, 2008).

The findings suggest that people can use literacy programmes to improve their lives in tangible ways, yet literacy does not have a uniform and ‘linear effect’ on empowerment (Robinson-Pant, 2005). “Whether literacy will empower the poor and powerless to enable them to improve their conditions will not only depend on literacy content and pedagogy, but the social context of literacy in which literacy is learned and practiced” (Patel, 2005, p. 16).

In conclusion, literacy education is a vital but yet an insufficient means of diminishing entrenched social and gender inequalities. Even if the psycho-social benefits which learners attributed to their participation in the programme do not constitute collective empowerment or social change per se, women and men in this study recognized these important outcomes because they corresponded to the structure of their daily lives. Their lives, needs and desires, in turn, were shaped by social conditions such as women‘s isolation, social exclusion of campesinos and post-war social disruption. As scholars and educators, we would do well to recognise psycho-social changes as vital, relevant benefits of literacy education, while also seeking to ensure that literacy programmes work to mitigate social inequalities (Prins, 2008).

This example indicates that literacy education is important for solving the problems of inequalities in society, but it does not constitute a ‘sina qua non’ condition. Rather it could be

successful when educators or facilitators take into account Robinson-Pant and Patel‘s advice mentioned above. Therefore, knowing the learners’ context and the choice of an approach for any literacy session are important features for success. In this study, the Reflect approach has been chosen because it has shown its power in helping people who are marginalised, poor, and vulnerable or discriminated against.

4.3 Reflect in practice

Reflect combines the theory of Freire (1972b; c, 1985) and the techniques of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) (Chambers, 1992; 1993). Therefore, it is clear that it is important to start by giving some examples which show the use of Freire‘s method of teaching literacy. Thereafter, I describe what has been added to Freire‘s method in order to help people to get fully involved in their learning. Then through Reflect and using PRA tools, testimonies are given, as well as the reasons why studying the relevance of the Reflect approach makes sense today.

4.3.1 Paulo Freire’s method in practice

Lyster (as cited in Hutton, 1992, p. 138) describes the Freirean method as a method which relies on group discussion around themes which are central to learners’ lives. These themes are presented in the form of codes (very often pictures, role plays, dramatisations, songs, dance) which depict particular situations with which learners can identify. A good example is given by Brown (1975) in *Literacy in 30 hours. Paulo Freire’s process in North-East Brazil.*

Literacy in 30 hours: Paulo Freire’s process in North-East Brazil

In order to prepare for teaching in any specific community, Freire’s teams visited the community to investigate its culture. The team developed a short list of words used by the community and chose ones necessary for teaching adults to read and write syllabically and phonetically. They called these words ‘generative’ (Brown, 1975). On every word list, the first word has three syllables. The reason for this is that one of Freire’s colleagues discovered that a chart could be made of the syllables of trisyllabic words in a way that helped non-literates to grasp the structure of Portuguese words. For example, after introducing the word tijoro (brick), the coordinator broke the word into syllables. After reading aloud the

individual syllables with the group, the coordinator presented the first one, "ti", like this "ta te ti to tu". Next, "jo" was introduced in the same manner, and was followed by "ro." Finally, these three presentations were combined in a chart, called the "card of discovery" (Brown, 1975).

ta	te	ti	to	Tu
Ja	je	ji	jo	Ju
ra	re	ri	ro	Ru

Freire and his colleagues arranged discussions of such topics as nationalism, development, illiteracy and democracy. They introduced these topics with pictures or slides, led a dialogue and prepared a picture to illustrate each word. For example, for the word 'brick', a picture of a construction scene was prepared. This picture was shown first without the word. Only after the group had discussed buildings with bricks, their own houses and housing as a community problem, the second picture was introduced, showing the construction scene together with the word. Finally, the word appeared alone (Brown, 1975).

After only twenty-one hours of literacy training, some participants were able to read simple newspaper articles and write short sentences. Thus, Freire's method of literacy training was initiated (Gerhardt, 2000).

The methodology used by Freire seems to be appropriate in this Rwandan Potter case. However, instead of bringing a list of words prepared in advance by the facilitators, this study used problem-posing dialogue, and themes were generated by the people concerned themselves and analyzed together in order to learn how to plan various actions, such as reading and writing, and to generate development activities. Before this study, I could not confirm that it would be easy to reach this goal in 21, 30 or 40 hours as Freire himself had done. It depended on the involvement of the group concerned with the literacy programme. However, I planned to accomplish this in one year in order to enhance the capability of Rwandan Potters in using the written word and writing. Therefore, it was intended that Rwandan Potters who were participating in the study would be able to read and write without any help, they would increase critical awareness about their living conditions, and would be able to take decisions on issues raised in their community or life context.

Another example in which authors referred to Freire's model in educating people is given in Botswana. It is presented below.

Laedza Batanani case study using Freire's method of literacy teaching through popular theatre technique for non-formal education in Botswana

Kidd and Byram (1977) present a case study on a non-formal education project in Botswana which attempted to follow a Freirean model. The basic goal was to find a way of motivating people to participate in development and mobilizing the community around important local issues by using popular theatre. What was needed was a means of bringing people together to discuss their problems, to agree on changes and to take collective action.

Evaluation of the first campaign indicated that there was little apparent follow-up action. One solution was to reduce the number of issues and to be more strategic in their selection. Concerning critical awareness and action, the goal for Laedza Batanani was to facilitate critical thinking about the participation in discussion on local issues encountered. According to Freire, authentic dialogue leads to action, however in Laedza Batanani and other popular theatre programmes, the performances and discussion led to very little action (Kidd & Byram, 1977).

Kidd and Byram (1977) conclude that popular theatre in Botswana took a 'pseudo'-Freirean course, shifting away from its goals of authentic participation, critical awareness and collective action. This was a result of facilitators' inadequate understanding of the power structures of the village, and the modernization framework of the programme organizers. This case study is one example of how Freire's ideas have been distorted (see chapter 3 about limitations and distortions of Freire's methodology).

The case of Laedza Batanani provides an opportunity to think about my role and the roles of Rwandan Potter Community during the sessions. I have to recognize that Freire rejected the banking approach to education which gives a minor role to learners. In Freire's method of literacy teaching, the teacher takes a minor role, while learners take a major role in each activity.

Freire's work has its value and it should be unacceptable to distort it. Servaes and Jacobson (1995) advise people who want to use Freire's participatory methods. They draw readers'

attention to the problems of using the participatory methodology in all situations without analysis of the society concerned. This is a call for using a new approach to literacy, such as Reflect using PRA tools, which encourages participants to be fully involved in their learning by thinking about problems they face in their everyday life and planning for action in order to solve them.

4.3.2 The use of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA)

A case study of minority ethnic groups in Western context

According to Preece (2006), this case study takes us into a Western context with minority ethnic groups. Doyle and Krasny (2003) describe a project which engaged American youth in learning about ethnic gardening practices using participatory methods adapted from PRA. The project focused on issues of intergenerational and ethnic marginalisation in poor American urban neighbourhoods. The youth and community gardeners were low-income Puerto Ricans, Hispanic immigrants and African Americans with origins in South America, as described below:

> Community gardeners in the United States tend to be low-income minorities and recent immigrants living in apartment buildings in neighbourhoods with little open space and few grocery stores that carry fresh fruit and vegetables. They voluntarily work in the gardens, which provide a place to socialize, relax and appreciate nature, and a means of accessing fresh produce. (Doyle & Krasny, 2003, p. 94)

The project was stimulated by cooperative extension educators who wanted to use PRA as an educational/community action tool for local youth from the same minority backgrounds as the adult community gardeners. The youth would be trained as PRA researchers to document gardening practices and then conduct community action based on their results. The idea was to stimulate interest in 'urban agro-ecology and food systems' to compensate for the lack of grocery stores. The youth in this case were therefore both researcher-facilitators and community members who were expected to subsequently undertake their own action with their elders. The facilitators trained the youth and maintained their presence throughout the PRA exercise, sometimes sharing responsibilities in data collection when the youth encountered difficulties. The self-reflection process therefore took place at three levels – the gardeners, the youth researchers, the facilitators. Six PRA methods were used, such as a

visual time-line and interviews to document garden history; mapping of plots and gardens and a seasonal calendar to identify planting practices; Venn diagrams to locate resource flows within the wider community, followed by a shared action plan between gardeners and youth to identify problems and solutions. The project took place over several weeks during the long summer vacation (Preece, 2006). It was a well resourced project because a total of 31 facilitators and 26 gardeners were involved to support only 85 youths across seven neighbourhoods.

Youth participants were taken from community centres and school gardening programmes serving low-income children. The project author (Doyle) conducted her own assessment of the process through observations, interactions and interviews at the beginning, middle and end of the programme, supplemented by end of project focus groups and youth diaries. Ultimately only four sites followed the full PRA process (Preece, 2006).

A significant action outcome for the project was that the youth from two sites started their own garden, while at the third site, youth developed long term mentoring relationships with their neighbourhood gardeners. They also gave presentations about their findings to gardeners and community members at a garden event (Preece, 2006).

Doyle and Krasny (2003) report that the youth experienced some challenges in facilitating the more hands-on activities such as mapping and diagrams and sometimes the facilitators helped to adapt the processes, for example by encouraging the youth to interpret the Venn diagram activity as a "puzzle about how the people fit together within the garden" (p. 96). There were also some language and cultural differences between the youth researchers and minority ethnic community members. Practical issues related to time management and transport were mentioned (Doyle & Krasny, 2003). The youth found interviewing a more familiar technique, stimulated by the fact that the gardeners loved telling stories, but the gardeners felt awkward when asked to draw a map or diagram. Nevertheless, they eventually became deeply engaged in mapping their plots, when the youth started drawing a map and asking gardeners for help in filling in the details. The message here, of course, was to fit methods to context (Preece, 2006).

According to Preece (2006, p. 215), the expertise of the elders, minority ethnic research 'subjects' and the age differentials of the youth researchers suggest that perhaps power differentials and the subsequent learning processes were unusually complementary in this

project. So, for instance, the youth acquired substantial historical knowledge about the evolution of the gardens, the influence of the surrounding environment such as pollution on the gardens and connections between the garden and broader city. They increased their knowledge about soils and soil testing. Through the necessary listening process of interviewing, they were able to build a relationship with the gardeners. By the same token, the facilitators learned to respect the young adults' own ability to take the initiative:

> I would say [to the youth], 'Do you want me to go over to the gardener with you? Do you want me to do anything or just be here?' They'd say, 'No, just be here,' and they'd come back and I'd let them tell me how it went (Educator, Philadelphia). (Doyle & Krasny, 2003, p. 97)

Preece (2006) observes that reflections on the whole action research process highlight the difficulties in balancing a complex set of research, education and community action objectives. Full participation of youth and gardeners in determining objectives and devising research questions was motivated by the facilitators' overall control of the process, although youth were encouraged to add research questions of their own. The gardeners themselves were confused about their role in the exercise, sometimes believing they were facilitators rather than participants with a shared objective. The youths' interpersonal communication and academic skills varied, with consequent outcomes for their engagement in all the activities. A general observation was that all participants needed more preparation time to fully understand the PRA process.

The community gardening study highlighted how to lead a group of participants using PRA tools. It was not easy for new facilitators, and especially for participants to use PRA tools. They needed help when they experienced challenges. The example also guided me in my role as an insider researcher. It was a call to be vigilant and encourage participants to use the tools to solve a particular issue. I intervened only when I necessary, with clear questions which helped participants to understand what to do and how to take the initiative. The facilitators also had to discover what participants felt unhappy about, and subsequently create other techniques which suited their situation. For example, as Rwandan Potters love dancing and singing, so there was an opportunity to exploit these talents and others which are not well known but which could be unlocked. Creating new techniques which fitted well with the participants' context developed participants' knowledge, and enabled them to work hard in their everyday life.

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) in Gambia

According to Brown, Howes, Hussein, Longley and Swindell (2002), this case study is a review of PRA used by Action Aid-The Gambia (AATG). AATG is an international NGO with a general goal to support community capacity building and target rural poverty. AATG works with mixed-sex, Village Development Groups (VDGs) and has prioritised, since the early 1990s, the promotion of PRA as a key element of a systematic capacity-building methodology. AATG was already ten years old when PRA was adopted (in 1991), as part of an attempt to move the organisation from a classical service-delivery style of operation to a less dependent, more community-led approach. A number of positive outcomes can be observed. VDCs have been developed, access by different groups (including women and the poor) to the new opportunities has been good, and they have generally emerged from the encounter with AATG in a somewhat stronger position than they enjoyed before.

1) Synthesis of AATG's case study findings

PRA has had a number of positive effects. It offers a useful set of techniques, which can (with certain reservations) be employed by non-specialist field staff to help them develop research skills. There has been some strengthening of village capacity. Village-level workers see PRA as a means to help them understand their beneficiaries' interests and to strengthen their relationships with them. Its powers in visualisation are felt to be an aid to communication. The community involvement which it seeks to promote is felt to be essential to long-term sustainability. PRA has also helped to create a common language and cement a common sense of purpose among development practitioners in Gambia (Brown et al., 2002).

An AATG Internal Review Report (July 1999, in Brown et al., 2002) mentions changes in the communities which can be attributed to PRA. These include:

- Greater unity within communities;
- Increased community participation and resource mobilisation;
- More understanding of the community and its real problems;
- Improved linkages with development agencies.

2) Who has participated in PRAs and what have been the effects on poverty alleviation?

Women are recorded as well-represented among poor people. The effects of PRA are varied. Women's participation was generally good. Similarly, the fact that AATG credit programmes did reach the poorest members of the community, although not as well as they reached the better-off, was suggestive of a relative degree of success in ensuring wide participation. Participation of the poorest of the poor, on the other hand, is likely to be low, as these often comprise temporary migrants ('strange farmers', Fula herders working on a contract basis, and the like, who are not seen as part of the local 'community'). Whether this represents a problem rather depends on the circumstances. For example, in places where the individuals in question are short-term migrants, their participation in the direct benefits from fairly long-cycle activities such as community forestry and the income-generating schemes would not seem a priority issue. Whether they should be required to contribute to public works, without the promise of future benefits, is something of a cultural question, and difficult to judge externally ***(***Brown et al., 2002).

The AATG case study also indicates that PRA tends to privilege the literate, because it is possible to move further and faster with literate people. Given the fact that PRA was initially seen as a way of reaching non-literate people, and that this advantage is still widely assumed, these findings may represent a significant challenge to the use of this methodology ***(***Brown et al., 2002).

3) Has PRA been recognised by the Government of the Gambia, and has it been influential at this level?

One area where AATG is to be strongly commended is the extent to which its own use of PRA has influenced the wider development community in The Gambia. PRA is now well established in a number of government programmes, and in most of these cases, AATG staff has played an influential role. There is also a wide recognition within the NGO community of the positive role which AATG has played in introducing participatory techniques to The Gambia (Brown et al., 2002).

However, there are concerns as to the diversity of development efforts. For example, AATG has used PRA to promote its own 'Village Development Groups', which are parallel to the

government-sponsored ‘Village Development Committees’. Government workers tend to regard the AATG-supported VDG as a ‘poor people‘s group’ and their establishment was perceived to involve a radical transformation of local structures. AATG and the government have continued to discuss this problem, and to seek ways to overcome it, so far without success. If the issue is not solved, it may create difficulties when the Local Government Bill and the establishment of VDCs become law. The point at issue here goes beyond the use of PRA, and concerns wider issues of NGO independence and capacity building strategy (Brown et al., 2002).

The use of participatory approaches has achieved benefits in community development matters. Thus, it appears reasonable to apply the participatory approach to the Rwandan context, specifically among Rwandan Potters to help them to tackle illiteracy. The challenges faced by people in AATG’s case study gave me insight about the choice of participants in this study. The author of this case study declares that PRA was initially seen as a way of reaching non-literate people, but sometimes researchers do not want to work with people who cause more work. They choose those who allow them to proceed as quickly as possible, as happened in AATG’s case. This study will focus on Rwandan Potters who cannot read or write.

Another lesson I drew from AATG‘s case was to establish how the promotion of literacy among Rwandan Potters creates the potential to bring change in methods of educating adults who cannot read and write. This study intends to bring something new to adult learning by encouraging the involvement of participants in their learning and to invite the Rwandan Government to acknowledge the benefits of participative methodologies. Instead of creating conflicts between the Government and the researcher, they should find common ground in their efforts to improve the living situations of the poor, as observed with AATG and the Government of Gambia. The latter has recognised the effects of PRA applied among poor Gambians. The issue was raised when AATG used PRA to promote its own ‘Village Development Groups’, which are parallel to the Government of Gambia‘s ‘Village Development Committees’. It is better to have a common goal, and consequently to work hand in hand. The AATG case shows me the kinds of opportunities and obstacles I might face on the ground. I will explore some further empirical studies around this topic.

4.3.3 Community development in El Salvador

According to Wagner (2000), in late 1993, Action Aid (UK) began a two-year research project to explore possible uses of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques within adult literacy programmes. This led to the development of the Reflect approach (Regenerated Freirean Literacy through Empowering Community Techniques), which seeks to build on the theoretical framework developed by Paulo Freire while providing a practical methodology. Salient features of the Reflect approach include the absence of pre-printed materials such as textbooks or primers. Instead, each circle of learners develops its own literacy materials through construction of maps, matrices, calendars and diagrams that represent local realities which give learners the opportunity to systematize their existing knowledge through analysis of issues faced in their lives.

In El Salvador**,** learners implemented new soil management and planting techniques, adopted new methods of pesticide and fertilizer use, and undertook an ongoing study of local soils and construction of conservation structures. Also, learners commented on the value of the knowledge they had gained on recent peace agreements relating to land reform, because they could directly apply their knowledge not only to accessing land but also to using newly acquired agricultural techniques to make it more productive. Discussions in the Reflect 'literacy circles' led directly to collective action at the community level and contributed to participation in community organizations. Through group construction of a natural resource map, learners examined the local water problem, after which they obtained funds for water tanks from a national NGO. There was a dramatic change in learners' involvement in community organizations, as several took up formal positions of responsibility in the local co-operative, credit committee, women's group, and education committee, all within a year of participating in the literacy programme (Archer & Cottingham, 1996).

After exploring how Reflect served on the ground as an approach which involves people in discussion about issues they face in their lives and search for solution by themselves, this literature review explores some findings, as indicated below.

4.3.4 Findings of Reflect in the first three pilot projects (Uganda, Bangladesh and El Salvador)

According to Phnuyal et al. (1998), there were three action research pilots in Uganda, Bangladesh and El Salvador - supported by Action Aid and funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

An evaluation of the original three pilot projects showed (according to Archer & Cottingham, 1996) that participants presented a mixture of outcomes, from practical activities (for example, sharing herbal medicinal knowledge, which led to the growing of more herbs); acquisition and use of literacy and numeracy skills (for example, record keeping in an individual‘s projects); to attitudinal changes, such as increased self-confidence and greater participation in their own family or community activities (for example, standing for election). In addition, 60 to 70 per cent of those who enrolled in the programme achieved basic levels of literacy and numeracy, enabling them to write a one page letter, read a passage, and carry out the four numeracy operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication and division) (Phnuyal et al., 1998**)**. How did these improvements come about? The following points contributed:

Women's increased mobility

All three evaluations suggested Reflect activities encouraged increased mobility of women - they shared information and experiences of travelling, and could therefore move around the locality with more confidence. In the Bangladesh Reflect programme, this sharing of local information was reinforced by the habit of leaving the 'private' compound to attend the 'public' literacy circle with husbands' and fathers' permission (Phnuyal et al.,1998).

Increased participation in family and community

Another reported change was an increased self-confidence on the part of women, as they claimed their right to be visible and audible in family and community meetings. In the Ugandan pilot project, 15 per cent of women reported speaking for the first time in the presence of men at a family meeting. In Bangladesh, the female facilitators reported that their training and new status gave them a stronger voice in decisions made by their husbands, for example, about loans. In a one year programme in El Salvador, the political context of the

Reflect circles were the gottis, the traditional decision-making meetings, which were traditionally attended by men only, but this time included women. There was initial resistance to women‘s inclusion, so an awareness-raising campaign was necessary to change entrenched attitudes towards women‘s participation (Phnuyal et al., 1998).

Changes in the gender division of labour

According to Phnuyal et al. (1998), changes in the gender division of the family workload were also reported. In the Ugandan programme, more than 50 per cent of participants reported that their husbands were fetching fuel and water, in order to free women for more agricultural work (traditionally women‘s responsibility). This was a result of including the gender workload calendar as one of the series of units on agricultural work, marketing, and natural resources. This change was not conflictual, but was based on re-negotiation for rational economic ends.

The same trend was observed in a more recent Reflect programme in Nepal, where men have also started helping with domestic work. ECARDS is a national NGO, an activist organisation working with marginalised groups in Nepal. ECARDS has been using and adapting Reflect for over two years in its empowerment-oriented work with small-scale landholders and landless people. Workers for ECARDS report that a discussion on gender issues was initiated in one Reflect circle, prompted by the late arrival of a male participant, who stated that he was late because he was waiting for his wife to return from the field to prepare the family meal. A few female participants asked him whether he could not have prepared the meal himself. His reply was that it was not his job. The participants, especially women, challenged his views about the concept of men’s and women’s work. The facilitator decided to continue the discussion on the issue and did not ask them to read or write anything that evening. Gradually, all the participants got involved in the debate. They were split into two groups according to their views. It was agreed that everybody would share his/her views without personally attacking others, because the purpose was to explore the issue. It took a couple of hours, but participants (including the man who raised the issue) eventually concluded that men could and should do domestic work such as cooking, washing, and caring for children. The behaviour of the male members of the group changed to a great extent as a result of the discussion; and the majority of the male participants started to do some domestic

work. Their progress has been monitored by the whole group, with the men being encouraged to undertake domestic tasks (*Education Action*, Issue 8, ACTIONAID, 1997).

This paper concluded that the Reflect approach proved to be more effective than primer-based methods both at teaching people to read and write (60-70% of those enrolled learnt to read and write) and at linking literacy with empowerment. In respect of empowerment, the major outcomes were: self realisation - most participants mentioned an increased ability to solve problems as well as to articulate ideas; increased participation in community organisations, for example 61% of learners in Usulutan took up positions of responsibility; community level actions in agriculture (e.g. food stores), health (growing medicinal herbs), and management of natural resources (e.g. tree planting); changes in gender division of labour - in Bundibugyo, men took on some household chores to free women for more farm work; enrolling children in school and starting non formal education centres, and health awareness (Phnuyal et al., 1998).

Analysing the findings

Reflect's approach to gender issues is to sensitise men to gender issues as well as focusing on women. Men come to realise their own role in perpetuating gender inequalities and recognise that they have to change; it is not enough to have sympathy for women, men must be willing to look at and modify their own behaviour.

After presenting the whole action research in Reflect pilot projects in Uganda, Bangladesh and El Salvador, different authors were interested in evaluating the Reflect approach in developing countries where Reflect was implemented, in order to show its impact on government and donor policies on the one hand, and on empowering people who participate in literacy and developmental activities on the other hand.

4.3.5 Evaluation of Reflect in South Africa

An evaluation of Reflect was carried out in June-July 1999 by Riddell (2001). It was a mid-term evaluation of a pilot project in the Northern Province of South Africa. The purpose was to assess how successful the pilot had been in making progress toward the alleviation of poverty through the creation of a practical link between literacy and community development, the establishment and support of critically aware community groups and the trial and enhancement of Reflect**.**

Once the facilitators had been identified, they underwent three weeks' training, consisting of two workshops, one on PRA and one linking literacy with participatory development. There were 217 participants, all but 9 women, with an average age of 58. One refresher workshop was run during the harvesting season, when attendance was low. Although the average time spent in circles was meant to be about 4 hours per week, in fact attendance averaged 111 hours over the full period, rather than the original 192 scheduled (Riddell, 2001).

Meetings and focus group discussions were held with participants, facilitators, a representative of the local ward council and a village chief, in addition to the evaluators receiving written submissions from the project manager and field worker. Participants and facilitators were asked to assess their work in the circles against their expectations for what they had hoped to achieve. Participants could write their names and count to varying degrees. Their gaining self-confidence was perhaps more notable than their literacy and numeracy achievement, though their ability simply to write their own names was valued highly. The circles had also begun to develop ideas for small projects and had already arranged eye tests for themselves. In addition, they had requested help from agricultural extension workers, and had dug drainage ditches (Riddell, 2001).

The original plan was to compare the achievement of the Reflect pilot with a traditional adult literacy approach, namely the National Literacy Campaign. The collapse of this campaign, however, made such a comparison impossible (Riddell, 2001).

The evaluation pointed to the following recommendations. For the pilot to continue, funding would be required, otherwise it would not be sustainable. It was noted that the focus of the circles was more on the communities, than the participants. It was felt that a shift of this

focus toward the participants would be beneficial, not least for their own motivation. (Indeed, a Record of Achievement for participants after their first year was devised in response to their request for a 'certificate'). Further support and back-up for the facilitators and field worker was seen to be necessary. Other recommendations included more flexible meeting schedules, the encouragement of fund-raising initiatives, the maintenance of a project manager, a consolidation of the links with local government and an expansion of the programme (Riddell, 2001).

The South African pilot programme collected important baseline information on individual participants such as their prior education or exposure to literacy training, as well as the usual data on their sex, age and circumstances. When the final evaluation of the pilot is carried out, this will enable the differentiation of various outcomes in addition to the measurements of progress that can be made from the snapshots offered in the mid-term assessment of the involvement of the various circles in different activities, as well as their literacy and numeracy achievements. The certification devised to recognise individual participants' achievement probably needs to be complemented with some communally agreed measures of development activities and empowerment (Riddell, 2001, p. 30)

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The evaluators make the important point that the project had problems in attracting sufficient funding because it fell between the stools of literacy and development, and thus did not fit easily into funders' categories (Riddell, 2001, p. 24). Supporting agencies need to consider appropriate responses to this point.

4.3.6 An action research study of the Reflect approach in rural Lesotho

Attwood (2007) applied the Reflect approach in rural Lesotho. The overall purpose of the study was to explore how a rural community in Lesotho would use the Reflect approach to deal with issues and challenges experienced in daily life. This intention is reflected in her first research question, "How did participants in a rural area of Southern Africa accommodate, apply and adapt the approach and principles of Reflect in their respective communities?" (Attwood, 2007, p. 354). She emphasized three elements in her answer to this question but I present those which are relevant to my study.

- There is interplay between knowing, doing, acting and reflecting, not as separate activities, but as fundamental processes (Kolb, 1984, in Attwood, 2007). Although participants were not always focused on learning literacy, Rogers (2000, in Attwood, 2007, p. 362) noted the "literacy comes second" model, and defined this as a process whereby learners "start with developmental activities and fit literacy in as one of the many different sets of skills and knowledge the groups will find themselves acquiring in the course of that activity".

- The use of PRA tools: Attwood (2007, p. 363) noted that both the facilitators and participants were not comfortable using the full range of PRA tools. I used these tools at the beginning to identify issues faced by participants in their area. Thereafter, I used them in literacy sessions and development activities in order to allow participants to put into practice the Catholic Action method - to see, to analyze, and to act (see Freire's method of literacy teaching described by Martinez (1993, pp.1-2) in chapter 3) which fits with AR (see chapter 5).

The second research question asked whether there were any identifiable benefits gained from introducing Reflect into Malealea (a village in Lesotho). Participation in circles enabled members to build their capabilities to be and to act, and to access produce and physical resources useful for building their livelihoods. In this way, people added to their quality of life, and enhanced their capacity to confront the social conditions that produce poverty (Attwood, 2007).

The third research question asked, "What kinds of literacy practices developed and in what ways did these practices support development initiatives?" (Attwood, 2007, p. 394). She says that while participants in both the village and the co-operative contexts made progress with regard to using literacy for their own purposes, the Reflect approach did not go far enough to push a critical restructuring and redistribution of power. The only learning unit in which power was overtly discussed was the gender unit, where power was associated with different gender roles. Reasons as to why participants did not develop sharper critical reflection skills are discussed in the final research question (Attwood, 2007, p. 417).

The final research question asked, "What kinds of challenges and constraints were experienced in the process of implementing Reflect?" (Attwood, 2007, p. 418). According to

Attwood, the facilitators were not highly skilled and did not have great experience of contexts which were different from Malealea. One of the major obstacles experienced by the facilitators was acquiring the ability to think critically, to use the learning materials and the curriculum and to develop units.

According to Attwood (2007), Reflect is a demanding approach in terms of both time and commitment. There are certain elements inherent to the context, some situational, and some cultural. All the facilitators, without exception, were from the same socio-economic context as the participants. And, because most of the facilitators had similar educational backgrounds to the participants, they faced the same educational challenges and struggles. Also, there were some tensions related to a number of factors. Culturally, Basotho men are considered superior to women, and this belief hindered participatory practices as women kept electing men into positions of power, feeling more comfortable in supportive rather than leadership roles.

There were a number of concerns in relation to the sustainability of the project. One of the main concerns about sustainability was the issue of funding for materials, food at workshops, photocopying of learning units, stationery, and paying facilitators (Attwood, 2007).

To conclude her study, Attwood (2007) recognises that Reflect allowed people to implement their own learning, to develop their workload schedule and to improve livelihoods. People improved their participation in meaningful decision-making.

I will now consider the role of Reflect in contributing to the evolution of gender issues among people. There are numerous cases from different parts of the world on how participation in gender analysis has contributed to participants 'discovering' a new reality and how men and women subsequently started to behave in a more gender sensitive way.

4.3.7 Reflect and empowering women in Bundibugyo (Uganda)

According to Kanyesigye (1998), women constitute the majority of Reflect participants in the circles – over 85% of participants are women in Bundibugyo. Like non-literate men in society, these women have not been given the chance to speak or are not listened to whenever they speak. The non-literate are considered to be ignorant, stupid, superstitious and lacking an ability to plan. As a result, when community leaders are elected, the non-literate are not

considered. In community meetings, their views are disregarded. This phenomenon of excluding women and non-literate people from the mainstream of decision-making is what Kanyesigye and his team sought to address when they started Reflect in Bundibugyo. Their aim was to empower the socially and economically disadvantaged community members so that they could fully participate in their development process and shape their destiny.

The Reflect process of empowerment started by communities (including both the literate and non-literate) selecting facilitators who lived in their villages. This meant that they understood the socio-economic, political and cultural status of their people. These facilitators were trained in participatory approaches to community development and went back to their communities to do a baseline survey on community needs, problems and priorities. They then received further training during which they worked to adapt PRA tools to address the problems that they had identified. The facilitators were therefore able to open Reflect circles with a solid foundation. Most circles were mainly made of the non-literate, with a majority of participants being women. When discussions were generated in the circles, they were strictly based on the community's own agenda and were not an outside imposition. The resonance and immediacy of the themes addressed created a sense of ownership of the whole programme. This made them feel comfortable to critically analyse some sensitive issues which would have been difficult to address in any other forum **(**Kanyesigye, 1998).

For quite some time, persistent hunger in Bundibugyo was a problem due to poor agriculture practices and the growing population in the district who were exerting increasing pressure on the land. When the Reflect participants discussed this issue using Household Maps, Agriculture Calendars, Rainfall Calendars, Natural Resources Maps, and Hungry Seasons Calendars, they were able to critically analyse the causes and effects on the society, families, and individuals. These PRA tools helped the facilitators to systematise learning. The process was empowering as, for the first time, the women had the chance to give their opinion and be listened to by other villagers. The outcomes from the discussions were documented by the facilitators and written down in the learner-participants' notebooks. The graphics that they constructed served as a record that could be used as reference materials during community planning. The analysis by participants and facilitators had many immediate and long-term impacts. The first issue on the priority list of many communities was the lack of education for children. Most children were not going to school because it was far away from their village and the terrain was difficult to traverse. It was discussed and agreed in the circles that they

should establish nursery schools in their villages where their young children could go for the first 2 years until they were old enough to attend the schools that were far away. It was decided that the Reflect facilitators would teach the children. Within a period of one year after the start of Reflect circles in Bundibugyo, 12 pre-schools were established, entirely on the initiative of the Reflect circles and without any external support. This was an indication that the communities, for the first time, were seeing the value of education and taking responsibility for managing the schools - they were even paying their facilitators' allowances to motivate them to teach the young children. Kabanyaka, a Reflect participant in Busoru parish, who had been selected on the school management committee, had this to say:

> ... I am 43 years old and I missed the opportunity to go to school when I was young and when I got married, nobody listened to me when I spoke. Look at me now; I am the chair person of this school! It is great to lead the movement for education! Our children will never suffer the way we suffered... **(**Kanyesigye, 1998, pp. 2-3)

Another issue that was discussed by the participants, and later taken to the entire community for consideration, was about giving food to relatives and friends after a good harvest to show gratitude for the rich harvest received. This often meant that households were left in hunger, as food had to be shared among several relatives who helped during harvesting. The researcher participated in the discussion where participants sought the origin of the practice and its implications. The circle came to the conclusion that the practice was no longer sustainable, given the growing numbers of large households and small plots of arable land. They discovered that some families were not cultivating their farms and as a result, they should not expect to live on other people's harvest. Some participants, however, said that the practice was good because it was a sign of goodwill and hospitality. Bakecura, a 37 year old participant from Nyakakindu village had this to say on the same issue: "It is the hand that gives, that receives ... If you don't give, God will not bless you with any more rich harvest. Even our ancestors will not be happy with us ..." (Kanyesigye, 1998, p. 3)

At the end of the discussion, the participants agreed that they should cut down on the amount of food they gave, rather than abandoning the practice altogether. Six months later when the researcher went back to visit them, participants told her that they were happy that the issue had been discussed and agreed upon. As a result, they now had some food in their granaries and they had agreed to construct a shelter to store food for use during the season of scarcity **(**Kanyesigye, 1998, p. 3).

The Reflect facilitators also felt the impact of Reflect on their lives. In addition to facilitating the circles in their respective villages, they have taken the responsibility of acting as resource people in their communities where their advice is sought for different development issues. When there are conflicts in the villages, the facilitators are to attend the conflict resolution meetings with elders and other opinion leaders. This has had a positive impact on the facilitators because, although most of them are young men and women, they are regarded with high esteem due to their role as change agents and 'animators' for development in their society **(**Kanyesigye, 1998).

Recently, when Bundibugyo was hit by rebels from the Democratic Republic of Congo, the communities were internally displaced and started living in camps. The facilitators were selected to be on the committees for relief distribution and helped to educate the people on how to avoid cholera in the camps. Some Reflect circles were reported to be continuing, spontaneously (and without any external support) in the refugee camps **(**Kanyesigye, 1998).

4.3.8 Literacy development through Reflect programmes

Evaluations done by Duffy, Fransman and Pearce (2008) have underlined that in some Reflect programmes the literacy dimension of Reflect is not seen as a focus and that literacy is seen as separate to other goals such as empowerment and community action. This can lead to the literacy element of Reflect being poorly understood and underemphasised.

In general, despite programmes showing an awareness of the functional uses of literacy, the evaluations suggest that many programmes in practice tend to focus on a narrow understanding of literacy as the '3Rs' without making clear links between these basic skills and other literacy skills such as communication skills, self-confidence and an awareness of power relations in literacy practices. A focus on the '3Rs' without a clear indication of understanding the broader concept of literacy may mean that programmes ignore literacy development opportunities (Duffy et al., 2008, p. 19).

Interestingly, of the five programmes (Madagascar, Lesotho, South Africa, Nepal and Pakistan) that separated literacy in Reflect from other goals and downplayed the literacy element of their programmes, all went on to provide evidence of literacy development

through Reflect. This again highlights the importance of viewing literacy and the achievement of wider development goals as integrated processes. The Madagascar report refers to circles writing to obtain support and food after the cyclone and also found that some circles have notebooks to record attendance and minutes of meetings. Three of the circles produced monthly reports. The South African evaluation reports that all groups drew up action plans. For example, one circle "gathered a petition, which they presented to the local council regarding the clearance of illegal dumps" whilst three circles have written proposals for start up funds (Duffy et al., 2008, p. 19).

Duffy et al. (2008, p. 6) discuss how in Nepal, Kamaiya participants "filed petitions for liberation" and the Reflect programme with the Land Rights Movement combined literacy with the discussion of rights through the use of "visual literacy methods" (Duffy et al., 2008, p. 19). In Nepal circles also began to produce their own literacy materials such as diaries, minutes of meetings, posters and campaign slogans and action plans. Kamaiya circles engaged in the production of "diagrammatic and visual aids to illustrate issues of working hours and wages and debt bondage" (Duffy et al., 2008, p. 8). The Land Rights Movement circles also "used resource mapping/social mapping to illustrate the status of land ownership and tenancy rights" (Duffy et al., 2008, p. 18) and "collective constructions of maps matrices, calendars and diagrams" (Duffy et al., 2008, p. 20). The Nepalese examples clearly show that literacy development is an integral part of the pursuit of empowerment and other development goals (Duffy et al., 2008).

Finally in Pakistan, despite references to "Reflect without literacy" (Duffy et al., 2008, p. 20), the evaluation found that materials such as radio programmes and newspaper articles were brought into circles. These were used to stimulate discussion, thus developing oral skills and problem-solving skills. Not only does this show that literacy was developed within the circles, it also points to the development of wider literacies beyond the '3Rs'. However, one fieldworker did report that despite attending training, he was still unsure of the literacy component of Reflect and so literacy was not being taught in the circles in his area. This reinforces a narrow conceptualisation of literacy and the assumption that it should be "taught" in clearly recognisable ways as it is to children in schools (Duffy et al., 2008, p. 26).

Integral to Reflect is the use of PRA tools or graphics in the discussion and analysis of local issues. Seven evaluations referred explicitly to the use of PRA skills in the Reflect programmes. This includes the example of Nepal, outlined above. Other examples include the Vietnam evaluation, which refers to extensive use of graphics: "learners showed that they could use a number of PRA tools such as problem trees, seasonal calendars, pair ranking and priority ranking" (Duffy et al., 2008, p. 23). The DRC evaluation states that circles "generate textual materials including risk-mapping the prevention and control of malaria, making and using community pregnancy calendars" (Duffy et al., 2008, p. 17) and other visual materials.

In Vietnam and Laos "participants used PRA tools to draw a village map, diagram of a causal tree to define poverty status of their village and family; they know how to make crop calendars to manage agricultural products; know how to make calendars to monitor and prevent livestock epidemic diseases … participants draw a tree of income and expenditure" (Duffy et al., 2008, p. 18). The Mali and Ghana evaluations also refer to the extensive use of PRA tools and graphics to discuss various topics such as gender roles, income, health and sanitation. Both the South African and Nepalese evaluations indicate that programmes/circles used PRA tools and techniques. However, both countries' programmes stated that their goals were the empowerment of participants rather than literacy development. This suggests that, at least in some Reflect programmes/circles; there is a mistaken assumption that the use of PRA tools does not involve literacy development (Duffy et al., 2008).

In sum, the majority of Reflect programmes are making a positive contribution to literacy development. Even in cases where countries do not start with a focus on literacy, the Reflect process is still having a positive impact on literacy acquisition and development. In some cases, programmes appear to have an assumption that the use of PRA tools and graphics do not involve literacy development. However, the evidence shows that, even when this is the case, programmes have a positive impact on literacy skills development (Duffy et al., 2008).

4.4 Conclusion

The case studies of PRA and Reflect in this chapter show that success is uneven in all aspects of empowerment (personal, interpersonal and collective) (Patel, 2005), because literacy does not have a uniform and 'linear effect' on empowerment (Robinson-Pant, 2005). Reflect used with PRA tools offers a space for individuals, groups of people and communities to discuss

pertinent issues they face in real life, to raise their awareness about those issues and take initiatives to deal with them. The empirical studies have also demonstrated the opportunity offered by the use of Reflect in data collection and in creating new dynamics between the researchers and participants that would not otherwise have been achieved.

It has been shown that Reflect could be used to provide innovative ways of engaging with marginalised social groups, and adapted to suit particular circumstances (Preece, 2006). According to the literature reviewed above, it is clear that Reflect has proved its power to help poor or underprivileged or marginalised groups to deal with underdevelopment. It has been shown that participants in Reflect perform considerably better than those in functional adult literacy programmes (Foroni, cited in Briddell, 2001). Examples given in developing countries of Africa, Asia and South America reveal the benefits of the Reflect approach in tackling illiteracy on the ground. These include a number of changes in communities which can be attributed to Reflect, including:

- Acquisition of literacy skills in reading, writing and numeracy (see findings of Reflect in the first three pilot projects (Uganda, Bangladesh and El Salvador evaluation of Reflect in South Africa);
- Greater unity and cohesion among participants in Reflect circles (see Participatory Rural Appraisal in Gambia);
- Increased community participation and mobilisation in developmental activities (see Participatory Rural Appraisal in Gambia);
- Consciousness raising around the community and its real problems (see Participatory Rural Appraisal in Gambia);
- More understanding of gender roles **(**see Reflect and empowering women in Bundibugyo in Uganda; Findings of Reflect in the first three pilot projects (Uganda, Bangladesh and El Salvador);
- Empowerment of women, poor, marginalized, and oppressed people, as well as minority groups (see Reflect and empowering women in Bundibugyo (Uganda));
- Acquiring skills to make decisions individually and in groups (see an action research study of the Reflect approach in rural Lesotho by Gillian Attwood in 2007);
- Shifting from the top-down approach to the bottom-up one.

Alongside these benefits, Reflect has proved that it is a demanding approach. Several challenges were underlined in literature review. The major ones were the following:

- Low attendance in Reflect circles;
- Difficulties around language when participants in Reflect circles and their facilitators have different cultures (a case study of minority ethnic groups in Western context);
- The use of PRA tools (maps, diagrams and so on) is demanding in terms of time and other resources (see a case study of minority ethnic groups in the Western context, an action research study of the Reflect approach in rural Lesotho by Gillian Attwood in 2007);
- Not all groups use all PRA tools (see an action research study of the Reflect approach in rural Lesotho by Gillian Attwood in 2007).
- Facilitators need training and support (see an action research study of the Reflect approach in rural Lesotho by Gillian Attwood in 2007).
- Sustainability of the project (see an action research study of the Reflect approach in rural Lesotho by Gillian Attwood in 2007, evaluation of Reflect in South Africa).

For those challenges mentioned above as well as others that may arise during the research process of this study, strategies should be developed to deal with them. In the next chapter, I describe the research design and research methods.

CHAPTER 5: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the intention is to describe methods to be used to investigate and to answer questions raised by the associated problems of illiteracy, marginalisation and powerlessness among Rwandan Potters. As Robinson (1990) states, research takes many forms and incorporates many tools, techniques and methods. This is because "choosing a strategy is governed by the form of the question the researcher chooses to ask and the kind of outcome he/she considers meaningful" (Robinson, 1990, p. 9). I have chosen a qualitative paradigm because of its flexibility in all aspects of the research process such as setting objectives, designing, sampling, and the questions that the researcher plans to ask the respondents. It is not like quantitative research where those aspects are predetermined (Kumar, 2005). The main points to be discussed in this chapter are the following: the research paradigm; the research design; the scope of the research and selection of research participants; the research methods and techniques; validity, reliability and generalizability; ethical issues associated with action research; and strengths and limitations of action research.

5.2 Research Paradigm

The approach I adopted in this study is qualitative. Qualitative research is often described by the methods that are most frequently associated with it, such as participant observation, in-depth interviews or case study. In fact, qualitative research is more than just methods; it is a particular approach to inquiry, based on a particular set of assumptions about how knowledge is produced and about the nature of reality itself (Mathie & Camozzi, 2005, p. 25). In this study, the population concerned are Rwandan Potters grouped in the Modern Pottery Cooperative. Qualitative research is appropriate in this context because it is flexible, and can adjust to the group under study. Concepts, data collection techniques, and methods can all be adjusted as the research progresses.

According to http://www.csulb (accessed on 05 August 2010), qualitative research aims at:

- gaining a deep understanding of a specific organization or event, rather than a surface description of a large sample of a population;
- providing an explicit rendering of the structure, order, and broad patterns found among a group of participants;
- getting a better understanding, through first hand experience, truthful reporting, and quotations of actual conversations.
- understanding how the participants derive meaning from their surroundings, and how their meaning influences their behaviour. It generates data about human groups in social settings.

For Woods (2006), qualitative researchers are interested in life as it is lived in real situations. The qualitative researcher seeks to discover the meanings that participants attach to their behaviour, how they interpret situations, and what their perspectives are on particular issues. But what studies can be classified as qualitative?

Kumar explains that:

> The study is classified as qualitative if the purpose of the study is primarily to describe a situation, phenomenon, problem or event … The description of an observed situation, the historical enumeration of events, an account of the different opinions people have about an issue, and a description of the living conditions of a community are examples of qualitative research. (Kumar, 2005, p. 12)

Creswell (2003) goes beyond the description of a phenomenon and defines qualitative research as "an inquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based on building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting" (2003, pp. 1-2).

Moreover, Merriam (1998) has defined qualitative research as "an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible" (p. 5).

My concern is with Rwandan Potters who cannot read and write. The Reflect approach has been chosen for the possibilities it has for addressing illiteracy and associated development challenges. I cannot carry out this study outside the Rwandan Potter Community. This is

supported by Mathie & Camozzi in http://www.idrc.ca (accessed on 5 August 2010) in the following statement:

> Given the importance attached to discovering how people understand their world, it is important to go into the subjects' environment, rather than taking them out of that environment. This is what it means to "go into the field." Fieldwork is an essential activity for qualitative researchers. During fieldwork, the researcher is able to have direct and personal contact with the subjects of research and to place their lived experience in a specific local context. Unlike quantitative researchers, who tend to remain detached from subjects, qualitative researchers make a conscious effort to develop relationships in the field. In this way, they begin to see things in the way the research subjects see them, and appreciate why they think, act, and feel the way they do. (Mathie & Camozzi, 2005, p. 27)

The research design appropriate to conduct this study is action research (AR) because of its role in involving people in understanding their problems and solving them by themselves in their contextual setting.

5.3 Research Design

The present study piloted the Reflect approach, an innovative approach to adult learning and social change, which fuses the theories of Paulo Freire with PRA tools. Using this approach on the ground, I wanted to examine whether it could help Rwandan Potters to be fully involved in their own learning and to be able to deal with the problem of illiteracy. I wanted also to assess if literacy could lead to development and empowerment. Therefore, I chose Action Research (AR) as a research approach for this study to help participants to identify and reflect on issues they face in everyday life, and search for common actions to solve them.

5.3.1 Defining Action Research (AR)

The term ‘action research’ was coined by Kurt Lewin in 1946 and taken up in 1948 when he defined it as an approach used in research on the conditions and effects of various forms of social action. Action research involves a spiral of steps, each of which is composed of a circle of planning, action and fact-finding about the result of the action (Lewin, 1948).

After Lewin, many other researchers provided their own definitions. According to O'Brien (1998), AR is known by many other names, including participatory research, collaborative inquiry, emancipatory research, action learning, and contextual action research. Put simply, AR is "learning by doing" - a group of people identify a problem, do something to resolve it, see how successful their efforts were, and if not satisfied, try again. To emphasize this, McNiff (2002, p. 17) suggests that "action researchers support the view that people can 'create their own identities' and that they should allow others to do the same." This idea is also elaborated by Ferrance (2000, p. 1) who states that AR is a process based on the following assumptions:

- Participants work best on problems they have identified for themselves;
- Participants become more effective when encouraged to examine and assess their own work and then consider ways of working differently;
- Participants help each other by working collaboratively.

According to Ferrance (2000, p. 2), AR is not what usually comes to mind when we hear the word "research". Action research is not a library project where we learn more about a topic that interests us. It is not problem-solving in the sense of trying to find out what is wrong, but rather a quest for knowledge about how to improve or change. Action research is not about doing research on or about people, or finding all available information on a topic or looking for the correct answers, it involves people working to improve their skills, techniques, and strategies. This is argued by Rule and John (2011) who suggest that action research, with its emphasis on process and change, might be understood as a case study which is concerned not only with understanding a particular situation or case, but also collaborating with participants to act on this understanding in order to improve the situation, and documenting the different phases of development. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011) add to Ferrance's and Rule and John's thoughts that action research is a powerful tool for change and improvement at local level. They argue that Lewin's own work was deliberately intended to change the life chances of disadvantaged groups in terms of housing, employment, prejudice, socialization and training. As Kemmis and McTaggart (1988, p. 5) report, this is possible by a collective self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants themselves in order to understand the practices carried out in their social situations. They emphasize this idea by confirming that the action research of the group is achieved through the critically examined action of individual group members. Action research also permits participants to gain scientific knowledge and

competencies (Hult & Lennung, 1980) which are useful in their everyday practices and which could enhance their living situations.

In addition, Reason and Bradbury who have a great understanding of AR have tried to suggest a complete and common definition in the following statement:

> A participatory, democratic process concerned with developing practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes, grounded in a participatory worldview which we believe is emerging at this historical moment. It seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, in participation with others, in the pursuit of practical solutions to issues of pressing concern to people, and more generally the flourishing of individual persons and their communities. (Reason & Bradbury, 2001, p. 1)

In sum, AR is a recognized form of experimental research that focuses on the effects of the researcher‘s direct actions of practice within a participatory community, with the goal of improving the performance and quality of the community or an area of concern (Reason & Bradbury, 2001; Hult & Lennung, 1980; McNiff, 2002).

The said actions have a set goal of addressing an identified problem in a particular setting, for example, developing the literacy of people through the use of new strategies (Quigley, 2000) or improving communication and efficiency in a hospital emergency room (Eisenberg, Baglia & Pynes, 2006). It is a collaborative method for testing new ideas and for implementing action for change. It involves direct participation in a dynamic research process, while monitoring and evaluating the effects of the researcher's actions with the aim of improving practice (Checkland & Holwell, 1998; Hult & Lennung, 1980). AR is a way to increase understanding of how change in one's actions or practices can mutually benefit a community of practitioners (Reason & Bradbury, 2001; Carr & Kemmis, 1986; Masters, 1995: http://cadres.perpperdine.ed accessed on August 2010). Wadsworth (1998 in http://www.scu.ed.ad accessed on August 2010) reinforces the understanding of AR saying that Participatory Action Research (PAR) is research which involves all relevant parties in actively examining together current action (which they experience as problematic) in order to change and improve it. They do this by critically reflecting on the historical, political, cultural, economic, geographic and other contexts which make sense of it. Participatory action research is action which is researched, changed and re-researched, within the research process by participants. It is not simply an exotic variant of consultation; instead, it aims to be

active co-research, by and for those to be helped. It cannot be used by one group of people to get another group of people to do what is thought best for them - whether that is to implement a central policy or an organizational or service change, instead it tries to be a genuinely democratic or non-coercive process whereby those to be helped determine the purposes and outcomes of their own inquiry.

Thus, the Rwandan Potter Community fulfils the requirements of AR. It is a group of people who experience problems of poverty, marginalization and powerlessness. To solve these problems, the group concerned needs to take action. But before making such a decision, there is a need to reflect on the origin of the current situation and to discuss how to deal with it. As an action researcher, I believe that going to meet the group concerned, and offering help to them, is the best way to help them to become active in handling issues in their everyday life. Action researchers proceed through repeated cycles, in which researchers and the community start with the identification of major issues, concerns and problems; initiate research; propose action, learn about this action and proceed to a new research and action cycle. This process is a continuous one. Participants in AR projects continuously reflect on their learning from the actions and proceed to initiate new actions. Outcomes are very difficult to predict from the outset, challenges are sizeable and achievements depend to a very great extent on the research team's commitment, creativity and imagination. With this in mind, I conducted one cycle of AR with the Rwandan Potter Community with the aim of understanding the issues in their community, and searching for solutions. My role as an action researcher, together with other facilitators and following Ferrance's (2000) advice, was to assist this group to move forward in gaining more control over their lives, to collaborate through participation, to acquire knowledge, and to work progressively for social change.

Rule and John (2011, p. 11) describe the role of the researcher as someone who, after identifying the problem that needs addressing, carries this forward into stages of planning for change, implementing the changes and evaluating how they actually worked out. These stages are explained in detail in the following section.

5.3.2 Steps in Action Research

According to Ferrance (2000, p. 9), within all the definitions of AR, there are four basic themes: empowerment of participants, collaboration through participation, acquisition of

knowledge, and social change. The same author suggests the following five phases of inquiry in conducting AR. They are presented in the figure below:

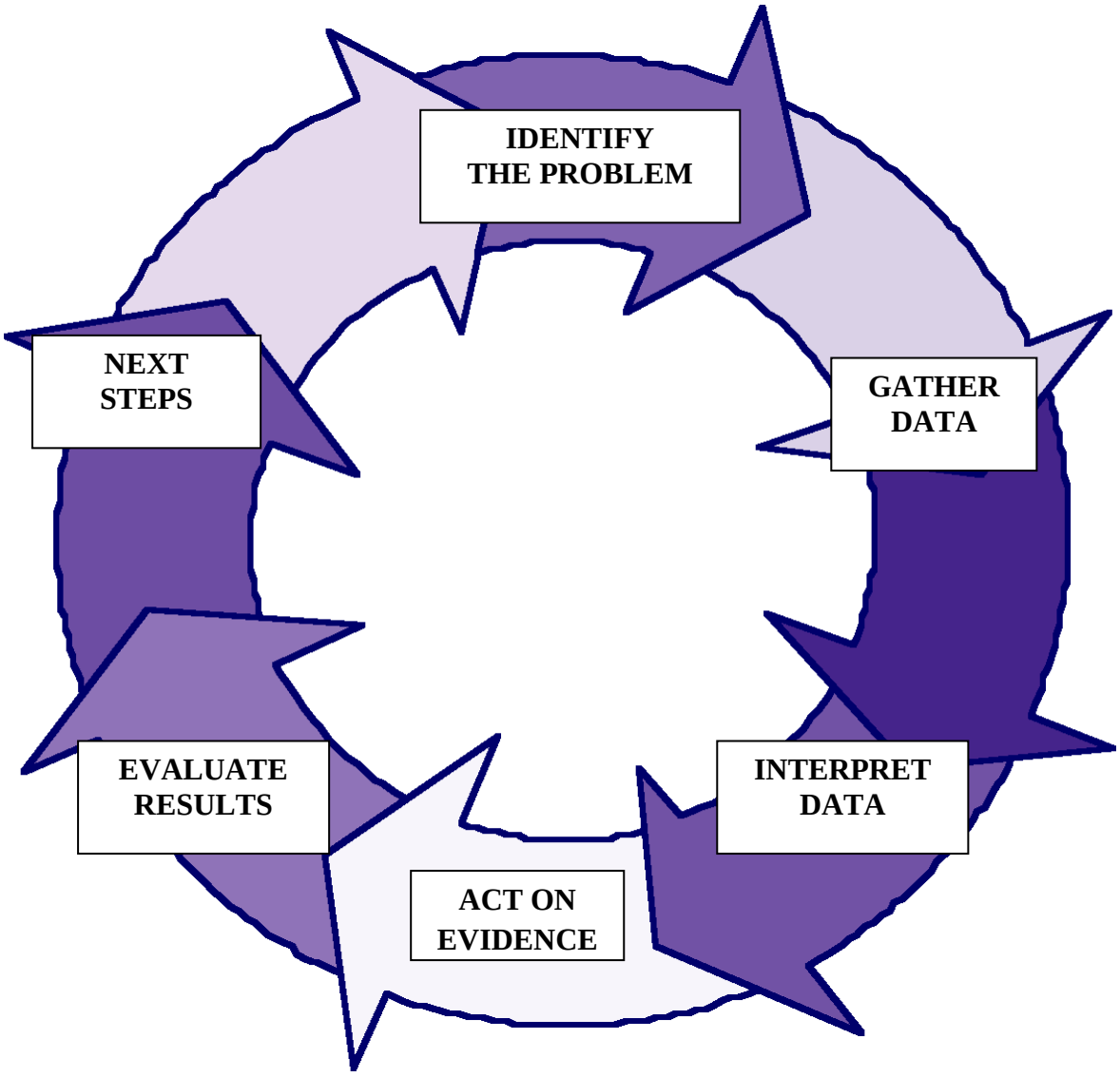


Figure 4: Steps in action research (Ferrance, 2000, p. 9)

Identify a problem area

According to Ferrance (2000), researchers often have several questions they wish to investigate; however, it is important to limit the questions to one that is meaningful and doable in their daily work. Careful planning at this first stage will limit false starts and frustrations. This study aims at dealing with illiteracy and associated development challenges among Rwandan Potters. But the root causes of this situation were identified by participants

themselves while discussing issues they faced in their everyday life. PRA tools were used by participants to analyse together the encountered issue and to plan for actions.

Gather data

The collection of data is an important step in deciding on the action that needs to be taken. Multiple sources of data are used for better understanding of the scope of events in a literacy class. There are many techniques for qualitative data collection, such as interviews, portfolios, diaries, field notes, audio tapes, photos, memos, questionnaires, focus groups, anecdotal records, checklists, journals, individual files, logs of meetings, videotapes, case studies, surveys, records – tests, report cards, attendance, self-assessment, samples of student work, projects, performances, etc (Ferrance, 2000). For this study, interviews, field notes, observations, photos, video-recordings, and focus group discussions were the main techniques used to collect data, and are presented in a later section of this chapter on research methods.

Analysing and Interpreting data

Analysing data makes sense of the collected data (Taylor, 1999). According to Ferrance (2000)**,** verbal data, such as people‘s opinions, attitudes, or checklists, may be summarized.

I used qualitative analysis to explore the Groupthink Circle’s motivation, behaviour, desires and needs so as to better understand how Reflect operated and in what ways it affected participants. Marshall and Rossman (1989, p. 111) provide the following advice for researchers dealing with qualitative data:

- The analysis should be relevant to the respective research question.
- There are no hard and fast rules for the methodological approach, but the approach should be systematic and transparent (clearly explained).
- Treat and analyse the data in a purely qualitative way, for example by summarizing themes.

Qualitative analysis allowed me to assess both the outcomes of the study and the changes in people's perceptions towards the problems of illiteracy, powerlessness and marginalization, and to anticipate new actions to be carried out in the future.

Act on evidence

As Ferrance (2000) says, taking action allows people to make changes in their lives. This statement meets Reflect's aim because when used on the ground, the outcomes are revealed by changes in the community under study. As Ferrance advises, when we use Reflect, if participants determine many issues and search for solutions by proposing many actions, it is better to begin by solving a major problem and doing one action. Thereafter, participants can observe changes and get motivated to continue to solve the remaining problems (chapters 6 & 7).

Evaluate results

It is necessary to assess the effects of the intervention to determine if improvement has occurred. If there is improvement, does the data clearly provide the supporting evidence? If not, what changes can be made to the actions to elicit better results? (Ferrance, 2000). In this study, an evaluation of learning was planned every four months in order to assess improvements in reading, writing and other activities. It was also an opportunity for participants to bring to the surface the challenges encountered and how to handle them. Also, the participants, the facilitators and the researcher together visited the Reflect circle's project. At the end of each evaluation, decisions about improving literacy activities were taken by participants with the facilitators' help (chapters 6 & 7).

Next steps

On the basis of evaluation, the researcher and participants should identify further issues raised by the data and plan for additional improvements, revisions, and next steps (Ferrance, 2000). This is to say that AR has no end. It is summarized in a circle of action-reflection and evaluation in real time. This kind of thinking has characterized my way of conducting my research and accomplishing my facilitation tasks with the Rwandan Potter Community. Within one year, three cycles of action research were accomplished and we were able to

summarize the collected data, step by step, and arrive at conclusions about the use of the Reflect approach in the Rwandan Potter Community.

5.3.3 The Action Research Process

Using ideas of Lewin (1946, reproduced in Lewin, 1948), Hope and Timmel (1984), O'Brien (1998), Chilisa and Preece (2005), and Zuber-Skerritt and Fletcher (2007), I have developed a simple theoretical model of the cyclical nature of the typical AR process which includes Ferrance's steps of AR described above. Each cycle of this new model has five steps: Reflect, plan, act, observe, and provide new elements. The reflection in this model corresponds to Ferrance's identification of a problem area.

The first thing to do when participants have got a problem to solve is to reflect in-depth on what is the real problem and to set the new strategies for sorting it out. Problems are many, as will be seen in the pair wise ranking of the consequences of illiteracy in chapter 6. What are the root causes? How to handle them?

The second step is to gather data or to search for information. It is the planning of action which can help to solve the problem. Here the facilitators use tools and techniques in order to gain information before putting into practice the said action. In the Reflect, we use PRA tools and techniques, such as group discussion, interviews, participant-observation, video-recordings, and field notes. These tools and techniques provide enough information to enable the facilitators to plan the process that clarifies the action which participants want to put into practice in order to change the situation in which they live. What Ferrance calls interpreting data could be inserted in the planning step because when the facilitators clarify the action chosen by the participants, it is a kind of interpretation. They make sense of the collected data.

Then in all cases, action is taken in order to solve the problem. It is followed by evaluation, according to Ferrance, and by a new round of observation. Here it is a matter of finding out what went well and what needed improvement. That is the reason why a step called 'next steps' (in plural) is highlighted because several steps are always needed to improve the situation. An ideal has no end. The new model proposed 'input' step which is similar to 'next

steps'. We have, if necessary, to add something new to our actions. Using AR has no end; this can be seen in the figure below:

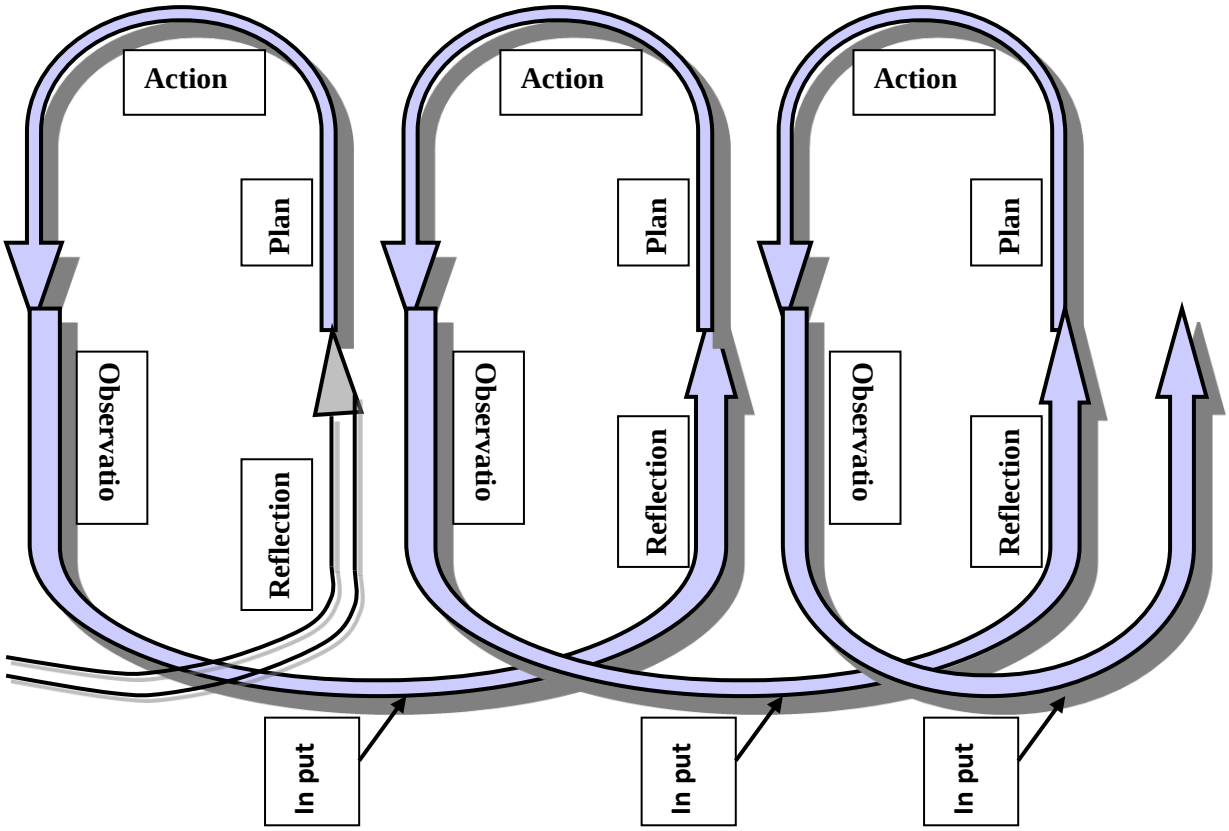


Figure 5: Cyclical Action Research Process - my own conception, 2010-09-04

This figure clearly explains the 'steps of AR' by showing how the learning cycles can be put into practice on the ground. With regard to this figure, Zuber-Skerritt and Fletcher (2007) say that the core of AR is where the classic reflect-plan-act-observe spiral is located, and in turn constitutes the basis of reflection for generating a product (the individual work of the researcher) which is the thesis.

Oettle and Law (2005) support Zuber-Skerritt and Fletcher's ideas and summarize the AR process in the learning cycle in the following words: "Learning is fundamental to AR, and learning is not the same as collecting data or 'gathering' knowledge. This is a learning cycle in which both the researcher and the subjects are intimately engaged." (Oettle & Law, 2005, p. 3). Elements of this learning cycle include the following steps:

- Reflection on the current situation: The researcher‘s task is to facilitate reflection on the situation and to guide the group towards a deeper understanding of their situation. At this level, participants identify problems they are facing in their everyday life. In this study, the problem identified by Reflect ‘Groupthink’ Circle‘s members is to tackle illiteracy among Rwandan Potters. But the root causes of this situation are identified by the participants themselves. PRA tools are used by participants in order to analyse together the issue encountered and to plan for actions.
- The planning of a change to improve the situation. Based on a deeper understanding of their situation, their capacities, available resources, etc., the researcher would facilitate a planning process that clarifies the actions that the group wants to take.
- Acting on the process and observing the consequences of the change. Plans are implemented, actions are taken and consequences are noted.
- Reflection and re-planning the same, or another process of change: At any point, the group can come together and reflect on the changes it has seen. Significant external changes may mean that the plan has to be modified. According to Ferrance (2000), this is obtained on the basis of the evaluation; the researcher should identify further questions raised by the data and plan for additional improvements, revisions, and next steps.
- And so on... and so forth: The learning cycle usually has a number of reflecting/ planning/acting/interactions. There is no clear end-point for the researcher.

As Hope and Timmel propose, input from other sources is important to improve actions. Therefore, re-planning actions has no end. However in this study I planned to recognise three rounds or cycles (one round was about four months) before presenting results. I hoped that at this stage I could draw conclusions about the relevance of the Reflect approach to literacy when used with Rwandan Potter Community.

Action research is useful in this study because its aim is to guide Rwandan Potters in their process to understand the problem which hampers their living situations, to plan actions which can solve the problem, to act and observe if there is a change, to re-reflect again and re-plan another action, etc.

Through this process, the ‘research’ aspects of AR avoid the traditional research carried out by universities and governments where ‘experts’ go to a community, study their subjects, and take away their data to write their papers, reports and theses. Research using AR is ideally

BY the local people and FOR the local people. Research is designed to address specific issues identified by local people, and the results are directly applied to the problems at hand.

5.4 Scope of the study and selection of participants

My research interest lies in piloting the Reflect approach for educating Rwandan Potters. Ideally, this study should be conducted with all Rwandan Potters. However, it would be almost impossible for me to conduct a study throughout the whole country due to distance constraints, available time for carrying out my research activities as well as limited financial resources. These constraints did not allow me to extend the research to areas outside Kigali City. Therefore, one Reflect circle was started in order to gauge the relevance of this new approach to literacy for educating Rwandan Potters. The research was carried out in the Modern Pottery Cooperative that belongs to Rwandan Potters located in Kigali City, Gasabo district, Kacyiru Sector and Gataba village.

With regard to sampling in qualitative research, Kumar argues that:

> In qualitative research the issue of sampling has little significance as the main aim of most qualitative inquiries is either to explore or describe the diversity in a situation, phenomenon or issue. Qualitative research does not make an attempt to either quantify or determine the extent of this diversity. (Kumar, 2005, p. 165)

I took into account Kumar's (2005) and Lazar's (2001) advice about choosing participants when techniques such as observation, interviews and focus groups were involved. For these reasons, I concentrated my study on one constituency, Modern Pottery Cooperative, where this study was carried out. However, representatives of the COPORWA organisation were also consulted for permission to conduct this research among its members. As explained in chapter 1, COPORWA is a national structure which advocates, promotes and defends civic, political, cultural, social and economic rights of all Rwandan Potters in order to facilitate their socio-economic integration in the Rwandan society (COPORWA, 2009).

5.4.1 Modern Pottery Cooperative

Modern Pottery Cooperative was described in chapter 1. In this chapter, I base my choice of this co-operative on five main reasons:

- It is located in a suburb of Kigali City; the city where I live.
- The majority of this cooperative‘s members cannot read and write (35 of the 45 members)
- All members of the Modern Pottery Cooperative are obliged to have writing and reading skills to manage the cooperative itself. Numeracy is also needed, so that they can participate fully in developmental activities.
- Above all, the new understanding of literacy defined in the new definition of Reflect (Phnuyal et al., 1998) would help Rwandan potters to read not only the word, but also the world (to become aware of problems which surrounded them and discuss together how to solve them by constructing their knowledge using local materials). The Reflect approach is a way of solving issues they encounter in their lives**.**
- As I presented in the statement of the problem in chapter 1, the Rwandan Potter Community‘s members constitute the group in Rwanda for whom this research has the greatest significance.

To collect information from these people in order to find answers to my research questions, I suggested that twenty adult volunteers, male and female aged from 18 to 50 years old from the Rwandan Potters be selected by the committee of the Modern Pottery Cooperative to participate in this research. I chose this sample because in qualitative research importance is given to the ability of informants to provide the information needed. Rwandan Potters responded positively to my request because I offered them a literacy programme for free and also they were requested by their Modern Pottery Cooperative’s representatives to be able to use literacy skills in their everyday activities**.**

5.4.2 Facilitators as agents of Reflect research

In order to facilitate Reflect and concurrently conduct action research, I needed assistance. In this study, I worked with three Reflect facilitators, one of whom had had experience in using Reflect and two remaining facilitators (or ‘animators’ in Hope & Timmel’s (1984)

terminology) who were familiar with the group of Rwandan Potters to be studied, and one research assistant in the research process. All were always mindful that AR is fundamentally participatory. As Hope and Timmel state:

> [The] Animator provides a framework for thinking (…). [The] Animator raises questions: why, how, who? Participants are active, describing, analysing, deciding and planning. People are actively involved in the social construction of knowledge. (Hope & Timmel, 1984, p. 19)

Before engaging people in action, I, as a researcher, discussed with them how to animate a group of participants in Reflect sessions by taking into account Hope and Timmel‘s advice above. While two of them were facilitating the sessions, another one was taking photos and video recording, while the fourth assisted where there was a need (taking field notes, assisting participants in group work, etc.). I, as the main researcher, made field notes, and played the role of participant observer.

5.4.3 Position of the researcher

The perspective or position of the researcher shapes all research - quantitative, qualitative, even laboratory science as stated below:

> A researcher's background and position will affect what they choose to investigate, the angle of investigation, the methods judged most adequate for this purpose, the findings considered most appropriate, and the framing and communication of conclusions. (Malterud, 2001, pp. 483-484)

According to what is said by Malterud above, the role of the researcher in qualitative research is often described as ‘the key instrument’. This is because all the research methods associated with qualitative research are heavily dependent on the researcher as interviewer, observer, facilitator, communicator, and interpreter of data. In other words, all data is filtered through the researcher. Marti (2008) describes the researcher’s position as both an outsider and insider. These are the positions of the action researcher during the whole process of AR. As the distance between the researcher and the participants is a basic issue in social research, Herr and Anderson (2005) give special attention to the positionality of the researcher. These authors base their arguments on the distinction between insider and outsider drawn by Cochran-Smith and Lytle (1993), and develop the following continuum with respect to different possibilities that can be identified in AR:

(1) Insider (the researcher studies and changes his or her own practice),
(2) Insider in collaboration with other insiders,
(3) Insider(s) in collaboration with outsider(s),
(4) Mutual collaboration (teams of insiders-outsiders),
(5) Outsider(s) in collaboration with insider(s),
(6) Outsider(s) studying insider(s).

A doctoral student, such as myself, who is writing a dissertation on AR, can adopt any or all of these positions. For instance, position (1) will require self-observation and self-distancing; position (2) will tackle tensions and conflicts arising from the power relations between the community members in which the project is being carried out, and the difficulties of tackling them while being part of that community; in positions (3), (4), and (5) it will be necessary to face the social relations in which different interests converge: the ones of the participants (with interests in producing change within their own practices, each one based on his or her own interests) and the ones of the external researchers (e.g. academics with specific incentives for publishing results). Case (6) describes 'conventional' research on AR projects or AR methods (Marti, 2008).

According to Kottak (2004), many researchers record their impressions in a personal diary, which is kept separate from more formal field notes. Later, this record of early impressions will help point out some of the most basic aspects of grounded realities. Such aspects constitute the basic patterns that Malinowski (1922/1961, p. 20, cited in Kottak, 2004, p. 325) calls "the imponderabilia of native life and of typical behaviour". Some cultural features are so fundamental that local people take them for granted. Then, the researcher should be an accurate observer, recorder, and reporter of what he/she sees in the field. The action researcher does not study people in laboratory cages. The experiments that psychologists do with pigeons, chickens, guinea pigs, and rats are very different from the procedures used by the action researcher. The action researcher does not systematically control subjects' rewards and punishment or their exposure to certain stimuli. In the present case, my subjects (i.e. Rwandan Potters) are not speechless animals but human beings. It is not part of action research to manipulate them and control their environments, or experimentally induce certain behaviours.

My first endeavours in the research field were to establish a good, personal contact and friendly working relationship with my subjects. During the study, I could not be a totally detached observer. I observed and participated on many occasions in the Potters' lives and sometimes offered ideas when problems arose. My common humanity with Rwandan Potter Community made participant observation inevitable and enabled me to comprehend the community. As a participant observer, I had to be in the group and I often became involved in activities in order to gain the confidence of participants and to get information from them. I could not succeed if participants did not see me as one of them**.**

However, I also had to put distance between myself and the Potters, to stand back, to adopt an external positionality in order to have an objective look at the studied group when gathering data and searching for valuable information.

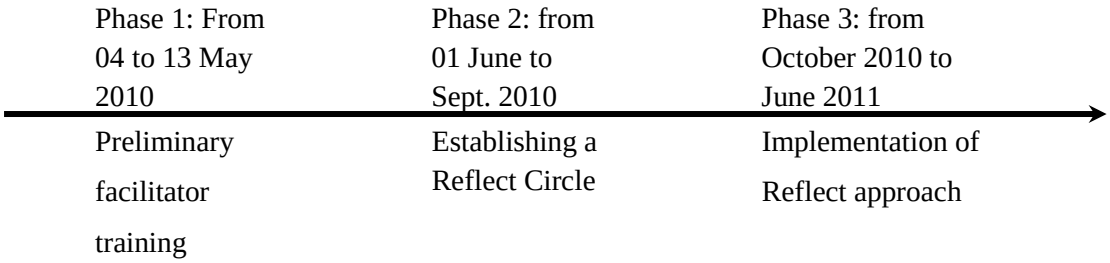
5.5 Research Methods and Techniques

According to Chilisa and Preece, (2005) in qualitative research, data-gathering methods are usually multiple. In this study, they involved techniques such as observation, interviews, focus groups or discussions, field-notes, photography and video-recordings. The use of PRA tools is an integral part of the success of the Reflect approach to literacy and the community was called upon to be involved in every stage of the PRA process (Chilisa & Preece, 2005). These techniques and tools for collecting data were used literally on the ground where data was also analyzed and interpreted.

5.5.1 Training for facilitators (10 days) from 04 to 13 May 2010

Four participants (three Rwandan Potters and one external to the group but living not far from the Rwandan Potter Community) were chosen to be trained as facilitators. In addition, two experienced facilitators were recommended to me by the education advisor in Action Aid Kigali. The topics discussed in facilitator training were the Reflect approach to literacy with emphasis on: History of Reflect; definition of Reflect; the use of Reflect; tools of Reflect: tools for illustration, and tools for analysing; PRA tools (maps, trees, calendars, story telling, and so on); preparing sessions based on discussions about using Reflect in literacy classes; and planning actions with participants.

Based on their acquired knowledge, the novice facilitators began leading sessions with one experienced facilitator in order to strengthen their capabilities. Collecting data from Rwandan Potters in the Modern Pottery Cooperative became possible thanks to the creation of a Reflect circle known as 'Ihuriro ry'Abunguranabitekerezo' (i.e. 'Groupthink'), the name given to it by its members. This new Reflect circle began its reading, writing and numeracy activities in Kinyarwanda and development projects concurrently in June 2010 and continued until June 2011 (one year, because no activities were scheduled for April 2011) according to the time line of important events:



5.5.2 Data collection methods

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2006), qualitative research uses interactive methods which use face-to-face techniques to collect data from people in their natural settings. In this study, data was gathered through teaching reading and writing Kinyarwanda and doing developmental activities using various methods. Woods (2006) enumerates the main methods employed in qualitative research, such as observation, interviews, and documentary analysis. Other authors, such as Kumar (2005), Henning, van Rensburg and Smit (2004), Brigance (1955), Collier and Collier (1986), and Attwood (2007) emphasize the above numeration and indicate other methods that are valuable in qualitative research. They evoke respectively interviews, participant observation, group discussion, video-camera, and photography. As Millar (2008) writes, in general it is best if action researchers do not rely on only one source of data or on any one type of data collection tool. Research is stronger if the information is collected in many ways. For each research question, it is useful to have a minimum of three sources of data as mentioned below.

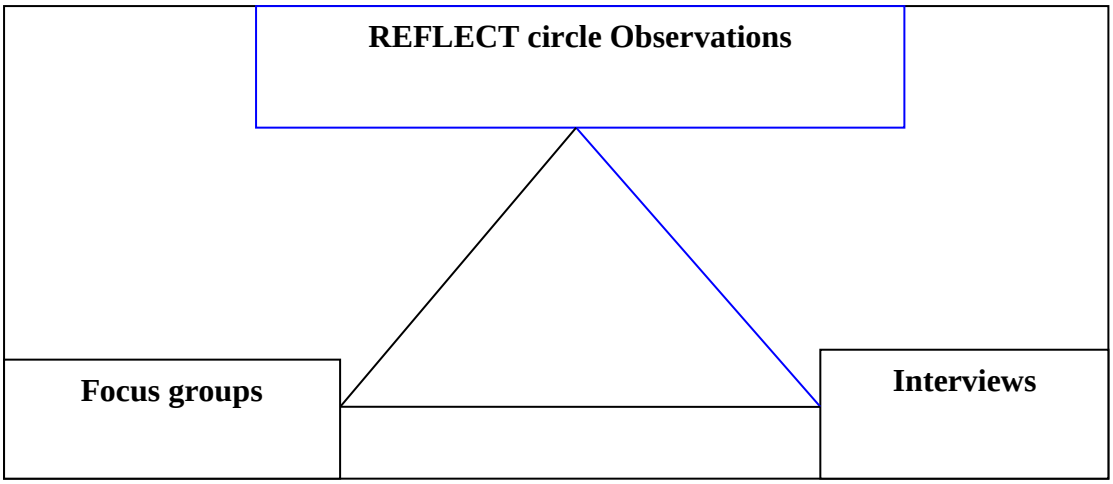


Figure 6: Main techniques of collecting data (My own model)

Interview

An interview is a technique used in qualitative research. In my study, I used unstructured interviews because, as Kumar explains:

> The strength of unstructured interviews is the almost complete freedom they provide in terms of content and structure. You are free to order these in whatever sequence you wish. You also have complete freedom in terms of the wording you use and the way you explain questions to your respondents. You may formulate questions and raise issues on the spur of the moment, depending upon what occurs to you in the context of the discussion. (Kumar, 2005, p. 123)

I used this type of interview during the entire process of learning in the Reflect circle when guiding discussions; and at the end of each phase in order to evaluate the progress and to find out if any problems had arisen. Interviews were conducted in Kinyarwanda in groups, or by talking to individuals. I took notes and my research assistant recorded information which came from unstructured interviews.

As I wanted to know in depth the reality of the situation and discover the subjects' meanings and understanding, through interviews, it was essential for me:

- to develop empathy with interviewees and win their confidence;
- to be unobtrusive, in order not to impose one's own influence on the interviewee (Woods, 2006, n.p.).

As mentioned above, the best technique for this is the unstructured interview. Here, the researcher has some general ideas about the topics of the interview, and may have an aide-mémoire of points that might arise in discussion for use as prompts, if necessary. But the hope is that those points should come up in the natural course of discussion as the interviewee talks. Care is therefore needed to avoid leading questions or suggesting outcomes, and special skill is called for in discovering what the interviewee really thinks. The researcher has to appear natural, not someone with a special role, but one who engages with interviewees on a person-to-person basis (Woods, 2006).

There are a number of tools used by facilitators in order to lead the group. These tools are chosen among PRA tools, such as story telling, tree graphic, maps, etc. They are prepared in order to help the researcher and facilitators to engage in 'active' listening, which shows the interviewee that close attention is being paid to what they say; and also tries to keep the interviewee focused on the subject, as unobtrusively as possible. Something of the researcher's self – perhaps involving some similar or contrasting experiences to those of the interviewee - is also put into the interaction in the interests of sustaining rapport and encouraging more discussion. In this sense, the unstructured interview is a process of constructing reality to which both parties contribute. A large amount of data is generated, and if possible, it is a great advantage if the interview can be tape-recorded for later transcription (Woods, 2006). The above mentioned tools are presented here below.

Participant observation

According to Woods (2006), in seeking to explore the natural scene, the qualitative researcher aims to be as unobtrusive as possible, so that neither the researcher presence nor the methods disturb the situation. This is why participant observation is one of the favoured approaches. Here, the researcher adopts a recognized role within the institution or the group. Researchers have become, amongst other things, teachers, gang-members, pupils, nudists, hippies, bread salesmen, and medical students. Therefore, in this study, the participant observer and researcher‘s roles were in the Rwandan Potter Community. The facilitators and the researcher took part in daily activities such as reading, writing, interactions, projects and other events taking place in this community.

I tried to be one with the Potters during the process of AR in order to know why they were illiterate, then together we analysed how to overcome this situation. Thus, participant observation gave access to important and confidential events in Rwandan Potters' lives. This mutuality also enabled me to record information by using a video-recording, photography and field notes. The use of these tools provided me with personal hands-on experience of the role of Rwandan Potters.

There were many occasions where I was able to observe major events in the lives of the Rwandan Potter Community. A camera and a notebook helped me to record such events. As Henning et al. (2004, p. 82) say "Observation may mean participating in the actions of the people in the research setting and getting to know their ways of doing well". This activity was made possible because participants were informed about being recorded (see Participation consent form in appendix B), taking photos and notes.

Focus groups

In the Freirean approach, discussions in small groups are valued. It is very important to use this tool in an adult literacy programme. As Brigance notes:

> True 'discussion' occurs when people meet to consider a common problem. It occurs when they exchange information and ideas, and then critically evaluate the information and ideas. (Brigance, 1955, p. 138)

In the Rwandan Potters' case, a group of three or five participants sat down in a circle, and talked about the problems they faced in their everyday life and searched for solutions. After discussions in small groups, they formed one large group (plenary) and shared their conclusions. The facilitators helped participants to summarize those conclusions and to take action. A tool which helped me to summarize data from Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle is presented below. The data collected by using these tools appear in chapters 6 & 7.

Data Collection Tool	Definition	Purpose
Interviews	The researcher asks one person to express his ideas and answer questions.	To get lots of information about one person's attitudes, beliefs, ideas.
Focus groups	The researcher asks a number of people (usually 4 to 6) for their ideas on a particular issue.	To get information about a group's attitudes, beliefs, and ideas on an issue.
Observations	The researcher watches a class, particular students, another teacher, or themselves and records what they see and hear.	To see how people act or behave in particular situations; to see how people demonstrate what they know or believe.

Table 3: Data collection by Millar (2008, p. 2)

In order to keep the collected information over a certain time or forever in the form of this thesis, I added other tools such as PRA tools, field notes, photography and video-recording. They are presented below.

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools

According to Kapoor (2002), the goal of the participatory appraisal (PA) process is to be as inclusive as possible in collecting views from across the community population. This usually involves several people acting as facilitators, rather than interaction with one researcher. Data collection techniques are designed to be useable amongst communities where literacy levels are low. PRA has been described as embracing a family of methods and approaches that involve group-based learning and planning, using different techniques to investigate an issue from several different angles. To do so, the Egerton University PRA Field Handbook (2000) guided me as an insider/outsider facilitator-researcher in the Rwandan context. It proposes eight steps for doing this research - these are site selection; preliminary site visits to establish contact and build relationships; public announcement of activities through traditional information dissemination meetings; data gathering; data collation and analysis; preparation of the community action plan; adoption of the plan and strategies for its implementation; and then ongoing participatory monitoring and evaluation. Some of these steps were accomplished in April and May 2010, the two months which were scheduled for the first three steps. The rest of the steps began in June 2010, monitoring was done twice a week, and evaluation after four months.

As Preece (2006) states, the aim is to gradually build up a knowledge base of the whole community, so I collected data through discussions, role play, interviews, photos, trees, maps, seasonal calendars, diagrams – exploring what people think, how they live their lives and specific cultural domains of those lives. By recording information from such a diverse range of techniques, and feeding back to community members they are challenged to consider perspectives other than their own in the effort to find common solutions. Many of the techniques are borrowed from qualitative social research, though the emphasis is on visual and group data, rather than individualised information. So Preece reinforces the relationship between theory and practice of PRA, particularly regarding its claims to give voice to marginalised people and contribute to development needs. The tools presented above were used to enable participants to engage in discussion about problems raised by Rwandan Potters and search for solutions together. The following is a list of PRA tools used in this study: a map of the Modern Pottery Cooperative, the problem tree, the pair wise ranking of the consequences of illiteracy, story telling, a diagram of a balanced meal, an agriculture calendar, historical profile of AIDS in Rwanda, daily routine diagram for women, daily routine diagram for both men and women, and a matrix of household decisions. The photos of these tools are presented and analysed in chapters 6 and 7; and a table presenting them and the context in which they were used appears in appendix D.

Field notes

While observing and interviewing participants in a Reflect circle, I took notes of what I saw and heard related to social behaviour. Collecting field notes was a basic way to record information. Darwin (1849, p. 598, in Chancellor and Van Wyhe with the assistance of Rookmaaker, Chancellor & Van Wyhe, 2009, n.p.) wrote in *Journal of Researchers* about making notes in the field: "Let the collector's motto be, 'Trust nothing to the memory'; for the memory becomes a fickle guardian when one interesting object is succeeded by another still more interesting." And in the *Admiralty Manual*, Darwin (1849, p. 163, in Chancellor and Van Wyhe, 2009) advised that a researcher ought to acquire the habit of writing very copious notes, not all for publication, but as a guide for himself. To show the importance of notebooks, a series of small notebooks that belonged to Charles Darwin are today preserved by English Heritage at Down House. Fourteen of them were the notebooks Darwin used on his shore excursions during the voyage of the *Beagle* (1831-1836) and edited by Chancellor and Van Wyhe with the assistance of Rookmaaker (Chancellor & Van Wyhe, 2009).

However, because the eyes and the ears of a researcher cannot capture every event, the following techniques supplemented field notes:

Video-recording and Photography

In my study, I used selectively a video-recording as an observation tool in order to register all essential events. I agree with Collier and Collier (1986, p. 5) who say that: "The critical eye of the camera is an essential tool in gathering accurate visual information because we moderns are often poor observers." However, the old adage that 'the camera cannot lie', should be critically examined. The camera is only as good as the person who uses it - and it is important to remember that observation is instrumentally assisted.

Photography can be used effectively in a number of ways to collect data (Attwood, 2007). I used a video-camera and took important photos during the training session when participants used PRA tools. The video-recording helped in group discussion. Participants could remember what happened in the poster play, making the analysis easier. Photos appear in my thesis in order to keep alive the main events in the Rwandan Potters Community's Reflect circle.

5.5.3 Analysing and interpreting the data

AR is a process which engages the full participation of participants in common actions when solving an encountered issue. The researcher and facilitators are there for guidance only. While analysing data, I followed Vella's (1995, p. 4) Seven Design Steps based on the classic questions, "who, why, when, where, what, what for, and how". These questions encouraged both the researcher and participants to think more deeply and critically about the data they collected, and to look for explanations, relationships, comparisons and predictions. Taylor's four aspects for analyzing and interpreting data supplemented my stated intention to analyze and interpret data according to the research questions (Taylor, 1999). These are:

- Reading data - data is read or closely scrutinized in order to recall the events and experiences that they represent. What was done? What was said? What really happened?
- Selecting data - important factors are separated from unimportant ones, similar factors are grouped; complex details are sorted and simplified.

- Presenting the data - the selected data is presented in a form that is easy to take in at a glance.
- Interpretating data and drawing conclusions - relationships are explained and a practical model constructed to fit the situation which has been researched.

This procedure is used in chapters 6 and 7 when presenting and analysing data, followed by chapter 8 which discusses the research results.

5.6 Validity, Reliability and Generalisability

Qualitative researchers strive for 'understanding' what comes from visiting people in their setting by spending extensive time in the field, and probing to obtain detailed meanings (Creswell, 2007). Some researchers ask: "Did we get it?" (Stake, 1995, p. 107) or "Did we publish a 'wrong' or inaccurate account?" (Thomas, 1993, p. 39). This interrogation invites me to think about validation in qualitative research. Two other interrelated questions asked by Creswell (2007, p. 201) complete those of Stake and Thomas: "Is the account valid, and by whose standards?" "How do we evaluate the quality of qualitative research?" To answer these questions, qualitative perspectives and procedures on validation are discussed carefully. To establish the 'trustworthiness' of a study, Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 30) use terms, such as 'credibility', 'authenticity', 'transferability', 'dependability', and 'confirmability', terms equivalent for 'internal validation'; 'external validation', 'reliability' and 'objectivity'. To operationalize these new terms the above authors

> … propose techniques such as prolonged engagement in the field and the triangulation of data of sources, methods, and investigators to establish credibility. To make sure that the findings are transferable between the researcher and those being studied, thick description is necessary. Rather than reliability, one seeks dependability that the results will be subject to change and instability. The naturalistic researcher looks for confirmability rather than objectivity in establishing the value of the data. Both dependability and confirmability are established through an auditing of the research process. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 30)

As qualitative researcher, my focus is on internal validity because in qualitative research, it is very difficult to generalize findings to settings not studied (Firestone, 1993). This worry dates from a long time ago. The study of Miles and Huberman (2002, pp. 171-174) shows how the question of generalizability in qualitative research is difficult to respond to even today. According to Campbell and Stanley (1963), external validity asks the question of

generalizability: To what populations, settings, treatment variables, and measurement variables are applicable? (Miles & Huberman, 2002, p. 171). The notion of external validity interests quantitative researchers.

Golafshani (2003) says that some qualitative researchers have argued that the term validity is not applicable to qualitative research. The methodological literature on qualitative research has paid attention to this issue. For example, in their work about qualitative research, Doubert (1982), Kirk and Miller (1986) and Berg (1989) do not mention the issue of external validity. The major factor contributing to the disregard of the issue of generalizability in the qualitative methodological literature appears to be a widely shared view that it is unimportant, unachievable, or both (Miles & Huberman, 2002). Many qualitative researchers actively reject generalizablity as a goal.

The goal is not to produce a standardized set of results that any other careful researcher in the same situation or studying the same issue would have produced. Qualitative researchers have to question seriously the internal validity (reliability) of their work if other researchers reading their field notes feel that the evidence does not support the way in which they have depicted the situation. However, they do not expect other researchers in a similar or even the same situation to replicate their findings in the sense of independently coming up with a precisely similar conceptualisation (Miles & Huberman, 2002).

In sum, "Validity is not a commodity that can be purchased with techniques" (Brinberg & McGrath, 1985, p. 13). Instead, it depends on the relationship of your conclusions to the real world, and there are no methods that can assure you that you have adequately grasped those aspects of the world that you are studying. Validity is a goal rather than a product, it is never something that can be proven or taken for granted. Validity is also relative; it has to be assessed in relation to the purposes and circumstances of the research rather than being a context-independent property of methods or conclusions. Finally, validity threats are made implausible by evidence, not methods; methods are only a way of getting evidence that can help you rule out these threats (Maxwell, 1996). Maxwell (2005) adds that a lack of attention to validity threats is a common reason for the rejection of research proposals. Making validity an explicit component of a design can help researchers to address this problem.

Based on the above writers, I used several methods of collecting and analysing the data (interviews, participant observation, field notes, photograph and video-recordings, group

discussion) in order to have rich evidence about the problem studied. Denscombe (1998, p. 85) explains that: "the multi-method approach allows findings to be corroborated or questioned by comparing data produced by different methods." Attwood (2007) adds that using different methods enables one to collect different kinds of data that provide different perspectives on a topic. The same idea is produced by Mathie, Camozzi (2005) who say that triangulation implies the use of different research strategies to examine the same research question in order to verify findings or to identify biases.

Triangulation is important for validating and improving confidence in research findings. To do so, two of the facilitators helped me to collect data by writing notes and video-recording events they saw or heard. These people were chosen for their experience in the Reflect approach and their skills in psychopedagogy for exploring better people's motivations, behaviours, desires and needs, and leading them to literacy development and empowerment. In this study, the main techniques chosen for collecting data responded to the principle of triangulation.

According to Maxwell (1996), internal generalizability is a key issue of qualitative case studies. He continues by saying that internal generalizability refers to the generalizability of a conclusion within the setting or group studied, Rwandan Potters grouped in Modern Pottery Cooperative in this study.

Following this description by many qualitative researchers, I agree that the issue of external generalizability does not concern qualitative researchers. I argue that what we observe and what we hear comes from what our subjects live and feel in their lives. A qualitative researcher in general, and a qualitative action researcher in particular, cannot deduce an external meaning which can be reproducible within the same study to other subjects, saying that they have the same characteristics. Two groups of people cannot have the same identity. In qualitative action research, any group studied is unique and we cannot transfer what we found in it to other groups of people. Therefore, for this study, the findings from Rwandan Potter Community (a community which experiences illiteracy, marginalization and discrimination) cannot be generalized to another group of people. The results of this study are the fruit of their discussions related to what they live and experience every day. They are their own results, generated by them. Consequently they will be generalised only on the Rwandan Potter Community. However Reflect is an approach which can help people to explain their experiences and feelings. It is also an approach which can help every researcher

who wants to study a problem encountered by any category of people, but especially the poor and underprivileged in their society.

5.7 Ethical issues associated with Action Research (AR)

Hancock and Algozzine (2006, p. 40) stipulate that "the researcher must adhere to legal and ethical requirements, for all research involving people. Interviewees should not be deceived and are protected from any form of mental, physical or emotional injury."

I followed these authors' advice when I conducted my study with Rwandan Potters. I made them aware of my role in this research. Before collecting information, I had to consider the relevance and the usefulness of the research I was undertaking and to convince Rwandan Potters about this (Kumar, 2005). To do so, I explained my aims and asked for permission from the COPORWA organisation and the Modern Pottery Cooperative before interacting with my subjects. (See Appendix A – Permission to Conduct Research.) I guaranteed them confidentiality, especially when we discussed critical issues or sensitive problems. I also assured them that all information given would be approved by them, COPORWA and Modern Pottery Cooperative representatives (i.e. persons in charge of the organisation which represents the Rwandan Potters Community), my supervisor and me, for academic interests. (See Appendix B – Ethics Clearance, and Appendix C – Participant Consent Form.)

5.8 Strengths and limitations of the Action Research (AR) design

As indicated in the previous pages, the research design appropriate to my study is AR. It has shown its strengths because it has enabled people who were considered marginal to have a voice and share the problems they face in their everyday life and search together for solutions. Schön (1982) declares that being involved collectively in dialogue on issues related to self-selected problems promotes reflection-in-action. Little (1990) completes Schön's idea by saying that collaborative action research offers a systematic way for groups of individuals to explore issues and to determine potential resolutions through shared inquiry, reflection, and dialogue. Preece (2006) maintains that collaboration and participation have become an ethical issue in their own right, particularly for the poor and marginalised:

> In order for pro-poor development to become a reality, poor people themselves must be not only involved as respondents, but also have access to the information generated, a role in its analysis and in identifying the practical implications for change. (Chambers & Mayoux, 2005, p. 7)

Thus, AR helps participants to use their ideas and reflect on what to do in order to improve their living conditions and to testify that they are empowered, and consequently that there is a change in their lives.

Concerning the limitations of AR, the three main points are revealing:

- Firstly, AR is an approach which requires the researcher to have well-developed skills for animation and facilitation. That is why Attwood (2007) says that AR is a demanding approach in terms of time and commitment.
- Secondly, a researcher on her own is unable to control all the factors which can affect the research and its effects. The researcher has to locate and develop a team with which he/she can interact. Sometimes the problem of paying an incentive arises.
- Thirdly, the results cannot be generalised to a large group, only to the group studied.

This statement reveals again that AR is a demanding approach in terms of the responsibilities of each party involved in this process.

5.9 Conclusion

The research design and methods were constructed using a qualitative research framework. The process of collecting, analysing, and interpreting data was guided by Action Research (AR) because of its power to identify and to handle problems encountered by participants in a Reflect circle. AR had the potential to enable them to have a voice in their cooperative and to improve their relationship. The process of AR has also helped Rwandan Potters to be fully to improve practice for the future.

By using an AR approach, I have marked out the way for reaching the study‘s objectives and providing answers to the research questions (see chapters 6, 7 and 8 on presenting, analysing and interpreting data, and reaching conclusions).

CHAPTER 6: ESTABLISHING A REFLECT CIRCLE IN GATABA VILLAGE (APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2010)

Go to the people
Live with them
Learn from them
Love them
Start with what they know
Build with what they have
When the work is done
The task is accomplished
The people say:
'We have done these ourselves'. (Lao Tzu, Chinese philosopher of the sixth century BC)

6.1 Introduction

Over a period of one year, i.e. from April 2010 to May 2011, the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle was established with Rwandan Potters living in Urukundo Village, grouped in the Modern Pottery Cooperative in Gataba Village. This chapter presents in-depth how the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle was created and how its members adopted the Reflect approach to literacy to improve their living conditions. By using the Reflect approach, educational needs were identified and met. Furthermore, power was gained, or recovered and sustained. In this trial phase, the stereotypes that non-literate people are likely to be ignorant, stupid, superstitious and do not have ability to plan (Kanyesigye, 1998) were examined within the context of the implementation of the Reflect approach.

The chapter begins by explaining in chronological order the process of creating the Reflect circle. The establishment of the Reflect circle is a good starting point for engaging participants in discussions around issues in order to search for solutions by themselves. It is well known that in many cultures, especially in developing countries, poor people are characterized by apathy, fatalism and silence (Alissi & Mergins, 1997; Freire & Macedo, 1987). When they encounter serious problems, they do not make efforts to find a way of solving them. Instead, they assert that they are incapable, and do not take the initiative. This situation has led researchers, especially those in adult education, to attempt to deal with this issue. New methods have emerged, and my focus is on the Reflect approach. The main points which are discussed in this chapter refer to reading, writing and calculation skills. These

skills are used in literacy and development activities, such as creating small projects intended to solve problems that participants encounter in everyday life.

The data presented and analysed below was gathered using PRA tools. Each tool enables me to examine the coherence between theories discussed in the literature review which underpins this study, and the practice on the ground. It shows how participants made use of the Reflect approach, and the knowledge they gained. Therefore, in response to the theories and literature review described in the previous chapters, this chapter presents and analyses data collected on the ground.

6.2 Establishment of Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle

I established the Reflect circle in Gataba village located in a suburb of Kigali City in April-May 2010. I began by approaching representatives of the Rwandan Potters Community (COPORWA) who introduced me to members of the Rwandan Potters. A discussion with them allowed me to gain entry into the Modern Pottery Cooperative and to get consent to conduct research in their Cooperative. They all supported this initiative, but even at this stage, I started to face challenges related to their demands for payment after each Reflect session. This problem led me to reflect on what to do. Before establishing a Reflect circle, my first contribution to this community was to organize a workshop to clarify how Reflect works on the ground. This workshop enabled the Rwandan Potters to change their mind-set and some of them agreed to collaborate as facilitators in the Reflect sessions. These facilitators underwent training to provide them with the skills required for carrying out their new responsibilities.

6.2.1 Capacity building: Preparation for Action Research (AR)

As described in chapter 5, the research design and methods, using Reflect implies using AR which is a research approach designed for people living in the same area, sharing the same culture and wanting to solve together their everyday problems. Using this approach led the researcher to begin by establishing a relationship with the people, knowing their culture and their behaviour. The best way to do this was to live with them for a period of time (which was one year for this study, i.e. from June 2010 to May 2011) and become one with them.

However, a researcher cannot do AR alone; he/she needs help from people participating in the research. To overcome this challenge, it was necessary to train some of the Modern Pottery Cooperative‘s members and equip them with skills to guide their fellows in Reflect matters. Before looking at how the Reflect approach was piloted with the Rwandan Potter Community, let us briefly look at the Modern Pottery Cooperative.

According to the members of the Modern Pottery Cooperative gathered in the Reflect ‘Groupthink’ Circle, their cooperative was created in 2008 with 48 members. It is based in Kibaza Cell, Kacyiru Sector, Gasabo District, in Kigali City. In 2012, the Modern Pottery Cooperative had 45 members living in the same area (Urukundo village), but working in Gataba village (not far from Urukundo village) where their cooperative was based. Their main objective was to promote earthenware craft products in Rwanda. To do so, the Rwandan Potters needed to improve their literacy skills. That is why four literate persons were chosen by their fellows to be trained in Reflect to enable them to assist the participants in the Reflect circle and to handle issues which might arise during the AR process.

The training session was conducted by two experienced Reflect facilitators from outside the Rwandan Potter Community, as mentioned in chapter 5. Trainees were chosen during the meeting held at the Modern Cooperative’s office. They were chosen by their colleagues not only because they were able to read and write well in their mother tongue, but also because they were appreciated due to their competence in leading meetings. They were called ‘abakangurambaga’ *(*community animators) and the way they do their work is appreciated by the community. One of the participants expressed such appreciation in the following words:

> *Aba bagenzi bacu batugeza kuri byinshi kuko no mu mududugudu wacu ni abizerwa. Kandi n" iyo turi mu manama kuri koperative, mbona bazi gutega amatwi ku bibazo tuvuga ukabona bashishikajwe n"uko twafata imyanzuro yatuma dutera imbere twese hamwe. Iyo kandi henda kuba guhangana, nibo bafata iya mbere mu guhosha amahane amazi atararenga inkombe kuko n"ubundi bamenyereye gukorana neza n"abaturage. Nibwira ko bazatugeza ku bikorwa bifatika. Icyo biyemeje bagikora neza badasiba. Njye mbona bamenya kuyobora”*
> (Our colleagues are committed to our advancement as a whole group and they are respected. They have shown that they are capable to listen to us and help us to achieve our goals. We appreciate how they help us take decisions after discussions on issue in our cooperative meetings. They are the first to settle conflicts when they are about to arise, and they are used to collaborating with people. They carry out and achieve what they promise. I think they should be the good leaders.) (Field notes, May 2010)

Before the training, the trainees expected to gain knowledge and skills about the Reflect approach so as to be able to help the Rwandan Potters to solve problems they faced in their cooperative in general and in their families in particular.

Through this session, the trainees acquired skills to lead a group of people to discuss the issues they faced in their everyday life. They reached understanding of the necessity to involve people in solving their problems by themselves. Help was given when needed. Tools which enabled people to examine the root cause of their problems and their feelings were explained and experienced during the training. Skills gained included, as stated by Hope and Timmel (1984), skills for building a new community where it is possible to:

- improve communication;
- learn to listen and to express insights;
- diagnose needs together;
- analyse the causes of problems (including exclusion of people because of gender, race, tribe or class);
- plan and act together in teams, organisations and movements.

Having undergone the training, the new facilitators worked together to find ways to encourage their fellows to participate fully in the Reflect approach. Thereafter, I met a group of twenty volunteers among the Rwandan Potters who constitute my target group.

6.2.2 The establishment of the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle

The first Reflect circle activity started with a short presentation to the group of twenty. During the cooperative meetings held in April and May 2010, participants were informed about my activities with the Modern Pottery Cooperative. In addition, emphasis was placed on the importance of literacy in career development for effective management of their cooperative. There was a need for literacy and numeracy because the majority of Modern Pottery Cooperative members could not read, write or calculate. They were unable to apply these skills in their daily life, and lacked an understanding of the way they should develop their community (see chapter 1). The establishment of the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle took place on June 1st, 2010 with twenty volunteers among the Rwandan Potters, three facilitators, one photographer, and one researcher at Gataba village. A discussion was led by facilitators

about problems that Rwandan Potters face in their lives. The facilitators tried to create a friendly climate with the Rwandan Potters. To achieve that, they were humble and talked about matters related to the Potters' life, culture, and history. Participants gained self-confidence and learned how to contribute freely, through their experience, to a common search for solutions to the problems they face in their lives.

Through the discussion, they realized that they were called to work together as a team, as the saying goes: *Nta mugabo umwe* "No man is an island"; *Umutwe umwe ntiwigira inama wifasha gusara* "Two heads are better than one"; *l''union fait la force* "Together we stand". They suggested one name: 'Groupthink', which is *Abunguranabitekerezo* in their mother tongue. They also promised to work together towards a common goal. The photograph below shows the 'Groupthink' members who attended the first Reflect session.



Photograph 2: Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle (June 2010)

In the table below, Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle members are presented according to their gender and role. They were twenty participants and five facilitators, including the researcher.

	Participants			Facilitators and researcher		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Reflect 'Groupthink' circle	17	3	20	3	2	5

Table 4: Participants and facilitators in Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle by June 2010

The Reflect ‘Groupthink’ Circle comprised twenty participants and was managed by a committee of five facilitators, including the researcher. Members met twice a week and every meeting lasted at least two hours.

6.3 An overview of the use of the Reflect approach

The launch of the Reflect circle took place in Gataba village on 1st June 2010. During the period June 2010 to May 2011, the research focused on the main problems of Rwandan Potters who could not read and write, and for whom future prospects were far from bright.

During this period, all activities followed an AR process. The AR process was composed of cycles which imply a series of actions such as discussion of a particular issue, planning activities to address that issue, doing the activities, and observing/evaluating the actions. The issues discussed and actions planned and carried out to address the issues raised were summarized at the end of each AR cycle. One AR cycle took four months (from June to September 2010; from October 2010 to January 2011; and from February to May 2011) and there were no Reflect activities in April 2011. Therefore, the AR process documented in this thesis followed three cycles for an entire year, and three evaluations. I was convinced that after these three cycles I could draw conclusions about the use of the Reflect approach with Rwandan Potters.

6.3.1 Discovering the research terrain and what stands behind it

Facilitators used PRA tools (see Appendix D – Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools used in the study) to start discussions aimed at finding the root causes of the problems encountered by the Rwandan Potters. They first of all asked the participants to draw a map to help them become aware of issues in their cooperative that needed particular attention. Sometimes people ignore things around them while those things can be useful in their lives. The photograph below shows the map of Gataba village where the Modern Pottery Cooperative (MPC) is based. It also shows what resources the Modern Pottery Cooperative possesses and what it lacks in terms of infrastructures and developmental activities.



Photograph 3: A map of the Modern Pottery Cooperative (June 2010)

The map in the above picture gave participants in the Reflect circle an opportunity to know their cooperative better. They have an office with water and electricity, a garden, clay and a field. The map shows that they use clay for making pots, and they have a plot of land which is not cultivated. They also realized that they did not have a literacy class although the majority of the cooperative members did not know how to read and write.

This reflection led participants to think about what they could do to solve the problems raised. They realized that they could not solve all of them at the same time. However, they found that knowing how to read, write and calculate is nowadays indispensable. These skills are needed in their everyday work because they sell pots to the Rwandan public. They declared that the lack of these skills affected their living conditions in general and the management of their cooperative in particular. With the help of facilitators, they planned to mount a literacy class, but above all they decided to begin to learn reading, writing and arithmetic.

6.3.2 The starting point towards solving the problem of illiteracy

The best way of tackling a problem is to recognize that the problem exists and ascertain whether it could damage the life of a person or a whole community. This awareness is an ambition which drives people to search for solutions to their problem.

To identify the extent of the problem of illiteracy raised by the Rwandan Potters, the facilitators used a PRA tool called tree to analyze the root causes and consequences of the problems.



Photograph 4: The problem tree (June 2010)

The major root causes (from left to right) of illiteracy among the Rwandan Potter Community were the following:

- Historically, Rwandan Potters were characterised by endemic poverty (symbolized by a banknote of five hundred Rwandan francs (500 Rwf) or 0.83 US dollar). Parents could not afford to send their children to schools. It was impossible to buy uniforms and school materials for their children.
- Schools were far away (symbolized by a piece of brick).
- Authorities did not sensitize people to attend schools (this situation is symbolized by an exercise book).
- Historically, Rwandan Potters were considered to be people of fourth world. This root cause contributed to the poor living conditions which have characterised these people from immemorial time (symbolized by a container with a straw inside: Rwandan Potters were marginalized historically and have preferred to spend their time drinking beer).
- Among children who stopped attending schools, girls were most affected. This problem was common for girls in other communities in Africa in general and in Rwanda in particular (symbolized by a woman holding a craft).
- A child was shown beating another child belonging to the Rwandan Potter Community. This implies the harassment, mistreatment and discrimination that Rwandan Potters have experienced. Their children were forced to abandon or to drop out of school.

Alongside these main root causes of the problem of illiteracy among the Rwandan Potters Community in general and Modern Pottery Cooperative members in particular, participants described the trunk which symbolized the extent of the problem of illiteracy.

- There is no literacy class in the community;
- About 78% of Modern Pottery Cooperative‘s members cannot read and write.

Thus, a big trunk which symbolizes the extent of Rwandan Potters’ problem of illiteracy.

The branches (from right to left) represent the consequences of illiteracy and examples given by participants are many. The main ones are the following:

- Not being informed about schools (symbolised by a broken piece of paper)
- Unemployment and impossibility to create jobs (symbolized by an empty container of paint, a small bottle of water, a tool for painting);
- Insufficient spatial-temporal notions and difficulty to conceptualise appropriate time and space (symbolized by a post with a STOP sign);
- Inability to read and write constitutes an obstacle to getting information about your surroundings and the world or to keep secrets (symbolized by broken papers);
- Difficulty in intervening in meetings and making decisions (symbolized by an empty exercise book);
- Poor nutrition among children (symbolized by a child who is lying on the soil);
- Difficulty in preparing a balanced meal (symbolized by leaves of potato plant);
- Difficulty in applying family planning, resulting in street children (symbolized by many children sitting together);
- Difficulty in paying health insurance, which prompts the Rwandan Potters to practice traditional medicine (symbolized by an empty pen with a piece of wood inside).

The problem tree highlights the root causes of illiteracy among the Rwandan Potters. The Rwandan Potters withdrew from schools for a long time for the following main reasons: many dropped out of schools early and others did not attend schools at all because of poverty (they did not have fees, clothes and materials). Also, the long distance from homes to schools; discrimination and teacher/peer harassment (sarcastic comments made by their teachers and peers, and beatings by children of other ethnic groups) dissuaded them from attending school**.** That is why the picture of a tree with a big trunk represents a big percentage of Rwandan Potters who cannot read and write. The consequences are serious.

The problem tree shows that Rwandan Potters were historically discriminated against and marginalized in Rwandan society. One can imagine their living conditions, and realize that the problem of illiteracy constitutes the core of their situation. Seeing the seriousness of the problems raised, participants committed themselves to reflect together on how to solve them. With the help of their facilitators, participants in the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle understood the true extent of the problem of illiteracy. While planning their response, they realized that the first action was to set up a literacy class because there was not any, as indicated in the root causes of the problem tree. They began to plan activities and materials to set up a literacy class.

6.3.3 Literacy class, the first step to tackle the illiteracy problem

The literacy class was set up because the Rwandan Potters were interested in reading, writing and calculation activities. They hoped that these activities might encourage them to improve their living conditions. As the class was held outdoors, participants initially planned to construct a literacy classroom. They were aware of this need not only for reading, writing and calculation activities, but also and especially for solving problems they faced in everyday life. It was to be a space for challenging participants, discussing, solving problems together, and encouraging mental growth. Then they got involved in the construction of their literacy class and found a benefactor who could intervene where they were unable to.

The construction of literacy class (See Appendix E)

Action	Period	People involved in the action	Materials	Contributors
Carrying out excavation work	3- 14 June 2010	25 members of Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle	Picks , shovels, wheelbarrows	Modern Pottery Cooperative
Fixing pillars	17-20 June 2010	2 builders and 4 assistant builders from Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle	Cement, sand, stones, pillars, wires	Modern Pottery Cooperative
Putting up the roof structure	24 June 2010	2 builders and 4 assistant builders from Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle	Pillars, wires	Modern Pottery Cooperative
Roofing	25 June 2010	2 builders and 4 assistant builders from Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle	Sheet metal and nails	Researcher
Paving	26-27 June 2010	2 builders and 4 assistant builders from Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle	Cement, sand, stones	Modern Pottery Cooperative
Cement the floor	28 June 2010	2 builders and 4 assistant builders from Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle	Cement, sand	Modern Pottery Cooperative

Table 5: Planning of Reflect 'Groupthink' circle literacy class

The construction of the literacy class was planned for June 2010. In the meantime, discussions were held in the open air. To get the materials needed for building a literacy class, two participants were chosen to approach their cooperative representatives and other benefactors for funds and materials, especially sheet metal, pillars, cement, sand, stones, wires and nails. The Modern Pottery Cooperative offered cement, pillars, nails and a builder while participants in the Reflect circle offered their labour. The researcher provided 28 sheets of roofing zinc. The following pictures show the Rwandan Potters' new literacy classroom and two parts of backyard as prepared by Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle.

a) b)



Photograph 5: Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle (a) literacy class and (b) its surroundings (July 2010)

The Rwandan Potter Community's literacy class is situated in front of the Modern Pottery Cooperative's office. Its roof is made of sheet metal laid on metal pillars, and it does not have walls.

Launching the literacy class

The period between June 2010 and May 2011 was dedicated to introducing the Reflect approach to educate the Rwandan Potters. As mentioned above, the crucial problem under investigation in this study is that the majority of the Rwandan Potters cannot read and write. The first action was to tackle this problem in order to get a starting point for solving other problems they faced in their lives. The literacy class was launched in July 2010 and has been working ever since. The Potters wanted to read and write in their mother tongue. Helped by facilitators, the Potters explained their desire to begin this action without payment (as would

be in their culture when asked to do things). For example, when a training programme was proposed to them, some asked how much money they would earn. One participant argued that:

> *Igihe kirageze ngo duhindure imyumvire. Ntabwo tuzahora tutitabira amahugurwa yatugirira akamaro, ngo dusabe ibihembo kandi tugiriwe ubuntu bwo kwiga ntacyodutanze. Tugom ba rero kumva ko ari twe gahunda batuzaniye ari twe zizagirira akamaro. Nta n"ubwo twahora tubona udufasha uko tugize ikibazo. Iyi gahunda rero tuyitabire tuzarebe niba yazadufasha kwikemurira ibibazo nk"uko twabyumvise.*
> (The time has come to change our understanding in terms of solving our problems to improve our living conditions. We cannot always ask for money to people who want to implement a programme which is beneficial to us. This programme is for equipping us with skills that are needed to work efficiently in our cooperative and community; let us participate actively). (Field notes, July 2010)

They were accustomed to wait for aid from outside to solve their problems. Another participant explained that they had the potential to do things without external intervention because it was not easy to get what they needed at the right time:

> *Duhora dutegereza ko hari uwadufasha, nyamara tumenye ko natwe hari ibyo twakwikemurira kuko n"ubundi igihe cyose duhuye n"icyibazo si ko tubona udufasha. Guhora dutegereza bituma tuguma mu bukene buhoraho. Igihe cyo gutekereza icyo twakora kirageze tukikemurira ibibazo.*
> (We are always waiting for help, but today we know that we have power to solve our problems by ourselves, because we cannot find help every time we get a problem. Waiting for help from outside is not a good culture because it causes us to remain in endemic poverty. The time has come to take care of our destiny.) (Field notes, July 2010)

This statement can be understood through the Rwandan proverb '*Akimuhana kaza imvura Ihise*' which means that 'Aid from outside arrives late when the worst has happened'. This is a true reflection of the situation in which the Rwandan Potters were living in June 2010. They had few customers for their products and they experienced hunger in their families. Although it was a bad period for them to attend a literacy class, it was a good period for the facilitators to explain and emphasize the necessity and the benefits of literacy and the Reflect approach. In this regard, the facilitators tried to help participants to gain the necessary skills, with the hope that this new approach to literacy could change the potters' way of confronting life, problems and improving their living conditions.

6.3.4 The first step for gaining knowledge and skills (June-September 2010)

During this period, participants put their efforts into acquiring reading, writing and arithmetic skills. This period was sufficient for the majority of participants to be able to read and write words and short sentences with all consonants and double consonants in their mother tongue. In the next session, I explore how participants responded to the Reflect approach, how they used the approach and what they gained.

Achievements

- **Reading, writing and calculation as key skills for embracing the developed world**

The Rwandan Potters are generally characterized as 'underdeveloped'. They are considered by their compatriots as people who belong to another world. As they have been historically marginalized, the majority cannot read and write. Some of them have found it almost impossible to acquire reading and writing skills, while others want to try their best. All participants agreed that planning for reading, writing and numeracy sessions was the best way to tackle the problem of illiteracy in their community.

Action	Period	People involved in the action
Reading, writing and calculation	From June 2010 to May 2011	− Twenty Rwandan Potters − Three facilitators − One photographer − One researcher − Modern Pottery Cooperative's representatives (in some cases)

Table 6: Planning for reading, writing and calculation

Therefore, Reflect was used to help participants to gain literacy and self-confidence. Thereafter they could find a place in a literate world and begin taking the journey to improve their living conditions. The Reflect approach was supported by PRA tools, including techniques, such as card games, small group work and individual work with the help of facilitators in order to push the members of the Reflect circle to read and write as quickly as possible. In the beginning, 'a card game' was used often as it has revealed its power to motivate participants. In the card game, participants used cards to discover syllables and construct words. This exercise was done individually and in groups as well. Potters were very

active and quickly constructed words and short sentences. The following photographs (6, 7, and 8) are revealing.



Photograph 6: Participants in group work (June 2010)

This photograph shows one group in which participants used cards to construct syllables and form words and sentences. It was an exciting exercise. Everybody wanted to show the knowledge she/he had acquired, and this skill enabled them to decipher Kinyarwanda syllables. Words and sentences built in groups were presented on the floor, and then written on the chalkboard.

The following picture shows a woman Potter reading words and sentences written on the chalkboard. Participants read in the group, but each had an opportunity to practice in front of the class. After one month, the woman shown in the picture below had gained the capability to read a short text.



Photograph 7: Reading activities (July 2010)

In parallel with the progress made by participants in reading, they also learnt how to write. Photograph 8 shows how proud participants were to write on their own. The facilitators followed and monitored what was done in the Reflect Circle.



Photograph 8: Writing activities in the adult literacy class

During the first four months, the Rwandan Potters made tremendous progress in reading and writing mother tongue vowels, consonants and double consonants. They were able to read and write different words belonging to the categories of those consonants, as well as the related sentences (see table 13 in chapter 7 which summarises all achievements in reading and writing in mother tongue). They also increased their numeracy and resolved some mathematical problems as illustrated in photograph 11 below.

Activities were not done by chance: rather they followed the four steps of the AR process as described in chapter 5 - these are reflection, planning, action and observation. Reflection was done by discussing issues raised by the participants in the Circle. For example the first discussion was about the problem a person encounters when she/he cannot read, write or calculate. To solve this problem, the participants and the facilitators planned reading and writing sessions and began to put these actions into practice. Observation was done throughout the process, particularly at the end of each period, and it was done with all the stakeholders. The key words for reading and writing were chosen by participants in the adult literacy class.

Those key words and/or names in Kinyanrwanda contain 5 different vowels (a, e, i, o, u) and 19 consonants (b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, r, s, t, v, w, y, z) . They were used during discussion around an issue raised by the participants. For example the first three words

‘*gusoma*’ (to read), ‘*kwandika*’ (to write) and ‘*kubara’* (to calculate) were raised when talking around the problem of illiteracy. After discussing the extent of this problem, participants planned actions to tackle the problem. Their desire was to start reading, writing and calculation immediately. Then Reflect sessions were prepared and put into practice. The practice led to a table containing a list of new words and sentences with a given syllable. For example the word ‘*gusoma*’ contains three syllables ‘gu’ ‘so’ ‘ma’. When participants learned a syllable, they discovered different words and sentences including that syllable. This exercise was facilitated by a card game (see photograph 6 above).

At the end of each session, they assessed their achievements through exercises on the chalkboard or in exercise books, and they made observations or gave feedback. These exercises were done individually or in small groups as photographs 6, 7 and 8 (above) show.

Another interesting reading exercise is shown in photograph 9 below in which participants in small groups helped each other to read aloud. This exercise was done three months after learning all the syllables in Kinyarwanda. A short text constructed by participants during homework and summarised together was read (see Appendix F).



Photograph 9: Reading activity in the group after learning all the consonants

The photograph above reveals participants’ interest in the reading activity. They discovered that they could empower themselves through learning.

As they were learning to read and write, punctuation and capital letters were introduced in the month of October 2010.



Photograph 10: Punctuation, capital letters (December 2010)

The improvement was visible not only in terms of reading and writing, but also in numeracy. This new skill reached an interesting point in August 2010.

Numeracy was relatively easy because the Potters use numbers to count their products (pots, vases) and to calculate the money they get by selling them. The facilitators identified problems in writing these numbers and helped participants to do it. Then they started to use the four operations (see photographs 11 and 12).

a) b)



Photograph 11: Numeracy in adult class: (a) Addition and (b) Multiplication

Photograph ‘a’ shows how this woman used her fingers for adding when difficulties arose. A facilitator helped her. Others were busy doing the same exercise.

In photograph ‘b’, one participant did multiplication on the chalkboard. She was happy to learn multiplication because she could now calculate the number of pots sold at a particular price.

Another way of tackling illiteracy

Reading, writing and calculation skills make sense through their use to organize, comprehend and solve complex situations people face. Having acquired a certain level of reading, writing and calculation, the Reflect ‘Groupthink’ Circle gained insight into other problems they could solve. They started to be aware of other kinds of literacy such as preparing a balanced meal, the use of modern medicine, how to search for decent work, family planning, HIV/AIDS prevention and so on. They discovered too many problems they were not aware of before, and it became necessary for the facilitators to help participants to prioritize them. A PRA tool called ‘Matrix’ or ‘Pair wise ranking’ (‘*Imbata*’ or ‘*ikibariko*’ in Kinyarwanda) helped them rank these issues which were associated with illiteracy. A pair wise consists of ranging causes of problems with symptoms of their manifestation by using concrete symbols or materials in helping people to figure out the extent of the problems they are facing.



Photograph 12: Pair wise ranking of the consequences of illiteracy (July 2010)

In the photograph above, a woman is drawing the consequences of illiteracy among the Rwandan Potters and compares each of them with the others, using symbols representing those consequences. This comparison was done in pairs. The comparison becomes simple and clear if numbers are attributed to the symbols used. For example, brick (1) represents inability

to create jobs; herb from potato (2) represents lack of balanced meals; children made of clay (3) represents the inability to plan and control births; and a dirty syringe (4) represents not having medical aid. Then, number (1) is compared with numbers (2), (3), and (4). Similarly, number (2) is compared with numbers (1), (3) and number (4), and so on. This is done to identify which problem is crucial and merits being tackled before others. This is shown in the table below:

Comparison	**Capacity to create jobs**	**Poor nutrition**	**Ability to plan births**	**Access to medical aid**
Capacity to create jobs		Capacity to create jobs	Capacity to create jobs	Capacity to create jobs
Poor nutrition			Ability to plan births	Poor nutrition
Ability to plan births				Ability to plan births
Access to medical aid				
Frequency	3	1	2	0
Harmfulness	1	3	2	4
Prioritarisation	4	2	1	3

Table 7: Explanation of the matrix of the consequences of illiteracy

The issues were prioritized as follows: capacity to create jobs, ability to plan births, nutrition, and access to medical aid. While discussing what action should be taken first, the participants said the following:

> *Nitumenya gusoma, kwandika no kubara; tuzashobora no kubona nibura akazi gacirirtse. Dore muri twe hari abazi gukora ubusitani neza ariko ntawe ubona akazi atazi gusoma no kwandika*.
> (If we are able to read, write and calculate; we shall obtain an average paying job. There are good gardeners among us who cannot find a job because they can neither read nor write). (Field notes, August 2010)

It was obvious that the first problem to be solved was creating jobs, but participants prioritised the problem of family planning because they realized that they did not need external help to tackle this problem, and they discovered that the number of children in each family was high (an average of five). Then they agreed and committed to combating this problem.

Comprehending family planning

They decided to invite a health counsellor to help them understand the issue and to solve it. In this case, discussions were prepared around the topic 'family planning', and sub-topics were generated, such as the consequences of having many births, involvement of parents in family planning, means of family planning, consequences of birth control and the role of nurses in family planning. The following table shows how this action was planned by participants in the Reflect circle:

Action	**Period**	**People involved in action**
Discussions about family planning	04-22 July 2010	Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle, Nurse counsellor, and facilitators
Asking for an appointment at the hospital	20 July 2010	Two participants and researcher
Going to the hospital for family planning	Any time given by the hospital	Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle, Nurse counsellor, and Facilitators Researcher and cameraman

Table 8: Planning for birth control

After understanding the necessity of family planning, some families agreed to control births and planned to go to the Health centre. However, others feared the consequences of birth control because of religious beliefs. We got permission to go to Kacyiru Police Hospital on 10th August 2010, but unfortunately permission for taking pictures was not given.

The second issue to be solved was the problem of poor nutrition. Participants agreed to plant vegetables, but they decided to wait until the rainy season. They then decided to focus on the problem of medical aid.

Importance of health insurance

The following story explains the importance of medical insurance in Rwanda:

Nyirahabimana Faraziya, umukobwa wa habimana Fideli yafashwe n''indwara ibera se akayoberabasuzumyi: yahindaga umuriro, aruka inshikashike, ababara mu mutwe no munda, anyara umutuku. Bavugaga ko abaturage b''i Mwogo (i Bugesera) aho Fideli atuye baroga isazi. Fideli ntiyashidikanya ajya kuvuza umwana we uburozi. Umuvuzi akora iyo bwabaga, amuca ihene ebyiri na 30.000 frw; nyamara umwana arushaho kuremba. Magendu

Rusisibiranya, aba arahatashye; ati: "Dore inzoka zirenda kumuhitana nawe ngo ni amarozi." Ati: "Reka nze mutere urushinge muhe utunini, ejo uzarebe ko atazaba aguruka." Fideli yishyura ibihumbi cumi na bitanu. Vuganeza Helena, umujyanama w"ubuzima amenya ibyo kwa Habimana ahururana abahetsi bamujyana kwa muganga. Amaze ibyumweru bibiri arakira. Bati:"Zana mitiweri, basanga ntayo bamwishyuza 70.000frw. Agurisha ihene eshatu yari asigaranye, agwatiriza inka ye yendaga kubyara acyura umukobwa we:
(Euphrasy Nyirahabimana, Fidel Habimana's daughter was very sick. She had unusual malaria symptoms, such as extreme fever, vomiting, headache and urinating blood. Her parents believed she was poisoned because of where they lived. Her father, Fidel Habimana, went immediately to a traditional healer who promised to cure Fridel's daughter if he paid 30,000Rwf. He paid her, but she did not get better. A quack doctor called Rusisibiranya arrived very quickly and said to Fidel that his daughter was suffering from intestinal diseases. He also promised to cure her by one injection and tablets if he paid 15,000Rwf. Fidel did so, but in vain. In the meantime, a health counsellor came and took Euphrasy to the hospital. Euphrasy spent two weeks at the hospital and recovered her health. Her father had to pay 70,000Rwf because he did not have health insurance. He sold three goats and gave his cow as surety for the money required.) (Health Counsellor)

This story led participants to reflect on the consequences of not having health insurance. They talked about it and planned how to help each other by taking out a subscription for health insurance.

Action	**Period**	**People involved**
Contribute to subscription health insurance	Every Tuesday and Thursday during the literacy class	Members of Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle and facilitators.
Paying the subscription for health insurance	After getting enough money for paying the subscription	Participants concerned by the problem of not having any health insurance.
Reporting feedback to the Reflect Circle on the process of subscription to health insurance	After paying the subscription and during the period reserved for this action.	Participants who did not have health insurance.

Table 9: Plan for getting health insurance

At the end of this planning, the participants began to put their money together in order to pay the yearly subscription for medical insurance. They did this without any outside contribution because they now understood the importance of health insurance. The story above and other examples given by participants informed them about the risk they ran without health insurance. Among several examples, I mention one related to a member of the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle who fell very sick in 2009:

Iyo umufasha wa Amani atagira ubwisungane mu kwivuza, biba byarabaye birebire. Yarwaye igihe kinini kandi yivuza ariko kubera ubushobozi buke, urugo rwabo ntirwari gushobora kuriha amafaranga yo kwivuza kugeza akize, keretse mitiweri yabatabaye ikabishyurira.
(If Amman's wife had not had health insurance when she was ill, the issue would have been very complicated. She had been ill for a long time and she was getting medical care for her disease until she recovered her health. If there had been no health insurance, the family could not have carried the cost of medical care.) (Field notes, October 2010)

The following photograph shows a woman who presents membership cards for health insurance for her family to the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle. This was done every time members received their insurance cards and continued until every member had one.



Photograph 13: A woman presenting her family's health insurance cards

At the end of the first semester, I found out that members of the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle were using the skills acquired in literacy class at home. This was observed when one participant copied the list of participants who wanted to go to hospital for family planning. Another example was encountered when participants collected money for health insurance cards. One participant took the responsibility to write down the names of everyone who was giving money. Another case involved a participant who made a personal decision to write a short letter to her friend asking her news. She gave the content of her letter to the Reflect circle.



Photograph 14: A letter written by one woman to her friend

The content of the above letter is in Kinyarwanda. Briefly, Uwineza Philidaus asks her friend Mukantwari Francoise about her family's news (how are her parents, brothers and sisters). Uwineza Philidaus continues by saying that she would like to visit them as soon as possible, with her first born, to introduce him to his grandparents. She also asks her friend to inform her parents that their grandson likes eating potatoes, beans, vegetables and fish. He also drinks milk. He should not be given beer. She ends the letter by asking for God's blessing.

All these cases reveal the benefits of acquiring reading and writing skills. Based on these observations, we invited the participants and the facilitators to evaluate activities they had already done in order to summarize the benefits of the Reflect approach or to think of new techniques which could lead to the solution of problems affecting the Rwandan Potters in their daily lives. We drew up the list which follows:

Evaluation of activities (September 2010) (See Appendix G)

Issues raised	Means and results	Challenges and remediation
Construction of literacy class	• Modern Pottery Cooperative has reserved a plot of land, a builder and materials; • A benefactress has reserved sheet metal; • Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle played the role of builders' assistants.	The literacy class is like a shelter or a shed (hangar). Rain and sun can enter and disturb activities. Also Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle could not use walls to display its charts all the time. The facilitators kept them after sessions or made new ones when some of the flipcharts deteriorated.
Reading and writing	The Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle members attended numerous literacy classes; they responded to the reading and writing activities. By the end of September 2010, 74% of members of Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle had acquired the capacity to read all the kinyarwanda consonants and 13 double consonants, while 58% were able to write them. The remaining members could barely read, write and calculate, and they were striving to strengthen literacy and numeracy abilities.	• The fact that literacy classes were held near the cooperative office, disturbed Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle's activities. • Some of participants needed to leave earlier to make their pots. Sometimes the facilitators were obliged to interrupt sessions when there was an urgent supply of pots to deliver. • Participants have two different levels, therefore, the facilitators had to divide them in two subgroups in order to help them according to their knowledge levels. One group was obliged to work outside the literacy class, which was not always useful. When the facilitators encountered this issue, they tried to hold the literacy class on Sunday.
Numeracy	Participants learned how to calculate easily because they already use numbers to count money when they sell pots and vases. The success of the first semester was 16/20.	The problem was to write numbers. The facilitators helped them by giving them sufficient writing exercises.
Family planning	17/20 members understand why family planning is beneficial.	2/20 did not want to accompany their wives to the Health centres but they agreed that their wives could go. 1/20 cannot plan births because of religious beliefs. The facilitators plan to continue sensitization to family planning.
Health insurance	Group discussions about the risks of living without health insurance led participants to become aware of the necessity of solidarity among themselves and took membership of "Mutual Health Scheme" (a Rwandan national structure for paying the costs of medical care in the public hospitals or health centres).	As it was very difficult to find someone ready to help them pay health insurance, they agreed to subscribe by themselves to health insurance, and to help needy people (among their colleagues) to get it. They contributed 100 Rwf each and every week until the required amount of money for subscription to health insurance was gathered. Then two needy people among the members of Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle were helped to get health insurance.

Table 10: Evaluation of activities (September 2010)

I used the Adult Literacy Performance Appraisal (ALPA) in this study. This was not an 'ex cathedra' procedure, or merely an opportunity for the researcher to ask questions and the participant to reply, but took the form of a free-flowing conversation during which a range of views were exchanged. I appraised literacy actions and behaviours of each participant in the Reflect Groupthink Circle, providing an opportunity for participants to reflect on their performance and to make plans for development and improvement by reaching agreement about what should be done in the future.

Dialogue-based appraisal gave participants an opportunity to speak in a supportive and constructive climate. I implemented specific practices to encourage participants to put forward their ideas and problems:

1. Being an active listener, picking up verbal and nonverbal cues, and clarifying ideas and problems.
2. Focusing on participants' strengths during the appraisals of performance, and avoiding confrontations. The goal was to evaluate literacy performance and not to evaluate the person concerned.
3. Using positive reinforcement and constructive criticism, pointing the way to improvement and emphasizing what had been done well so that it could be done even better in future.
4. Ensuring that the discussion involved a full, frank and free exchange of views about what had been achieved, what needed to be done to achieve more and what the researcher and participants thought about their achievements and aspirations.
5. Coming to agreement about what had been done by all parties to improve performance, knowledge and skills, and to overcome literacy-based problems raised during the discussion.
6. Comparing actual performance with the desired performance. Actual performance may be more or less than the desired performance.
7. Communicating and discussing the results with participants on a one-to-one basis, with the aim of solving problems and reaching consensus. Feedback should be constructive and specific in order to have a positive effect on participants' future performance.

8. Encouraging participants to reflect on their progress and to develop creative, yet realistic, solutions to problems. Performance monitoring by all participants, including the researcher, was enhanced in this way.
9. Sharing perceptions, solving problems faced in class, deciding on new goals jointly and providing participants with feedback on their strengths and weaknesses. Charting and recording participants' improvements reinforced regular attendance of literacy classes.
10. Taking decisions to improve the performance of participants, and implementing those decisions, or alternatively, finding other means of approaching the problem.

The ALPA system provided a way of confirming that planned actions were actually accomplished. The literacy class was built on time; the majority of participants changed their behaviour with respect to family planning; participants subscribed to health insurance; and participants were now able to read, write and calculate. They became conscious of their marginalization and began to tackle this problem by involving themselves in carrying out various actions such as literacy learning activities, family planning, and so on.

6.4 Conclusion

The trial period from April to September 2010 showed that the Reflect approach could help to solve the problem of illiteracy in the Rwandan Potter Community. The chapter highlighted the progress the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle made in four months. The participants were able to sit together, to discuss issues encountered in their community and to search for solutions. They went through a critical period of begging for assistance but reached a phase where they engaged in the process of constructing solutions to their problems. This was clearly explained by a woman 'Affissa' who said:

> *Kuba umutwa ntibivuga gukomeza kubaho nsabiriza, nzashakisha ubwanjye ibintunga*.
> (To be a Twa does not mean that I have to continue to live as a beggar, barely surviving, I have to strive by myself to meet my own survival needs). (Field notes, September 2010)

CHAPTER 7: THE DECISIVE PHASE IN IMPLEMENTING REFLECT IN GATABA VILLAGE (OCTOBER 2010 TO MAY 2011)

7.1 Introduction

The first, trial phase, Reflect approach in the Rwandan Potter Community revealed that adult Potters could share ideas on common issues and solve problems together in the context of learning to read, write and develop numeracy. The implementation of Reflect urged the facilitators and Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle to embark on what I call the 'decisive phase of the implementation of Reflect'.

7.2 Step Two: Towards solving problems in the Rwandan Potter Community using the Reflect approach (Oct. 2010 to Jan. 2011)

After the first semester, which ended in September 2010, the second semester started with an adjustment resulting from an evaluation carried out earlier. Different participants responded differently to the Reflect approach. All participants were interested in the approach, but one group proposed that the facilitators should go slowly while the other group wanted to go faster. The first group requested two additional hours of Reflect learning in order to be on the same level as the second group. To accomplish this, the facilitators agreed with the first group's suggestion and this group had two additional hours to cover material introduced in the previous session. Therefore, both groups benefited from the same learning materials within the same week, but within two hours for the advanced group and four hours for those who wanted more time. During this period, the facilitators focused discussions around unachieved activities, and new ones which arose from participants.

The second period also focused on solving problems ranked in pair wise (see table 7 in chapter 6) which had not yet been solved. For example the problem of malnutrition was the first to be decided upon in the previous semester, but due to lack of rain, participants could not plant vegetables, fruits or maize. At the same time, double and triple consonants were learnt with ease because participants already knew single consonants. It was henceforth possible to accelerate reading, writing and numeracy activities. The programme of reading and writing words or sentences with consonants and multiple consonants in Kinyarwanda

ended in January 2011 after a period of eight months in total. Other achievements in reading, writing and numeracy were observed during discussions between participants and facilitators.

7.2.1 Achievements

Diagram of a balanced meal

The Potters envisioned very few activities aimed at improving their living conditions. This was partly due to the Rwandan Potters Community custom of doing no work other than making pots. It was very difficult for them to create a vision of overcoming their poor living conditions by taking up other small projects. Even when they recognised the necessity to change their behaviour, there was still a long way to go to change their mentality. For example when planting vegetables was raised as a solution to a problem they had to solve, some participants agreed with the idea, but when it came time for cultivating, they worked for only one hour, saying that agricultural labour was very difficult:

> *Ntabwo twamenyereye guhinga ariko tugomba kugerageza kuko Leta y"u Rwanda yaduhaye igishanga cyadutunga igihe ibibumbano byacu bifite abaguzi bake. Ni ukuvuga mu mezi yo mu mpeshyi.*
> (We are not used to cultivating the soil but we must try, because the Government has given us marsh land which could yield the crops necessary to satisfy our needs when our pots are not attracting many clients, especially during the dry season.) (Field notes, November 2010)

Another participant added:

> *Aho kugira ngo twicwe n"inzara n"imirire mibi, twagerageza nko guhinga kiriya gishanga kuko cyadutunga*.
> (Instead of suffering from hunger and malnutrition, we can try exploiting our marsh land because it can produce enough food for our families.) (Field notes, October 2010)

This discussion led them to talk about healthy food and to think about how they could get it. The tool which was used to explain this was a diagram of a balanced meal. The rain was pouring into the Reflect ‘Groupthink’ Circle literacy class, so participants could not draw on the ground in the open air, so facilitators proposed that the participants use a chalkboard to draw components of a balanced meal.



Photograph 15: Diagram of a balanced meal (October 2010)

In this photograph, we see three overlapping circles which represent three types of food. These foods (from the top) are recognised as healthy foods.

A balanced meal is composed of food which gives energy represented by sweet potatoes (circle / plate 1); food which builds our body represented by three bricks put together (beans, meat, fish in circle / plate 2); and food which combats diseases represented by a banana but the arm of this woman hides it (fruits and vegetables in circle / plate 3). After acquiring this knowledge, the participants agreed to cultivate and plant fruits, vegetables and maize because they had a field for this purpose. They started by establishing an agricultural calendar.



Photograph 16: Agriculture calendar (October 2010)

The participants' agricultural year started in September 2010 and ended in August 2011. They noted appropriate crops for their zone during the whole year (beans, maize, and vegetables). The woman in the picture is writing in Kinyarwanda the kinds of crops to be grown for the first agricultural season: *"(guhinga ibigori)"* [cultivate maize]. Then, they began to plan for the season starting from September 2010 to February 2011.

According to this calendar, the period of four months from October of each year to January of the following year was appropriate for planting and growing maize, vegetables and fruits. The participants agreed to plan for this. Some of the materials which had been used to build the literacy class, especially the hoes, also served to cultivate the field for planting the crops.

Action	**Period**	**People involved in the action**
Planning activities	September	- Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle - facilitators
Digging and planting fruits	October	
Planting cereals	November 2010	
Planting vegetables	November 2010	
Weeding	December 2010 & January 2011	
Harvesting vegetables and maize. Fruits took a long time	February 2011	

Table 11: Planning for planting cereals, vegetables and fruits

The Circle spent the whole month of October preparing fields for planting maize, vegetables and fruits. Fruits were planted in October, but vegetables and maize were planted in November. The following pictures were taken in January when the plants were growing and attractive. In these pictures, a group of participants and facilitators are weeding vegetables, cereals and fruits (photograph 17).



Photograph 17: Agricultural activities (January 2011)

In the set of photographs above, participants in the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle are taking care of plants. They were proud of this, not only because they were expecting crops within a short time, but also because they were experiencing the fact that they were capable of growing plants. Traditionally, the Rwandan Potters are dedicated to making clay pots and vases. Nevertheless, even if some of them understood the necessity of shifting from working

in clay to alternative businesses, when it came time for preparing the soil to grow plants, only some of them (12 people) agreed to provide labour, while another members (5 people) shrank back. Those who agreed to farm said:

> *Ntabwo tuzi guhinga, tuzi kubumba niwo mwuga wacu. Cyokora kubera ko aho bigeze tutatungwa n"uwo mwuga gusa twagerageza gukora n"ibindi nk"ubuhinzi, n'ubucuruzi*
> (We do not know how to cultivate; we know how to make clay pots. It is our profession since ancient times. But because today it is difficult to live from craft products only, we have to try other jobs, such as farming and selling activities.) (Field notes, January 2011)

During the discussion about solving the problem of malnutrition, the participants highlighted the importance of vegetables and fruits in fighting against diseases. One participant also mentioned that this kind of food was good for people living with AIDS because vegetables and fruits protect people from diseases. Then, the problem of AIDS was also found worthy of discussion among the Rwandan Potter Community. One participant said:

> *Nubwo abenshi muri twe batinya kuyivugaho, ariko cyane kuyipimisha, nyamara ni ngombwa kumenya uko uhagaze kugira ngo wifatire ingamba z"ubuzima. Ubu se hari ugomba gukomeza gutinya kwipimisha kandi ntawe ugiha akato abarwayi ba sida?*
> (Even if we fear to talk about AIDS, especially to accept being tested for this disease, it is necessary to know one's serological status in order to develop a personal strategy for protection. Can we continue to fear testing today while there is no discrimination against people with HIV/AIDS?) (Field notes, December 2010)

Reflecting on HIV/AIDS

In the photograph below, participants in the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle were reflecting and talking about AIDS.



Photograph 18: Discussion about HIV/AIDS in the literacy class (January 2011)

The participants were discussing HIV/AIDS in Rwanda in general and among the Rwandan Potter Community members in particular. The tool that participants were using is a historical profile (starting from the period they heard about it for the first time until today). Helped by her colleagues, one participant was completing a historical profile of AIDS in Rwanda as it appears in the following photograph.



Photograph 19: Historical profile of HIV/AIDS in Rwanda (January 2011)

In this photograph, the participants shared what they knew about the history of HIV/AIDS in Rwanda: in 1982, people got sick without getting better or recovering. Relatives and neighbours thought that a spell had been cast on victims. In 2000, HIV/AIDS was under-diagnosed. People who tested positive were stigmatised. From 2004 to date, drugs for helping people infected with HIV/AIDS were available and distributed freely in Rwanda. In 2005, organisations which helped people who tested positive for HIV were created, and thereafter discrimination diminished. Today people tested positive are not discriminated against in Rwanda.

Seeing this historical profile, participants in the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle recognised that HIV & AIDS were also prevalent among the Rwandan Potters. They shared their fear about knowing their serological status and decided to combat it. Then they decided to go to Kacyiru Police Hospital (Kacyiru is the sector where the Rwandan Potters live) to be tested in order to know how to manage their lives. Before planning this, they discussed whether they could invite a nurse to give them information about AIDS. However, as the lessons about AIDS were given once a week at the said hospital for those who wanted to be tested, they came to a consensus that they would go and get information from the hospital; in order to limit expenses. They chose the nearest hospital so that they could go on foot.

Action	Period	People involved in the action
Going to the hospital to be tested for AIDS	January 2011	- Reflect 'Groupthink' circle - facilitators
Testimonies about the benefits of knowing one's serological status	January 2011	- Reflect 'Groupthink' circle - facilitators

Table 12: Planning for HIV/ AIDS test

Reinforcing reading and writing skills

While the participants in the Reflect 'Groupthink' circle reflected on multiple issues (AIDS, malnutrition, family planning, and so on) and took various steps to improve their living conditions, they continued to acquire reading, writing and numeracy skills. Skills in writing and reading in Kinyarwanda helped participants to interact with others. For example, they began to help each other with reading. This is illustrated in the following photograph where one participant was helping her colleagues to read by decoding Kinyarwanda words/text.



Photograph 20: A woman is helping her colleagues to read

In this photograph, each participant had an opportunity to read alone, while others followed in order to help when a problem arose. Here, this woman was decoding words on a page of a Kinyarwanda book; she was advanced and tried to help her colleagues to improve their reading by reminding them how to pronounce some syllables they had forgotten.

During the period from October 2010 to January 2011, participants began to produce short texts according to the literacy level they had reached. This exercise was often done at the end of literacy sessions as homework once every two weeks. The facilitators collected the texts and helped participants to improve them. These texts were then used for reading activities. Participants enjoyed reading them in literacy class as they were their products. They also

helped each other in reading, especially those who did not attend class regularly due to family problems. But above all, participants needed to do a lot of writing because it was difficult to do quickly. To accelerate their abilities in reading, and particularly in writing, a new technique called 'Information Record – Memory Retrievable Dictation' (IRMD) was used. It takes place as follows: someone runs away, reads information from the source kept there and which only s/he can access, and then s/he comes back quickly to dictate the text to another person by recalling; s/he returns to read another piece of the text from the source and comes back to dictate it and so on until the end. The exercise is done in groups of two; each pair is evaluated by the members of the other group considering accuracy of the produced text compared to the original and the time taken to complete the activity in comparison with the time taken by other groups.



Photograph 21: Writing triple consonants (January 2011)

The table below shows the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle achievements in reading and writing in Kinyarwanda. Fourteen of the twenty members of the Circle were able to read and write well. Seven members still needed assistance.

Vowels and consonants	**Words**	**Sentences**
a e i o u	amata, igiti, omo, umubu, ema	—
so, sa, se, si, su	Isosiso, isosi, isogi, isaso, soma Gusasa, gusesa, ise, umusego, gusema, usase, isi, isogisi, isusa, Igisuma, isume, isasu	soso asase isaso
ma, me, mi, mo, mu	Amaga, mama, amamesa, iseseme, mimi, misago, misa, omo, mosi, amuga, umusa, musasa	ema asome, musa amese, mama asese amase, musa asoma isosi asesa iseseme
gu, ga, ge, gi, go	Gusoma, gusa, gusama, gaga, guma, gema, umugemo, gemima, igi, igisu, umugogo, umugome	Mugasa asoma agasa asesa agaseseme
no, na, ne, ni, no, nu	inoni inono inanasi ino	Inoni nazo zibamo amayeri.

ku, ka, ke, ki, ko	kaka, kuko, kuki, amakakama, agakoko, mukasa, mukakamaka, agaseke, amasaka	Kuki Mukakamaka aseka Mukasano asuka amakakama ku makoma agaseseka?
ba, be, bi, bo, bu	bobi, ibaba, ibibi, ibabi, gakuba, kabibi, kagaba, bakame, basome, bose, gakuba, kabibi, basome, bose,…	Kabano asaba ibisusa
ra, re, ri, ro, ru	ururo, urureri, ururimi, umusumari	Museminari ararira i Kabare
la, le, li, lo, lu	ikilo, Silasi, Kigali, Legisi	Silasi aragura ibilo bibiri i Kigali
pe, pa, pi, po, pu	Papa, papi, ipasi, papiyasi, perezida, piyo, perusi, nyirabapagasi, padiri, umupolisi,…	umudepite arasoma disikuru, abadepite bakopera perezida, polo na didasi barapereza ko disikuru basoma iza kubemeza.
da, de, di, do, du	Idodo, dadi, madudu, mudidi, disimasi, umudiho, umuduri, mukamudenge, dorisi,…	Papiyasi azi ipasi
yi, ya, ye, yo, yu	yayu ayoye atuye	oya ni amayeri ya mayira. amayira nayo yabaye ibisibe.
ha, he, hi, ho, hu	Hehe, ihoho, umuhini, umuhogo, umuheha, uruhimbi,…	Hogoza ni ihoho.
fi, fa, fe, fo, fu	Ifu, ifuro, ifi, fifa, ifuru, ifoto, umufa,..	Ufate imifupa n'ifarini Gafuku afite ifu
co, ca, ce, ci, cu	icece, ico, acoce, ace, cacana, umuce, umuco, umucunguzi, umucucu, umucagate, incucu, igicucu, igicuku…	Abajura bacikiye umuco
je, ja, ji, jo, ju	Ejo, jojo, ijabo, ijosi, ijeri, ijoro, ijuru, ijambo, ijerekani, Mujejende.	Kamujijima araca igicuma ijosi
vu, va, ve, vi, vo	Ivi, eva, ivu, ubuvivi, verena, umuvure, ivata, amavamuhira, ivumbi,…	Fata umutavu tuwuvanemo ivata. Viviyani yatumuye ivu.
za, ze, zi, zo, zu	Zaza,uza,zuzu,zeze, umuzi, ikuzimu, amagazeti	Zitura ikiziriko ku giti uze. Uzazane umuzabibu i Butare
ta, te, ti, to, tu	tito, titi, itoto, itete, atete	Gatete asomere Zaburi i Gatagara abatize abato.
wa, we, wi, wo, wu	I wawa, iwawe, wowe, iwuwa, ikawa, welarisi, uwibambe,…	Uwineza yafashe umutavu. Uwamahoro yagiye I wawa

Multiple consonants	**Words**	**Sentences**
Nga	Ngango, ingingo, ingume, ingemu	Ngango akora ningoga.
Bya	Umubyeyi, ibyari, ibyobo, Ibyuma, urubyiruko	Byukusenge yasogongeye akabyeri.
Nya	Inyanya, inyenyeri, inyoni, umunyigi, umunyu.	Munyinya yasabye Nyesi umunyu.
Nza	Ikibanza, Kanzenze, inzu, inzoka, umuhinzi.	Nzeyi yakinze inzugi ku nzu ya Nzigiye.
Nta	Intare, intege, inturusu, intonga	Inturusu ya Ntare si ntoya
Sha	Isha, shishoza, umushumi, umushonge	Isha ya Mushi si umushishe
Mba	Imbata, imbeba, imboga, imbugita, mbirurume	Mbabazi ahinga imboga
Tsa	Gatsata, igitsure, umutsi, arananutse, umutsobe	Mureke kubyutsa Neretse abanze ashire ibitotsi

Bwa	Umukobwa, ubwenge, ubwira, ubwuzu, ubworozi	Sebwenge yabonye ubwone agira ubwoba
Rwa	Urwango, urwembe, urwiri, urwoya, urwubati	Rwango yakuye inota mu rwubati.
Mwa	Umwana, umwera, umwirongi, umwungu, umworozi	Mwungeri ni umworozi ugira umwaga
Kwa	Igikwasi, umukwe, urukwi	Ukwakira ni ukwezi kwa cumi.
Twa	Umutware, umutwero, ugutwi, utwotso, utwuma	Abagore batwite bagomba kwitwararika muri twose.
Nda	Inda, indege, indimu, indobo, induru	Ndebera Ndanga andundire indimu
Cya	Icyaha, icyezezi, icyuya, icyombo, icyifuzo	Bucyana nacyure umucyahe yigize icyohe
Rya	Umurya, inyarwenge, intoryi, uburyo, Ryumugabe	Ryumugabe yanze kurya ibiryo bye
Nka	Inka, inkende, inkima, inkoko, Nkumba	Inkoko iratora mu nkike ya Nkubiri.
Mva	Imvaho, ikiremve, imvi, imvo, imvura	Mvejuru amvomere nteke imvange.
jya	Umujyanama, jyewe, ntirijyinama, ubujyurijyuri, amajyora	Ndajyana ya suka y'umujyojyo.
Mya	Imyaka, imyotsi, imyenda, imyitozo, imyuna	Imyenda ya Myasiro ni myiza
Mpa	Impano, impeta, impigi, impongo, impumu	Impaka za Mpano na Nyampinga zanteye impungenge.
Nsa	Insina, inseko, insokozo, Mukansanga, insuna	Nsunikira izo nsinga Nsabimana azimbikire.
Nje	Inyanja, injereri, injiji, injome, injugu	Iyi njiji yanjujubije.
Zwa	Kubatizwa, byaravuzwe, birazwi	Uwo mwana abazwe impamvu ahazwa atabatije
Gwa	Urwagwa, umugwegwe, urugwiro	Rwabigwi akunga urwagwa
Pfa	Umupfakazi, igipfirira, kunopfesha, amajyepfo, umupfu	Iby'abapfu biribwa n'abapfumu.
Jwa	Injajwa, kujwenga, amajwi, kujwigira	Ababajwe n'uko yabuze amajwi.
Nwa	Umunwa, ikinweti, kunwigira	Manweri atunze akabindi ka minwibiri.
Tya	Ityazo, gutyo	Mu Matyazo batyaza amasuka neza.
Mfa	Imfashanyo, mfotorera, imfizi, yamfendegeje, imfubyi	Mfasha mfindure ubu bufindo
Swa	Abaswa, imisuswe, imiswi	Iki kirago cyakegeswe n'umuswa
Sya	Urusyampetse, umusyite, Busyete, umusyi, igisyogogo, gusyunyura	Busyete arasya ku rusyo rwa Muswahili
Cwa	Kwicwa, icwende, igicwira	Akabaye icwende ntikoga.
Hwa	Amahwa, ibihwehwe, guhwihwisa	Batema amahwa bakayahwamika.
Pye	Gupyatura, gupyeneka, papyisi, gupyora	Gapyisi arapyeneka kuko Giyo amupyatuye.
Dwa	Kudagadwa, madwedwe, kudwinga	Gasore inzuki zamudwinze
Fwa	Amagufwa, igifwera	Igifwera ntikigira amagufwa
Vye	Zahovye	Inzuki zahovye ubuki mu ndabyo.
Vwe	Wahovwemo, uhovwamo	Indabyo zihovwamo ubuki
Shya	Amashyamba, amashyengo, amashyiga, amashyo, ubushyuhe	Ibijya gushya birashyuha.
Ndya	Indyarya, ndyemere, ndyige, ndyubake, indyoheshabirayi	Indyarya ihimwa n'indyamirizi.

Nkwa	Inkwano, inkwenene, inkwi	Nyirinkwaya nankwera nzamushyingira
Nzwe	Gusanzwa, mayunzwe, sinzwi	Nsanzwibwami na Burasanzwe bagenzwa n'ubusa.
Nsha	Insharwatsi, inshege, inshira, inshoberamahanga, inshunda	Inshoroke zisenya ingo nyinshi
Shwa	Imishwaro, igishwemu, urushwima	Abana bashimishwa no gukina n'ubwo bashwana vuba.
Ngwa	Ingwa, ingwe, ingwingiri	Ingweba zikamwa amata menshi.
Bywa	Kuyobywa, ntuyobywe	Injiji ziyobywa no kutamenya gusoma
Njya	Injyana, iwanjye, injyirabibiri, injyo, njyunguri	Njyanira Njyunguri iwanjye.
Nywa	Amanywa, anywera, umunywi	Uyu munywi yanywereye menshi kumanywa.
Mbwa	Imbwa, imbwebwe, imbwija	Umbwirire umukambwe ajye guhembwa.
Tswa	Botswana, rwubatswe	Umwana azahazwa no gucutswa imburagihe
Mbya	Kayombya, imbyeyi, imbyino, wimbyoroga, utambyutsa	Kayombya ambyukirije ubusa.
Ndwa	Imandwa, karindwi, ndwemere, ndwubake, ndwonone	Mandwa amaze kwasa indwi.
Nnya	Ubunnyano, kunnyega, umukinnyi, kunnyuzura	Ese abakinnyi nabo barya ubunnyano?
Ntwa	Intwari, intwererano, arantwitse	Ntwarane yampaye intwererano
Nswa	Inswaswa, inswegegeri	Inswegegeri n'inswaswa ziba mu myobo.
Nsya	Insya, ntunsye, Satinsyi, insyo, reka nsyunyure	Ndaje mpite nsya aya masaka mpite nsya n'izi ngano.
Ntsa	Ntsembe, ntsinde, ntsure	Wintsembera imfashanyo maze ntsinde, mbone uko ntsura amajyambere iwacu.
Mpwa	Simpwanye, mpwekereye	Wampamagaye nari mpwekereye.
Nca	Incamugongo, incenga, incike, ncogoza, incungu	Yezu yatubereye incungu
Pwa	Icapwa, wakopwe	Umukozi wakopwe yishyura ku kwezi
Ntya	Untyarize, intyoza	Bwenge avuga neza ni intyoza
Mpyo	Impyisi, yampyonyoye	Ushaka umupfu asoma impyisi
Mvye	Yahomvomvye	Umukwe mukuru yahomvomvye
Mvwa	Yumvwa, yumvwe	Inama nziza yumvwa na bose
Mfwa	Imfwati	Isuka y'imfwati ntiboneka hose
Ncya	Incyamuro, wincyena, wincyocyora, incyuro	Wincyenera n'incyuro zawe
Pfwa	Gukapfakapfwa, yakapfakapfwe	Imari yari isigaye yakapfakapfwe n'abajura
Pfye	Yakapfakapfye	Uwo bwaki yakapfakapfye acurika umusatsi.
Shywa	Umwishywa, yubashywe	Mwishywa we yubashywe na bose.
Nshya	Nshyashya, inshyenzi, inshyimbo, inshyomotsi, inshyushyu	Ya nshyomotsi yadukanye inkuru nshya

Nshwa	Nshwane, nshwekure, yanshwishurije	Reka nshwashwanye, ndokore na bake
Mbywa	Mpombywa, mpombywe	Ubonye ngo mpombywe n'ubujiji.
Ncwa	Incwabasi, ncweze	Reka ncweze tutavaho tuvugana nabi

Table 13: Words and sentences with all consonants in Kinyarwanda

Writing up ideas, events, texts and reports

The acquisition of literacy skills permitted participants to prepare by themselves materials for reading and particularly for writing. They did a lot of writing exercises in order to improve these skills and to produce needed texts for their literacy class. The following two examples are texts produced by participants.

Inkuru kuri koperative 'poterie moderne': *Kuwa kabiri tarili ya 03 mata 2011, umuzungu yaje kuri koperative yacu asanga turi kwiga kwandika no gusoma ikinyarwanda, nawe aricara ariga. Twatangajwe nuko yabishoboye. Twishimiye kandi ko mbere yo kujya muri gahunda yari imuzanye yaduhembye imyambaro myiza yo guha abana bacu* (a group led byAmani, 03 April 2011):
(**News about the Modern Pottery Cooperative:** Tuesday, 03 April 2011, a white woman came to Modern Pottery Cooperative's office. She found the Reflect 'Groupthink' circle in their usual activity of reading, writing and discussion about their common issues. She sat down and began to learn how to read Kinyarwanda. We were surprised to hear her doing well. We were also very happy because she gave us nice clothes for our children before leaving).

Inkuru ibabaje: *Kuwa 09/05/ 2011, nabonye amakuru kuri televisiyo avuga ko kubera imvura irimo umuyaga mwinshi, amazu yagwiriye abantu mu majyaruguru y'igihugu barapfa. Mu bapfuye harimo umuryango w'abantu benshi: umugabo n'abagore be batatu n'abana icumi. Harokotse umwana umwe utari waraye mu rugo. Si ibyo gusa. Hangiritse n'ibintu byinshi birimo amazu n'imyaka* (Angelique Mukantembe, umwe mu bagize ihuriro rya Reflect):
(A sad story: On 9th May 2011, I watched news on TV which described a sad event. It happened in the Northern part of Rwanda where heavy rains with strong winds caused death to a family consisting of a husband, his three wives and ten children. Only one child, who was absent from home, survived. The rains caused the destruction of houses and plants in fields). (Angelique Mukantembe, a member of Reflect 'Groupthink' circle, on 10th May 2011).

Little by little, the participants demonstrated what they were gaining by acquiring reading, writing and calculation skills. Being able to read and to write by themselves distinguished them among other members of the cooperative. They began to enjoy reading and writing, as well as using these skills in their everyday activities, and hence they became interested in reading other reading materials like textbooks and journals I provided. For example, one participant surprised us when he took responsibility for keeping a register of the names of people who were involved in cultivating fields for cereals, vegetables and fruits. He used to report their attendance at the beginning of sessions in order to encourage his colleagues to work as a team and with tenacity. This made him proud when he found that he could explain what he had written. Another participant who was very silent at the beginning of the literacy sessions suddenly began to express her opinions and feelings in a logical manner, especially during meetings where she advised the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle about what they should do. For example:

> *Ibyo dukorera hamwe muri iri tsinda ryacu bizaba ibya nde? Mu bisanzwe, iyo dukoze ibintu, koperative ibigiraho uburenganzira. None ko abandi bo muri koperative yacu batadufasha bizagenda bite?*
> (What we are producing belongs to whom? Usually when a member of our cooperative does something, the cooperative deducts part of it. What about what the Reflect 'Groupthink' circle is doing now? I ask this question because other members of our cooperative do not help us.) (Field notes, January 2011)

These examples provided evidence that participants in the Reflect 'Groupthink' circle were gaining skills.

An evaluation of activities which were carried out during the period from October 2010 to January 2011 identified the major problems that remained to be solved.

7.2.2 Evaluation of activities by participants in Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle (January 2011)

Issues raised	Means and results of discussion	Challenges and remedy
1. Reading and writing	Reading and writing: evaluation showed that participants who attended literacy class obtained an average of 81% in reading and 60% in writing. They were proud that they were able to read even though they were not yet fluent. Some of them were also able to help their colleagues to read. The good performance in writing was likely due to the new approach (Reflect) used.	Some of the participants in the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle continued to experience difficulties in writing. The facilitators planned to emphasize writing more than reading during the period from February to May 2011 and to foster the acquisition of writing skills among the participants by using new techniques such as IRMD.
2. Numeracy	Numeracy activities were successful with an average of 84 % in reading numbers because the literacy class participants always used numbers while selling pots and vases. But the average in writing was 67%.	Writing numbers was a difficult exercise for participants. The facilitators provided many writing exercises on the chalkboard.
3. Agricultural calendar	The agricultural calendar was prepared by the Reflect 'Groupthink' circle by taking into account seasons in Rwanda.	The agricultural calendar was not put into practice due to weather changes; the rains were delayed. Participants decided to plant in November 2010.
4. Diagram of healthy food	Preparing healthy food: Participants in the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle planted cereals, vegetables and fruits with the help of a benefactress who gave them seeds.	Because the rains were delayed, participants planted in November 2010, instead of October 2010 as planned. The majority of participants reported that they were unable to cultivate and argued that this was not in their culture. Reflect Groupthink circle decided to discuss other opportunities for improving the Rwandan Potter Community's living conditions.
5. Discussion about AIDS	AIDS: Discussions were held between participants and a nurse counsellor (facilitator who plays this role in his community). 17/20 participants agreed to go with him to Kacyiru Police Hospital to be tested for HIV/AIDS in order to be aware of their serological status and to make decisions about their personal protection.	It was difficult to get permission to take photographs outside the Modern Pottery Cooperative. This problem was encountered while blood samples for laboratory HIV/AIDS test were being taken at Kacyiru Health Centre. The facilitators and the researcher attempted to explain, but in vain. Nurses did not want to appear in the photographs. We were obliged to respect their choices.

Table 14: Evaluation of the activities carried out in the first part of the second semester

The evaluation highlighted in the table above was done by participants in the Reflect circle. Reading, writing and calculation were done by participants themselves, while facilitators

monitored whether they had understood. The evaluation was done by reading chunks of texts in the Kinyarwanda language, or writing phrases / pieces of text using the technique of Information Record - Memory Retrievable Dictation (IRMD):

IRMD takes place as follows:

A person leaves the venue, reads a text provided for her in a specific place, and then comes back quickly to dictate the text to another person by recalling the original text. The person may return to the same place to read the text again, or another section of the text, and then return to dictate it, and so on, until the entire text is dictated. The exercise is done in pairs. Each pair is evaluated by another pair, taking into account the accuracy and completeness of the dictated text compared to the original, as well as the amount of time needed to complete the activity.

In addition, issues such as agriculture, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention, and family planning were discussed in groups of three (or more) participants, based on the questions asked by the facilitators. The use of other techniques like interview and observation (see the Observation Grid in Appendix H) gave them the opportunity to think about what happened in the literacy class during the semester. The exchange and sharing of views and ideas took place in the literacy class. The facilitators helped participants to point out the main ideas (see the table above) which emerged from discussions and to agree on the summary as a group. In general, the issues raised were discussed and solved, even though the schedule was not respected. The remaining issues which appeared in pair wise were the consequences of illiteracy (see chapter 7, photograph 12) are discussed in the next step.

7.3 Step three: Handling the remaining problems in the Rwandan Potter Community (February to May 2011)

The last four months of 2011 were reserved for reinforcing reading, but also to develop writing skills. Efforts were also made to finalize activities identified in the pair wise ranking of the consequences of illiteracy (see photograph 12: Pair wise ranking of the consequences of illiteracy, July 2010). Harvesting maize and selling it, as well as other issues, were raised during discussions. This third period placed emphasis on the ability to create jobs in order to continue to improve the Potters' living conditions. A statement made by one of the

participants constituted a starting point indicating the problems that the Rwandan Potter community members face in their everyday lives:

> *Nta mugabo umwe. Ntacyo twageraho tudafatanyije gushakisha imirimo twakora dushaka gukura ingo zacu mu bukene.*
> (A single tree does not make a forest. We cannot do anything unless we put our heads together as a family to search for new jobs in order to fight poverty.) (Field notes, February 2011)

This was a call for the circle to discuss the activities described in the pair wise ranking.

7.3.1 Achievements

Reinforcing writing and numeracy exercises

Previous evaluations revealed that writing was a real problem in the adult literacy class. The Potters used letters and numbers in oral communication, but they did not write them. I think that this may explain their ease of acquiring reading and the difficulty in acquiring writing. In response, the facilitators prepared many exercises for writing on the chalkboard and in exercise books, individually or in small groups.



Photograph 22: Writing (a) on the chalkboard and (b) in exercise books (29 March 2011)

Note the improvement in writing sentences and numbers. While some participants were writing on the chalkboard, others were doing the same in their exercise books.

The participants were also proud of writing in exercise books. Emphasis placed on writing did not mean that reading was neglected, but it took a quarter of the time when compared to writing. As described in previous sections, the Rwandan Potters showed little interest in

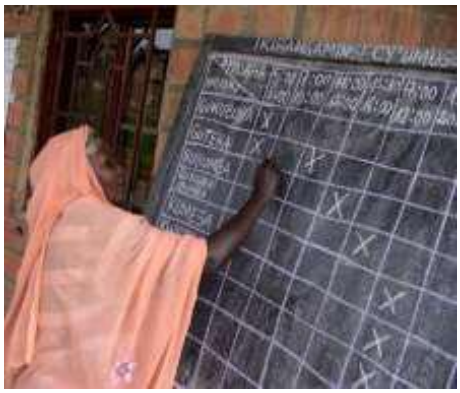
undertaking agricultural work because they were not used to it, but their attitude towards writing (though they were not used to it either) was different. They liked writing for two reasons: the first was the need to use reading and writing skills in the cooperative‘s business and their own activities. The second reason was that they considered the lack of reading and writing skills as the major cause of the impoverished situation they were living in, and which they wanted to overcome.

The Reflect Circle was initiated to work as a team without gender discrimination. However, there was no success at the beginning because women and men firmly believed that there were specific jobs for each gender. This constituted a starting point to introduce gender issues in the literacy class in order to find out how they understand this issue. Some women complained because they worked long hours without rest (usually from the early hours of the morning till late in the night), while their husbands rested after making pots, a routine activity of a few hours’ duration, usually in the mornings. The women said:

> *Mu gihe tuvuye kubumba hamwe n''abagabo bacu tujya mu tundi turimo two mu rugo tutagira iherezo tukaryama saa sita z''ijoro mu gihe abagabo bacu baruhukira mu tubari bapfusha ubusa amafaranga n''igihe. Iki ni ikibazo gikomeye*
> (When we are back from making pots with our husbands, we go home and directly continue with other endless tasks until midnight, while our husbands waste their time and money in bars. This is a big issue.) (Field notes, February 2011)

Gender issues in the Rwandan Potter Community

Gender issues were discussed when some participants raised the issue of work shared by men and women. They argued that in some families, women worked for the whole day without any help or rest. To discuss this issue thoroughly and search for a solution, a PRA tool called ‘daily routine diagram’ was used (see picture 23 below):



Photograph 23: Daily routine diagram for women

As shown in the table in the photograph, the Reflect Circle identified their main activities, and discovered that women got up early in the morning (5 a.m.) and went to sleep very late at night (11 p.m.). As indicated in the table, women cleaned the house and its surroundings, cooked and washed dishes, took care of the children, washed clothes, made pots and sold them, and so on. In Rwandan culture, men do not cook, wash, clean, or take care of the children. Women do these things. One man explained that there are jobs for men and others for women based on the nature of each group:

> *Imirimo nko guteka, koza ibyombo, gukubura cyangwa kurera abana ni iby'abagore. Hari byinshi nabo badashobora nko kubaka kandi no gukura ibumba abagabo nibo babishobora cyane*.
> (Jobs like cooking, washing dishes, cleaning the ground or taking care of children are for women. But building houses and extracting clay are usually done by men.) (Field notes, February 2011)

This statement made women aware of how they worked without recognition from their husbands. Then, both women and men started to discuss the issue. Women (the majority in the literacy class) laid claim to their rights. As human beings, they needed to enjoy rest and to be helped by their husbands. After the discussion, men realized that something had to change in their daily activities. Then, with the help of their facilitators, participants proposed a plan of action. They planned together how to share activities because men had already understood that it was reasonable to help each other in order to work for a common goal, to improve their family's living conditions. While one man was silent on this issue, another declared the following:

> *Mu gihe turimo nta kuvunisha abagore bacu kuko nabo ni abantu. Ntacyo umuntu atashobora gukora afite ubushake kandi ibikorwa byose ni ibiteza urugo rwacu imbere, imibereho ikaba myiza kurushaho n"ubwumvikane bugasagamba. Ahubwo reka turebe uko twajya dufatanya*.
> (Nowadays, we cannot refuse to help our wives; they are also human beings who need to be supported in their daily activities. We, men, can make it if we want. After all, we do it to improve our family's living conditions and for mutual understanding in our family. Let us commit ourselves to equal sharing of activities in our homes.) (Field notes, February 2011)

The next plan of daily activities was done by both men and women in the Reflect 'Groupthink' circle.



Photograph 24: Daily routine diagram for both men and women (January 2011)

It was curious to see men (represented by Gabo in the picture below) proposing to do the same work as their wives. Men tried to put into practice what they proposed in the daily routine diagram for both men and women. The picture below shows how Gabo is starting to clean the literacy classroom, at the beginning of circle activities, without waiting for women to arrive. This activity was previously done by women.



Photograph 25: A man cleaning the literacy class

As men had understood the benefit of working together for a common goal, they tried to do things they had not done before. Women were surprised but happy. One woman said:

> *Hahirwa umugore we kuko we kuba yaraje gufatanya natwe yungutse byinshi kurenza ibyo batwigishaga mu magambo. Guhera aho leta yacu batwigishirije ubwuzuzanye, mwabonaga hari icyo bibabwiye bose? Ariko igihe tumaranye twigira hamwe yabaye umwe natwe. Byari kuba byiza iyo abandi bagabo bitabira iyi gahunda.*
> (His wife is lucky because the fact that he has been with us for a long time has helped him to understand gender balance. You know, our government has made efforts to teach us about gender, but without any success for the majority of men. But with the Reflect approach, he has become one of us. It would be better if other men responded positively to this programme) (Field notes, January 2011)

This was also observed while harvesting the maize, an activity which was traditionally performed by women in Rwanda.

Harvesting maize



Photograph 26: The harvesting of fresh maize by Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle (Feb. 2011)

The members of the circle enjoyed their first harvest. Men joined women in harvesting the maize, while in the past it was only women who went to the field to pick crops. Men also declared that they were ready to cook.

In the photograph below, a man was with women bringing in the first harvest. He was saying that he would cook the maize at home so that his wife could undertake other home duties. He declared this without any feeling of shame or indignation because he had understood the benefit of men and women working together to improve the quality of life in their families.



Photograph 27: Maize harvest celebration by Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle (Feb. 2011)

As Rwandan Potters were not used to growing crops, this harvest made them happy and they celebrated this event as the picture above reveals. The man in the photograph, above left, carrying maize in his hands is saying:

> *Murebe ko natwe kujya guca ibigori byo guteka nta gisebo kirimo ahubwo ni ibyishimo kuko noneho twashoboye no kubyihingira ubwacu kandi nta kamenyero twari tubifitemo.*
> (Look at me now, it is a day of joy and pride for us, men and women, to go together to harvest maize for cooking. You know that we were not used to working the fields, but now these are our products.) (Field notes, February 2011)

Women were also proud of their products. One woman seated on the ground celebrated by eating raw maize she was so happy (photograph 27). The participants planned to sell the rest of the maize harvest and open a bank account but this was not possible because the majority had urgent problems to solve in their families, such as buying school materials and clothes for their children.

The action of growing and selling maize created a desire to think about how they could get more money to open a bank account and continue to solve problems in their families. Their discussion about this issue led to a solution to continue to create other jobs.

Job creation

The creation of jobs implied thinking about expenses. The facilitators led the discussion by using a tree which shows a family‘s sources of money and also a list of expenses.



Photograph 28: A tree for income generating activities and reasons for needing money

This photograph shows us the sources (represented by the roots) of income within the Reflect ‘Groupthink’ circle, and the reasons for needing money (represented by the branches). The sources of income are fewer than the expenses. The Rwandan Potters were making money by

selling pots and growing crops, but their daily expenses such as school fees, food, rent, transport, hospital fees, clothes, welcoming visitors, and feasts were far beyond what they were earning. The drawing in the above picture shows that Rwandan Potters spent more money than they earned.

They therefore understood that they had to create jobs in their community. Some of them proposed growing flowers. This project fitted well with their everyday activities as they make vases. They also proposed to create a troupe of dancers because they are talented dancers. Others added that they could put money together and give it to one person after another, at regular intervals according to an amount decided upon by members. They agreed to run all these projects. They decided to start by creating a mutual fund based on entrusting one member with a certain amount of money per week.

Mutual funds in the Reflect 'Groupthink' circle



Photograph 29: A picture showing people collecting money for the "mutual fund"

The mutual fund that entrusted the members of the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle with a certain amount of money every Tuesday allowed some of them to open a bank account, while others managed to solve emergencies and were able to afford building materials. Thus mutual fund could be one of the solutions for improving their living conditions. It was, for example, an opportunity to combat hunger in their families and to meet some of their needs. To emphasize the benefit of this action, one participant stated:

> *Nkomeze ncweze tugume muri ubu butindi? » Arongera ati: "Intwari nigira icyo yigomwa, mureke dutangire ikimina dore amafaranga 100 tuyateranye hanyuma ngire ntya nyafunguze konte m' 'UMURENGE SACO'.*
> (Can I continue to keep silent and remain in misery? The hero is the one who can deprive him/herself of something for the sake of a greater cause. Let us start mutual fund by regularly giving 100frws to each other, and then I will myself open an account in UMURENGE SACO saving bank.) (Field notes, February 2011)

Flower project

As the Rwandan Potters have a talent for growing flowers, this project could contribute to improving their living conditions. They introduced a flower project by using money collected from the mutual fund and the researcher‘s help, and then planned the following activities to implement this project:

Action	**Period**	**People involved in the action**
Making pots	February 2011	Reflect ‘Groupthink’ circle
Filling up pots with soil and humus	February 2011	Reflect ‘Groupthink’ circle
Buying flowers	March 2011	Reflect ‘Groupthink’ circle
Planting flowers in pots	March 2011	Reflect ‘Groupthink’ circle
Taking care of flowers	From March 2011 and the following months	Reflect ‘Groupthink’ circle
Selling flowers	From April 2011 and the following months	Reflect ‘Groupthink’ circle

Table 15: Plan for the flowers project

The Reflect ‘Groupthink’ circle started to implement the flower project in February 2011. They made pots first and filled them with soil and humus, and then they planted bedding plants they bought from nurseries. The following pictures show the varieties of flowers grown by the Reflect ‘Groupthink’ circle.



Photograph 30: Long-stemmed flowers grown by Reflect ‘Groupthink’ circle (March 2011)



Photograph 31: Herbaceous flowers grown by Reflect 'Groupthink' circle (April 2011)

The flower project was chosen by the Reflect 'Groupthink' circle because the majority of Rwandan potters have a talent for looking after flowers. Above all, they know how to make pots, and the raw material, clay, is available in their fen. Therefore, the benefit of this project was palpable. The Reflect 'Groupthink' circle planned to sell their flowers at almost every fair or celebration in the country. They decided to sensitize people working in NGOs and in public sectors about their activities. Potters were able to raise funds to take care of their families and to sustain their project.

The first flower harvest enabled the members of Reflect 'Groupthink' circle to open their first bank account with the bank of BPR (Banque Populaire du Rwanda), but the Bank branch manager did not allow us to take a photoraph of this important event.

While the members of Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle were getting an income from the above project, some of them, especially women, were worried about how to make decisions about spending their money. Women became aware that they ought to have a say in the management of the money in their respective homes, instead of leaving the responsibility for spending money to men. In a discussion held in the Reflect circle, they reached a consensus that when women handle money, they take care of the welfare of everyone in the family, but men use it selfishly - they spend it on worthless leisure; items such as alcohol in bars, shish kebab, and so on. The facilitators used a matrix to compare women's and men's spending habits.

Decision-making and empowerment in money use



Photograph 32: Decision-making in their cooperative (June 2011)

The above matrix comprises three columns and several rows. At the top of the matrix, there is an earthenware pot on the left (1st column) which stands for under split expenditure; a skirt (2nd column) which stands for women; and a pair of short pants (3rd column) which stands for men (Traditionally, Rwandan women wear skirts while pants are for men). Then the parts of women and men in taking decisions to allocate money for responding to the needs is represented by the number of objects we find in the row under the skirt and the pair of short pants respectively. The picture is explained in the following table.

Item targeted by decision	Decision = 10/10	A woman	A man
Children	Taking care of children.	6	3
House	Searching for a plot for building a house, building work, decision about the use the house (selling it, allocating rooms for particular uses)	3	7
Money	Getting money and using it.	3	7
Plots of land	Buying and making decisions about their use (selling them, giving part to a friend, cultivating)	4	6
Food	Searching for food and cooking	8	2
Kitchen materials	Buying and taking care of the kitchen materials	7	3
Clothes	Buying, lending and donation	6	4
Percentage	—	62,8	44,2

Table 16: Decision-making in family management according to the gender of stakeholders

This table shows that women play an important role in decision making in their families, and this is reflected in the Kinyarwanda saying, which states that "*Umugore ni umutima w'urugo*" (a woman is the heart of her family). But the domains where women take decisions are trivial (food, clothes, and kitchen) in comparison with the important domains where men take decisions such as the management of money and resources which could generate income. This shows that women still have a lot to do to change their socio-cultural status in the matter of decision making in regard to the management of family resources and business affairs. It is evident that men are in charge of powerful and income–generating items such as land and houses. Gender issues were raised in the Reflect circle so that participants' ways of seeing things might change. This is revealed in the example below:

It was surprising but promising that after one year of Reflect, both men and women participants brought about a change in their community. On Tuesday, May 10th 2011, the Reflect circle proposed to replace the committee of their cooperative which had been in place for a long time. Before gaining literacy skills, members of the cooperative who could not read and write were unable to discuss effectively the problems they encountered. But as some of them had become aware of problems they were facing, they decided together to nominate a new committee and to be part of it. Among the six members nominated, three (two women and one man) belonged to the Reflect circle. Thanks to the literacy class, they gained skills and were able to make decisions aimed at changing things in their cooperative. They said that they had not understood how decisions were taken and how money was used in the cooperative. They wanted transparency in the management of their cooperative and were prepared to help others to participate in the decision making process and to solve their problems together.

7.3.2 Evaluation of activities (June 2011)

Items/issues raised by the members of Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle	Means and results	Challenges and solutions
1. Reading and writing	17 participants who remained in the Reflect programme finished the programme as planned with good results in reading, but weaker results in writing despite the fact that a lot of exercises were repeated to them during the second period.	Participants were still struggling with the writing. It was still a difficult task for new literates. It is a long process. To reinforce the culture of writing, members of the Reflect 'Groupthink' circle took a decision of continuing with reading and writing exercises together at least once a week, and to do the same exercises at their homes when they had time.
2. Gender issue	It was not the first time that gender in the Rwandan Potter community was pointed out. Two men and fifteen women who were in the Reflect 'Groupthink' circle showed a desire to share tasks. Men began to do unusual jobs in the literacy class and at their homes, such as cleaning, preparing food, washing dishes, taking care of children, and so on.	Men were worried about criticism from their colleagues in the cooperative who did not have the opportunity to attend the literacy class. Those men did not understand how a man could clean a house or cook. Those who managed to understand promised to help their wives at home and their colleagues in the literacy class, even if it was hard work.
3. Creation of alternative jobs to pottery		
● Crops	The harvest of maize and fruits was a reason to celebrate their effort to fight hunger in their families. They also got money which helped them to buy school materials for their children.	The harvest of vegetables was not good because Potters did not manage to take care of them. They were not used to growing plants. Apart from that, members of the Reflect 'Groupthink' circle concluded that cultivation would be an effective alternative to combat malnutrition and to meet their families' needs. They therefore decided to improve the practice of agriculture.
● Planting flowers	The flower project was successful because it was done with enthusiasm. The Potters took care of the flowers and they liked arranging them in their own pots. With the first harvest, they opened a bank account which benefited members of the Reflect 'Groupthink' circle.	The only problem they faced was competition on the market. The members of Reflect 'Groupthink' circle decided to attract clients by arranging a flower show.

● Troupe of dancers	The Rwandan Potters are known to enjoy dancing.	This project required money to pay for materials such as drums, bells, costumes,… The Reflect circle decided to raise money gradually. A joint account on behalf of "Reflect Groupthink circle" would be opened at the BPR where the stakeholders could deposit the money.
4. Decision making and empowerment	For the first time, participants in the Reflect approach showed that they had no fear of taking a decision when needed. The good example is given when Modern Pottery Cooperative's members supported by the Reflect 'Groupthink' circle decided to change the membership of the committee. This showed again the skills and the confidence the group had gained.	Some participants still think that a woman cannot have a voice in matters of money. With discussions held among members of the Reflect 'Groupthink' circle and with collaboration of facilitators, the role / contribution of the women in income generation activities was emphasized. Therefore, all members understood that it was reasonable to associate women with decisions regarding money use.
5. Mutual support for facing the harshness of living conditions among members of the Reflect 'Groupthink' circle	The principle of mutuality has been instituted in the Reflect 'Groupthink' circle. Each participant gave 100frws once a week and one member was entrusted with the money collected. This money helped each one to solve current problem s/ he was facing in his/ her family.	Some participants forgot to bring money to the literacy class. The problem was solved by returning home and bringing it immediately after the literacy class.

Table 17: Evaluation of the second period activities (June 2011)

The above evaluation shows that even though efforts were made to improve writing skills, writing requires more attention from the outset. Participants acquired reading rapidly, but writing was difficult for them. However, participants enjoyed these exercises, and they made progress.

Concerning the harvest of their crops, participants were very proud, but the problem was to continue farming their fields with the aim of combating hunger in their families. The Potters were not used to growing plants, but after benefiting from Reflect they showed that they could change their habits and do things other than pottery. Alternative work like farming could help them gain what they need. This is highlighted in the examples of job creation in the table above.

The Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle was proud to create jobs with projects such as growing vegetables, planting flowers, and creating a troupe of dancers. They managed to implement the first two projects, and decided to work to accomplish the third one, as well as other projects which will emerge from discussions they will hold together, because they have developed the habit of handling the problems they encounter in everyday life together. This decision was taken when concluding the programme, in the presence of the researcher, where they said:

> *Twizeye ko tutarangirije aha kuko mwatubwiye ko nta na rimwe abantu bahwema gutekereza ibyo bakora kugira ngo bakemure ibibazo bagenda bahura na byo mu buzima bwa buri munsi*.
> (We hope that this is not the end of our programme (as Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle) because you have said that people continue to reflect on and to search for solutions together on issues that arise in their everyday life.) (Field notes, June 2011)

From this statement, one can imagine the power and skills the participants have in managing their destiny, with hope and without fear. They expressed in their words and thoughts the strengths of the principles of the Reflect approach.

7.5 Conclusion

The application of the Reflect approach in Gataba village has shown that adults are able to acquire reading and writing skills and to engage in solving problems they encounter in their community. They are able to put into practice the Rwandan proverb which states that '*Nta mugabo umwe'* (united we stand or unity is strength). Sitting together, they reflect on their living conditions and try to improve them. This is the testimony of consciousness-raising among the Rwandan Potters about the problems they face and the effectiveness of searching for solutions as a team. In this regard, many projects emerged from daily discussions, which were organised around the pair wise ranking of problems associated with illiteracy in the Community.

In their discussions, the participants learned to read and write in their mother tongue. They needed literacy skills to manage everyday matters they had to deal with in their lives. They also realised that once they knew how to read, to write and do arithmetic, they could learn to do other jobs and create new ones.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION TO THE STUDY

The Reflect approach was introduced to the Rwandan Potter Community in Gataba village where their Modern Pottery Cooperative is based, with the aim of gauging its relevance in tackling serious problems of poverty, marginalization, and powerlessness, which are associated with these people. Action research was used as the research approach. The research was conducted over a period of twelve months, i.e. from June 2010 to June 2011, with a break of one month in April 2011. Chapter 6 was devoted to the 'trial phase' which took four months, from June to September 2010, during which the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle was established in Gataba village. In chapter 7, I described the implementation phase (from October 2010 to June 2011 with a break in April 2011) during which the circle tackled problems encountered by the Potters in their everyday life.

Chapter 8 discusses the results in relation to the literature reviewed in previous chapters. It points out differences and similarities to the existing works, and then concludes the study. The starting point is the purpose of this study which was to find out whether the Reflect approach was appropriate to solve problems encountered by the Rwandan Potters in their everyday life. To meet this aim, I was guided by the research questions (see chapter 1), an abundant literature review (chapters 2, 3, and 4) which shed light on the questions, PRA tools and techniques such as interviews, dialogue, participant observation, focus groups, Information Record – Memory Retrievable Dictation (IRMD), photography, and field notes (chapter 5). All these tools traced my way towards an unknown destination which I reached at the end of the research. An analysis of data gathered and presented (chapters 6 and 7) produced themes which are discussed below and whose interpretation leads to answers to the research questions.

8.1 Responsiveness to the Reflect approach

The pilot phase of the Reflect approach among the Rwandan Potters convinced them of the importance of being equipped with reading, writing and numeracy skills in order to solve problems of poverty, marginalization and powerlessness in their community. There was really a need to find a way to develop these skills for members of the Modern Pottery Cooperative assembled in the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle. Those who became involved in

the Reflect circle were worried about being unable to use reading, writing and numeracy skills in their everyday activities. When I came to talk to them about the problems they were facing, and about the Reflect approach, I was warmly welcomed. They responded very quickly and declared that they were suffering from problems related to poverty, marginalisation and powerlessness which they associated with illiteracy. They agreed that the first issue to be tackled was reading and writing. Who participated in this new programme, and how did they respond to it?

8.1.1 The first volunteers for Reflect

Women were in the majority as volunteers for Reflect. At the beginning, there were seventeen women and three men; but sixteen women and one man continued to the end. One woman and two men dropped out in August 2010 and March 2011. One of the men died in an accident. The woman who dropped out said that her age (50 years old) did not allow her to learn; while the man who dropped out said that he wanted to look for a job. He believed he would find one with his gains in reading and writing. As may be seen, it was a women dominated Reflect circle. This situation is similar to what was found in Uganda (Bundibugyo) where Kanyesigye (1998) reported that women were 85% of participants in Reflect circles. They explained that they had not been given the opportunity to speak or to be listened to when they spoke. In Gambia too, women were the majority of participants in a programme on poverty alleviation (Brown, Howes, Hussein, Longley & Swindell, 2002). The same authors reported that women were well-represented among the poor and were the first to benefit from the credit that the programme provided to alleviate poverty. This also coincides with UNESCO's statement (2007) about the high rate of illiteracy among women in developing country contexts all over the world which keeps them under-developed. Therefore, when an opportunity is given to attend a literacy programme, they are the first to volunteer.

This statement explains why women are in the majority in literacy programmes. It also affects other excluded and disadvantaged groups, such as ethnic minorities, rural populations, indigenous people, and people living with HIV/AIDS and disabilities, who need to be given priority (UNESCO, 2007). In this study, the focus is on the Rwandan Potters Community, a minority group of marginalized people.

The majority of Modern Pottery Cooperative‘s members are women who are seriously affected by poverty, marginalisation, powerlessness, and who cannot read or write. The women potters explained that they wanted to create a space where they could share their concerns, and search for solutions. What do women participating in the Reflect ‘Groupthink’ Circle say about their situation?

The situation of women in the Modern Pottery Cooperative is similar to several situations where the Reflect approach was implemented between 1993 and the time of the study. Archer, in a survey of Reflect (read on www.reflect-action.org, accessed on 17th October 2011), shows similar results:

> Women are clearly the majority of participants in most Reflect processes and many organisations work exclusively with all-female Reflect circles. This is not just in cases where Reflect has been used with pre-existing women‘s groups (which account for 30 organisations) but is also clearly an active option in many other cases – creating a new space for women to meet together. Even in mixed circles women tend to be in the majority. This can be put down to the disproportionate exclusion from schooling of girls and hence a higher level of need and interest in learning from women adults compared to men. It may also be that men are reluctant to come forward to participate in anything that is identified with basic learning owing to the issues of social status, personal pride and stigma. (Archer, 2001, p. 21)

The above stated situation is not surprising because all over the world, women have been pushed aside from decision-making instances and economic activities. This kind of discrimination has consequences for their welfare. When opportunities are offered to them in order to talk about their problems and to search for solutions, they are the first to respond to the invitation. Examples from pilot studies (Phnuyal, Archer & Cottingham, 1998) in Uganda, Bangladesh and India showed that women welcomed the opportunity to be more visible and audible in family and community meetings; to have the same right to loans as their husbands; and to participate in decision-making meetings. What happened in these Reflect circles and other programmes where the Reflect approach was implemented also took place among the Rwandan Potters women who formed the Reflect ‘Groupthink’ Circle in this research. But what did they do to show that they welcomed the Reflect approach in their cooperative?

8.1.2 The Rwandan Potters' contribution to the implementation of Reflect in Gataba Village

In Rwanda, when someone or an organisation comes up with an idea to implement a programme in a certain place, especially in a poor community like the one of the Rwandan Potters in this study, people want to be paid before participanting in a programme. The members of these communities think that solutions to their problems come from outside. They do not realise that they can search for solutions by themselves. Examples are found in the work of Archer (2001). He reported that there are instances where participants expect to be paid for their participation. "Participants expect financial assistance" (Bangladesh); "People expect something in return for their participation" (Peru) (Archer, 2001, p. 25). These observations are also made in research undertaken in Uganda (Fiedrich, 2004) and El Salvador (Betts, 2003), which revealed in two specific (but very different) contexts that many participants saw themselves as making a sacrifice in order to please the organisation that was promoting Reflect. They did this with the expectation that by aligning themselves with the organisation and behaving appropriately, they would be rewarded with future handouts. As Fiedrich (Reflect in Uganda, 2004) observes, this is much more rational than buying a lottery ticket. This is part of the dynamic of many development programmes that is rarely addressed openly.

Fortunately, the Rwandan Potters were very eager to join a literacy programme. Some examples, such as not waiting for the construction of their literacy class before starting Reflect sessions, are revealing. In this regard, the first sessions were held outdoors in the open air during June 2010 and the first half of July, because that is the sunny summer season in Rwanda. In addition, the Potters appealed to the researcher for help in order to build their literacy class. When they were asked for their contribution, they said that they had no money for buying materials but they offered to use their own labour to clear the ground. They assigned shared tasks, such as negotiation with the representatives of Modern Pottery Cooperative for the land, and they reached a consensus that all of them could be assistant builders, instead of hiring workers from outside. It was very easy to get the plot of land because the Reflect 'Groupthink. Circle belongs to the said cooperative, and the representatives of the cooperative welcomed the Reflect programme from the first day that I, as researcher, introduced it to them. The only remaining problem was to get building materials. When I was asked to help, I bought these materials and the cooperative agreed to

pay two builders. In July 2010**,** as mentioned in chapter 6, the literacy class was launched. All these efforts reveal the responsive audience and the conducive social context which supported the Reflect programme, and substantiate the response to the first research question which is, 'How did a select group of Rwandan Potters respond to the Reflect approach?'

8.2 Discovering literacy priorities through Reflect

As Reflect is an approach which emphasizes helping people to discuss the problems they encounter in their lives, the facilitators in the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle found it necessary to prioritise the participants' problems. To do so, they looked at two aspects of Reflect highlighted in the literature review (in the original Reflect Mother Manual, 1996) where Reflect is described as: "a new approach to adult literacy which fuses the theory of Freire and the practice of Participatory Rural Appraisal" (Riddell, 2001, p. 50). They also looked at the 'renewed' definition by Phnuyal, Archer and Cottingham which was given to the Reflect approach in 1998 (chapter 3), which placed emphasis on a participatory learning process which facilitates people's critical analysis of their environment and which empowers them for sustainable development.

8.2.1 The significance of literacy within the context of the Rwandan Potters Community

Problems of marginalization, poverty and powerlessness are known to be common in the Rwandan Potter Community. The Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle decided to tackle these problems focussing first on illiteracy (chapters 1, 6, and 7). Illiteracy constituted a serious barrier for the Rwandan Potters to alleviate poverty and marginalization in their community. Therefore, the facilitators gave priority to reading and writing, for three reasons:

Firstly, when they found out that women were the majority of volunteers in the Reflect circle, they put into practice what UNESCO (2007) reported about the education of women in society, namely 'When you educate a woman, you educate a nation'. UNESCO (2007) argues that combating ignorance in society begins with educating women, because they are the first educators of their children. When they are educated, they can participate in combating

illiteracy around them. Research tells us that a child‘s ability to thrive is closely linked with his mother‘s education level. That is why literacy for women is at the centre of efforts to increase literacy around the world. Our mothers are often our lives (UNESCO, 2007). The Reflect facilitators thought that UNESCO‘s declaration was important as they were tackling the problem of illiteracy among the participants to the Reflect ‘Groupthink’ Circle.

Secondly, illiteracy was identified as a major problem that hampers the everyday life of the Rwandan Potter Community, impairs their ability to develop socio-economically, with the consequences of locking them in a pattern of marginalization, poverty and powerlessness. Therefore, there was a pressing need to tackle illiteracy first.

Finally, the existing literature review on context-based Reflect practice shows that experience gained from Asian countries with a long tradition of Reflect indicates that although literacy is always a key element, the emphasis differs from context to context (Bhalalusesa, n.d.). The local model may focus on literacy as a tool for empowerment, on community action or on human rights. In places where there is still high illiteracy, emphasis on the 3Rs (reading, writing and numeracy) is recommended, as Bhalalusesa has reported about Tanzania.

This literature is relevant to the Rwandan Potter Community‘s case because there are still many adults who are illiterate and innumerate. This is not a problem monopolized by some of the aforementioned countries such as India, Tanzania, and so on. The way participants in the Reflect ‘Groupthink’ Circle understood the benefits of literacy was that they could not solve the problems they faced without being literate. When the facilitators explained how Reflect works, they agreed, but they argued that literacy was the most important thing for all, for them to work in their cooperative and to solve other problems. This is similar to Robinson‘s (2004) findings, but the difference is that initially members of the Reflect ‘Groupthink’ Circle wanted to privilege reading and writing over other issues. After acquiring some reading, writing and calculating skills, their thinking was more like Robinson‘s writing about the social benefits of literacy:

> The social benefits of literacy have been shown to be enhanced when literacy programmes are accompanied by supportive interventions, such as credit facilities, skills training, and in the health context, access to family planning facilities or maternal child health centres (Oxenham et al. 2002, Lauglo 2001). This relates also to

> the kind of approach promoted in literacy programmes: Smith (1997) found in Nepal that integrated health and literacy programmes had a greater effect on women's health, than literacy alone or health alone. In this case, the literacy/health curriculum encouraged women to seek advice from local health professionals. Similarly, in family literacy programmes, parents are offered practical ways of supporting their children's education, alongside their own literacy learning (discussed in the Nepal context by Manandhar and Leslie, 1994 and Reinhold 1993). (Robinson-Pant, 2004)

In the Rwandan Potters' Reflect classes, the facilitators led discussions to help participants understand the importance of tackling illiteracy and other issues which hampered their development. Community development (see chapter 2) represents an approach that facilitates individual and community capabilities, that tackles more than one problem at a time, and that fosters citizen efforts and citizen influence in decision-making (Florin & Wandersman, 1990). Furthermore, as found in the case of Gambia, the promotion of literacy can bring change in methods of educating adults who cannot read and write (Brown et al., 2002)**.** Having understood that it was imperative to tackle illiteracy along with other problems, participants in the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle explained that reading and writing were important for them because they used them to deal with various problems, such as selling their products, communicating with others, processing information, and so on. This is similar to the ideological model of literacy as defined by Barton and Hamilton (2000) reviewed in chapter 3, which emphasises what people do with literacy from particular political and ideological positions, rather than on what literacy can do for people. Barton's and Hamilton's understanding could lead us to the real face of Reflect, today. Those aspects of literacy discussed above underpin an answer to the second research question which was: "What literacy and other educational interests and needs within this group are identified using the Reflect approach?"

8.2.2 Acquiring reading, writing and numeracy skills

As described above, from the outset, participants reflected on their daily life and found that they faced challenges in reading, writing and numeracy. These skills were needed, firstly for working effectively in their cooperative (even if literacy is not a requirement for becoming a cooperative member in Rwanda); secondly for selling their products to customers; and thirdly to participate actively in personal development and other social programmes aimed at community development. This was also observed in Malawi where the Ministry of Women

and Child Development (2008) stated that the link between literacy and development has resulted in the placement of adult literacy above poverty reduction. This report used Herbert's (2004) argument that empirical evidence demonstrates that high literacy levels correlate positively with low poverty levels. This argument suggests that literacy leads to development, as many Rwandan Potters believed when they began their literacy class. Participants in the literacy class clearly saw literacy as a way of enhancing personal capacity to change living conditions and as a path to future development. They described it as follows:

> *Ni ikintu cyiza ko abantu nkatwe ababumbyi bagenda bamenya gusoma, kwandika no kubara. Ntekereza ko ababumbyi benshi mu bihe bishize batabyigaga. Ndumva ari umugisha kuri twe. Ntekereza ko ari byiza kugira isomero. Ntekereza kandi ko turimo duhindura imibererho yacu ku buryo bwiza twikemurira ibibazo duhura nabyo buri munsi.*
> (It is a good thing that people like us potters are becoming literate. I think that many potters in the past could not acquire reading, writing and calculation skills. I feel that it is a real blessing. I think that it is very important to have a literacy programme. I think we are unbelievably changing our personal lives for the better and moving the Rwandan Potter Community forward with literacy skills). (Field notes, October 2010)

After discussing this issue, the Potters realised that they needed to begin as soon as possible. With the help of their facilitators, they planned for action (chapter 6) and began to put literacy classes into practice twice a week. This is similar to what was stated in chapter 3 that the ability to read and write is a prerequisite for gaining many other abilities, such as computer literacy, mobile phone literacy, and so on (Ntilema, 2009, p. 3). Therefore, the Reflect approach was a key approach to tackle the Rwandan Potters' concerns. The Rwandan Potters participating in the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle were used to living with resignation. The Reflect approach gave them new insights about the issues they were facing, and instilled in them the desire and confidence to improve their situation. It had become a serious issue to work in a cooperative without literacy skills. That is why the Rwandan Potter Community grouped in Modern Pottery Cooperative responded positively to the Reflect approach. They welcomed this research from the first meeting when I told them that I wanted to reflect with them on challenges they experienced in their daily life.

When I announced that I needed three people to train, so that they could help me to work with a group of 20 volunteers in searching for solutions to issues which would arise during the period of research, they immediately identified potential facilitators by describing their qualities in helping others. They mentioned that they chose people who were able to take up

responsibilities including facilitating group discussions, solving conflicts and making decisions that would benefit all participants, and so on, including the ability to face challenges which could arise during meetings. This emphasizes the role of the facilitator and the challenges he/she has to deal with, when using participative methodologies (see chapter 4 about Reflect and facilitation).

Reading and writing skills, the opportunities for group discussion, the Reflect and PRA activities opened the minds of Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle members to new opportunities for improving their lives, such as taking up small income generating projects; comprehending social and political issues in their country, such as policies related to family planning, gender equality, and HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment, because they were able to read various reading materials written in Kinyirwanda such us textbooks and journals, and write with understanding. This reveals that literacy liberates and empowers people to make meaningful decisions, choices and actions in order to explore new possibilities and initiate positive and constructive change in their lives. This embraces UNESCO's (2007, p.3) point that the ability to read and write is the foundation for learning and for success in life. From this point of view, I deduce that an educated person is well equipped to handle the challenges s/he could face in life. As far as women are concerned, the story told in chapter 6 is a good illustration of what King and Hill (1993, p. 12) say about what an educated mother can do for her family, such as taking care of the children's education, hygiene, nutrition and health. Based on what I had observed during my research, I could add the following examples as pointed out by the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle: the benefits from literacy may be extended to almost any endeavour in human life, such as working, worldwide communication, nutrition, farming; income generation projects (planting and selling flowers in order to eradicate endemic poverty in their families); health insurance subscription; testing for HIV/AIDS infection, and so on. All these cases testify to the power of literacy, which enables people to handle with more discernment various situations affecting their lives.

Although reading and writing were the first issues discussed in the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle, the facilitators also emphasized that literacy was not the only or necessarily the most important element of literacy programmes. Helped by the researcher, the facilitators began to help participants discuss another real dimension of literacy. Literacy cannot work alone, but solving problems in the community needs literacy. Therefore, literacy is important because of what people do with it.

8.2.3 Reflect as a device for developing the Rwandan Potter Community

When we began to put the Reflect approach into practice, the facilitators and the researcher broke with the top-down approach which had dominated in literacy classes in Rwanda for a long time, because we wanted to help the Rwandan Potters make decisions about their own development. Even if the Rwandan Potters started by tackling the problem of illiteracy, the facilitators led them to understand that literacy is one part of the Reflect programme. To do so, they used tools and techniques which broadened their minds, not to fill them with knowledge, but to help them to reflect deeply on their own issues and to search for solutions by themselves. The bottom-up approach (see chapters 2, 3 and 4) which was adopted facilitated the participation of all participants without external influences. This self-directed process was the beginning of changes that had to be made during the process of reflection and action using literacy and other knowledge and skills to solve problems. This idea was highlighted in the literature review by Duffy, Fransman and Pearce (2008) who observe that literacy is more than the acquisition of the skills of reading, writing and numeracy; it also involves the functional use of these skills. It also encompasses a range of social and cultural practices and can be a tool for critical reflection and action.

By using the power and skills gained from this process, the Rwandan Potters began to air their voices which had been lost due to their marginalisation and powerlessness. They realised that they could hold discussions, intervene in public meetings, criticise others' opinions and evaluate social and cultural practices with confidence. During the work on the ground, the participants revealed what had constituted obstacles to their development and tried to search together for sustainable solutions, using PRA tools. Those tools are summarized, interpreted and discussed in the following section.

The use of Reflect tools for different purposes

As mentioned above, the process was self-directed. This process was guided by selected PRA tools (map, trees, pair wise ranking, matrix, diagram, calendar, historical profile) and adapted to help adults to address freely the challenges they experience in their lives, and share their ideas when searching for solutions. The research findings were obtained by using three kinds

of PRA tools: tools for identifying problems; tools for analysing these problems; and tools for categorising the problems. Then, a map was used to identify problems in the Rwandan Potter Community in general, and in the Modern Pottery Cooperative in particular. The problems encountered were related to the lack of a literacy class, unused parts of the Modern Pottery Cooperative's property, while many members of the cooperative were experiencing hunger and poor nutrition. These problems were associated with the problem of illiteracy faced by the Rwandan Potters.

A PRA tool known as 'Tree' was drawn to show the origins and extent of illiteracy, marginalisation and powerlessness among the Rwandan Potters. The roots show the causes of their situation, the trunk shows the extent of it, while the branches represent the consequences.

A matrix of the consequences of illiteracy was used to categorise the consequences of illiteracy and numeracy. This was done to identify what should be tackled first, taking into account the factors which intervene in accomplishing activities.

PRA tools were interesting for Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle participants and they enjoyed using them. They learnt by doing, using local materials. They found out that items we do not give value to could be good tools for learning. Even though they appreciated this methodology, it was challenging for novice facilitators and participants because it was the first time they had used PRA tools. The same scenario was found in Gambia where Brown et al. (2002) found that it was possible to move further and faster with literate people, than with non-literates for whom the methodology is challenging. Non-literates encountered problems with drawing. This problem was similar to that experienced in the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle when writing letters and numbers. Another case which is similar to the Gambian one is the use of PRA tools, such as mapping and drawing a diagram (see Preece, 2006, in chapter 4 with minority ethnic groups in America). Facilitators had to help participants to use these processes. In a Western context, there is often a problem of language and cultural differences between the youthful researchers and minority ethnic community members (Doyle & Krasny, 2003). This differs from the Rwandan context where the participants and the facilitators in the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle could share their ideas freely in the same language.
This helped Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle members to move forward and become aware of what to do to improve their lives. This was observed particularly during the phases of action

plans, elaboration and implementation in the process of Action Research (AR). Evaluations conducted by participants and facilitators after each phase of the research show how, in addition to PRA tools, other techniques such as interviews, observations and focus group discussions supported by pictures were used to show that people could be empowered to do things on their own to improve their lives. The following points are revealing on this matter.

Reflect and handling money

As participants gradually discovered the importance of literacy in their daily activities, they tried to use the skills they gained in order to improve their living conditions and take a step forward towards development. They claimed they avoided begging and began to earn money to solve their financial problems. The use of the tree tool for income generation activities and causes of expenditures (see chapter 7) revealed that they were conscious of the source of the problems of the endemic poverty they were experiencing. In an attempt to find solutions, they used the new skills acquired in Reflect to deal with their problems, and recognised that in developing literacy they were developing themselves. Prior to this, they did not know how to open an account, and did not trust one another with their joint savings. With the saved money, they began a flower growing project because the majority of them knew how to take care of flowers. Selling flowers is lucrative in Rwanda, when well managed. It could help Potters solve many of their financial problems. The Reflect approach and literacy activities empowered the Rwandan Potters participating in the study to undertake fruitful initiatives.

Health literacy and family planning

The story described in chapter 6 helped participants to understand the importance of the health of family members. Reflect was understood as a process by which participants gathered in the Circle could discuss issues and find solutions by involving themselves as individuals; nobody else would bother about their concerns, because it was their particular perspective on a situation affecting their lives. Participants explained the fear they had of testing for HIV/AIDS. However, testimonies by some colleagues prompted others to overcome their apprehension, to share their problems, in order to be helped to live positively with HIV/AIDS. Participants learned not to stigmatize people living with the disease. This is a sign of personal empowerment as a participant in a literacy programme in rural El Salvador, explained, “My shame/timidity/embarrassment left me” (Prins, 2008, p. 29). This way of

understanding fits well with what Robinson (2004) highlighted about the benefits of literacy in her research on women's literacy and development in Nepal. She found that women's literacy rates can be correlated with statistical indicators of development, such as women's health and empowerment.

Members of the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle did not gain personal empowerment only, but interpersonal empowerment as well. Before forming a learning circle, some members showed antagonism towards others. The Reflect circle encouraged friendly relationships between the participants, the facilitators and the researcher. It became a space for sharing everything without fear. This became significant when participants realised that they could help their colleagues who could not afford the cost of medical insurance. They collected money every week and put it together until they paid medical insurance for three families in need. Their relationships had improved through Reflect and through shared leadership (this is further developed in the section below). This is similar to interpersonal empowerment (Stromquist, 1995) which happens when people work together to achieve a more extensive impact than each could have if s/he worked alone. Where empowerment sits, development occurs. However, in this study, the time we had (twelve months for implementing Reflect, and 3 months for follow up of the project) did not permit the collection of testimonies about collective empowerment.

Emerging shared leadership among Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle

When people are committed to work together, it is important to observe the emerging shared leadership. This strengthens cohesion and sustainability of their projects. In the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle, when one member began to take an attendance register for agricultural work, it meant that he had understood the necessity to lead a group of people with the aim of attaining the targeted objectives. This also happened when participants had to undertake joint action to solve the problem of poor nutrition among their children. In this regard, two women among the participants took the initiative to lead their colleagues by using their experiences.
This is similar to what Foster-Fishman, Berkowitz, Lounsbury, Jacobson, and Allen (2001) explained when they said that capable members (leaders) are needed to build collaborative capacity; and collaboration is ultimately about developing the social relationships that are needed to achieve desired goals (Foster-Fishman et al., p. 251). In Rwandan culture, this is summarized in the old adage '*umutwe umwe ntiwigira inama wifasha gusara*' (which literally

means that ‘two heads thinking together are better than one’). This adage seems appropriate to this study in which participants helped one another and in which “team members take on the leadership tasks for which they are best suited or are most motivated to accomplish” (Bligh et al., 2006, p. 306). In addition, O’Toole et al. (2002, p. 68) notes that two or more leaders are better than one when “the challenges a corporation faces are so complex that they require a set of skills too broad to be possessed by any one individual”.

8.3 Gender based decision-making through Reflect

By simply observing the Reflect ‘Groupthink’ Circle’s members, people may ask how I dared to talk about gender while the majority of participants were women. Such thinking has characterized popular education projects (Metcalf & Gomez, 1998), but in the current research project, a new understanding is put forward which I intend to elucidate by responding to the third research question ‘Is the Reflect approach sensitive to gender based decision-making among the Rwandan Potters?’ In this regard, Metcalf and Gomez state that:

> A gender focus implies the redistribution of social powers in order to create a more democratic distribution of power. To work with a gender focus implies deconstructing: to develop a critical vision, to distance ourselves from our culture, our values, our ideas and concepts, our ways of thinking and feeling in order to construct a new culture based on relations of equality and equity between men and women. (Metcalf & Gomez, 1998, p. 1)

Even if the Reflect ‘Groupthink’ Circle comprises mainly women, this does not mean that there are no gender issues in the Rwandan Potter Community. The participants were worried about the small number of men in the Reflect process. Women in the literacy class revealed their worry about the absence of their husbands while they exposed issues of being overloaded with work from morning to night, while their husbands had time to rest and to waste money earned by their wives. The workload described in chapter 6 means that women do not have time to rest. They are considered by their husbands as the ‘machines to do the work’, but not as managers of money gained from the sale of their products (pots and vases). This situation is similar to what Metcalf and Gomez (1998) found in Uganda. Fiedrich and Jellema (2003, p. 23) state that among the Baganda assets are considered to be commonly owned by both husband and wife, but the husband controls them. According to

Bagandan culture, a wife should hand over her crops to her husband when it is time to sell, and the husband should also decide how the money will be spent. Such a situation was observed among the Rwandan Potters. Women Potters' decisions were made by their husbands.

The attitudes of Bagandan men towards their wives are similar to those shared by some Rwandan women in general, and women Potters in particular. I say 'some' women because the efforts of the Rwandan Government to sensitize the population about gender relations have been understood by some men. Yet women Potters said that there was a long way to go. They explained that some men tried to hide their faces because they feared ridicule. For example, men no longer beat their wives, but they continue to abuse them with insults and attempt to control their thoughts. This behaviour revealed an issue which merits discussion and resolution. The Reflect Circle provided material for two pilot studies related to gender roles, described by Archer and Cottingham (1996), who stated that the Reflect pilot studies in Uganda and Bangladesh appeared to have a positive initial impact on gender roles and relations. In Uganda, learners and facilitators reported that many men began to undertake domestic work, such as carrying water and fetching fire wood, previously carried out by women. Women became more vocal and more involved in key household and community decisions. In Bangladesh, women attributed their growing involvement in household decision-making to the Reflect approach.

In the case of the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle, one of the two men who attended the Reflect circle understood gender relations. He confessed he did not help his wife, who was also in the circle. Another man declared that he did everything with his wife and therefore this problem did not concern his family. This was not true because he dropped out a few days later; and other participants said that he had lied. His reaction suggests that gender equality is not accepted by all Rwandan men. Some men do not wish to change their attitudes. They still argue for sexual stereotypes related to the culture in which women and men play different roles depending on traditional gender roles. This second man illustrated what the literature revealed about a pilot study of the Reflect approach in El Salvador where the organisations and individuals involved lacked basic gender awareness, and there was no significant impact on gender roles (Archer & Cottingham, 1996).

Fortunately, some Potters comprehended gender roles and accepted that their mentality should change. After one week, women noticed a sudden change in the behaviour of one man

who was participating in the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle. He came early to clean the literacy classroom (see photograph 25 in chapter 7). Normally this work was done by women. His wife was very proud of this and said that things were changing for the better in their family "*Kuva tuganiriye ku kibazo cy'uburinganire, ubu imirimo hafi ya yose turayifatanya* (Since our discussions on gender issues, we do most things together"). The same man proposed drawing up a schedule which engaged both men and women equally (chapter 7) in the family's activities. He explained that they would share activities depending on each person's availability, but each one would be able to accomplish any activity on the schedule (see chapter 7).

This situation was encountered in Ghana (Riddell, 2001) where attending the Reflect circle brought changes in the community. Men took more responsibility for work which was traditionally carried out by women, and they changed attitudes towards health and hygiene. These changes are acknowledged in several studies about the social benefits of literacy. Examples are given respectively in Lesotho, Bangladesh and India. In Lesotho, Attwood, Castle and Smythe (2004) showed that literacy acquisition through the Reflect approach led to a change in gender roles and practices. In Bangladesh, Maddox (2005) found that in some households, literacy enabled women to establish their right to manage the household financially, normally controlled by men. A study conducted in India (Khandekar, 2004) demonstrated how literacy empowered Dali (low caste) women to challenge a culture which expected them to suffer poverty and violence and to adopt subservient behaviour. Khandekar showed that acquisition of literacy and participation in the literacy programme provided women with the confidence and opportunity for collective action and leadership against alcoholism amongst the community's men. In Uganda, Phnuyal, Archer and Cottingham (1998**)** found that more than 50 per cent of women participants reported that their husbands were fetching fuel and water (traditionally a women's responsibility) in order to free them for more agricultural work. These are some cases described in the literature review (see chapter 4) which demonstrate that Reflect programmes can introduce changes in people's behaviour, and lead them to play an unusual role in their families and community.

The low participation of men in the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle revealed the extent of the problem of 'gender' in the Modern Pottery Cooperative. I could argue that men choose a

programme according to what they can gain from it, because most of the men said that they did not have enough time for literacy classes. They wanted to generate income, but they agreed to send their wives to attend the literacy class. This was emphasized when the man who dropped out was asked by his colleagues why he had done so. He replied that attending literacy classes was good for women, while men had to look for jobs and money. The same scenario was observed in Mali when participants were asked to rate their programme. The majority of those who expressed dissatisfaction with the programme (ranging from 10-15%, depending on whether it was reading, writing, numeracy or the circle discussions), were men (Riddell, 2001). This attitude reveals another issue, how men consider women in their community. Men continue to think that they are the ones who are able to access money and consider themselves as persons who have the right to comfort and freedom, but women do not have these rights. Gender does not mean 'women' as traditionally defined. In the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle, gender implies both men and women (see Metcalf & Gomez, 1998, p. 1 in chapter 3) who share power. This situation is also encountered in Mali and in the Sudan where the reason for the high participation rate amongst women, rather than men, is not well understood (Riddell, 2001). This differs from what the literature review revealed about the attendance of men in Reflect circles in Ghana where men seemed to be more integrated into the process than usual, despite the fact that circles mainly involve women. Young men began to take an interest due to the success of the action taken (Riddell, 2001, p.16).

8.4 Toward empowerment among the Rwandan Potters

As mentioned above, empowerment is the main aim of Reflect because the ultimate goal of this approach is to bring people to a point where they find themselves capable of facing every situation, taking decisions in their community without fear and with self-confidence, self-esteem and determination, and to reach an ideal in their lives. This goal was achieved by the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle**,** and in so doing the group answered the fourth research question, which was **'**Did the Reflect approach strengthen the capacity of the Rwandan Potters in action for development?'

8.4.1 Signs of empowerment and development

Members of the Circle showed signs of their improvement and development by intervening in

the Modern Pottery Cooperative‘s meetings, by writing a short report after an activity done as a team, writing the names of their family members, writing letters and essays in Kinyarwanda language, reading every notice encountered on the street, drawing action-plans for small projects, and by opening and monitoring a bank account - to name but a few. This shows the degree of empowerment gained through the Reflect process. The same examples of empowerment were found in an evaluation by Riddell in 2001, who said that the Reflect approach encourages and enables participants to critically assess their lives, take control of their futures, enhance their literacy skills, generate a vocabulary which is relevant to their own community or situation, recognize and build upon their knowledge, and mobilize for individual and collective actions.

I explain the benefits of using Reflect to educate one group of Rwandan Potters called the Reflect ‘Groupthink’ Circle in a practical model I constructed based on participants’ ideas in order to draw conclusions which fit with the purpose of this study.

Cyclical model of Reflect in practice

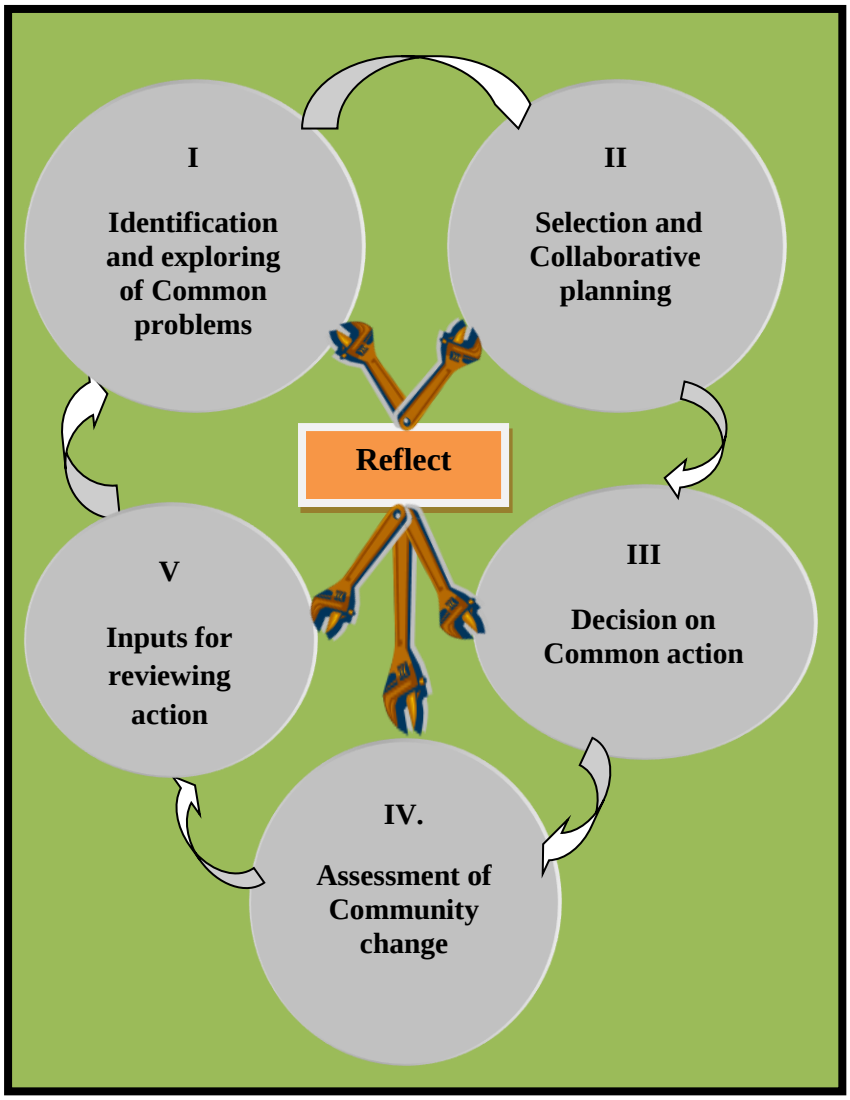


Figure 7: Framework for empowerment designed by the researcher with ideas from the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle

The Reflect process of identifying collective problems constitutes a gradual and continuous process of identifying and exploring problems with the intention of developing related personal and communal awareness. To become aware and to have a deeper understanding of common problems implies having a clear picture of what is happening in the community. In this regard, it is a process of seeking a common understanding of the root causes of those problems (phase I). Having a clear picture of the situation, the stakeholders are capable of engaging themselves in collaborative planning with selection of priorities and appropriate means (phase II). Thereafter, they decide on the action which they attempt to carry out (phase III). The outcomes of the action create changes in the living conditions of the stakeholders but the latter have to assess changes and to make value judgements about them by reflecting

on the initial situation (phase IV). This assessment stage provides inputs for reviewing the action (phase V), and this could require participants to identify and to explore the new ways to solve problems, and then, the cycle would restart and continue. Every time stakeholders come full circle, they become more empowered than they were before, and their capacity is fostered.

The above model is like a basket full of fruits of the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle's labour. There is little people can do without confronting problems in their lives. But with reflection-action on what to do to face them, people who work hand in hand by planning actions and accomplishing them together can reach good results. As the Rwandan proverb says: '*nta mugabo umwe'*: (No man is an island, or one tree does not make a forest). It is when people are involved in joint action that we can see changes in their living conditions. They begin to be aware of what they are able to do. They begin to express their opinions with self-confidence and have a voice in decision-making, during meetings, in their cooperative, and in their respective families. At a certain time during the actions, they evaluate how they are progressing in order to improve. If needed, they bring inputs and review their actions. As they want to improve and to move forward, there is no end to this cyclical process. Each problem raised during the process is discussed using the same process. Then, the basket is always full of fruits. The number and the quality of fruits depend on the efforts of all participants involved.

To develop, a community needs to work collaboratively as one people. Sitting together in a circle, all members of the said community dialogue about what hampers their living conditions. This kind of collaboration has characterised the Rwandan Potters community in Reflect meetings. Their process of working described in the model above is explained in five phases, but repeated again and again as follows:

The common problem

This was the first phase or the first objective of the on-going process of reflection-action. To exchange with others in the community requires being in the same area, sharing the same worries and having the same will to solve the problem for the welfare of individuals and for the whole community. Beside these considerations, people can communicate by respecting their differences. Because they have been living together for a long time, they know each

other. They could have a common understanding about a crucial problem which needs to be solved first and foremost.

Common planning

Due to the fact that the identified problem is theirs, participants in the Reflect process have a strong commitment and begin to invest in searching for common solutions. In collaboration with other stakeholders, such as facilitators and the researcher, participants begin to determine their objectives and ways to achieve them. Here, the role of the facilitators is to enhance capacity building of participants in doing a short-term strategic plan (from three to four months). It is better to begin with an action which could be affordable by the members of the community themselves. If this plan can be put into practice without external support, it is accomplished according to the group‘s schedule. It brings happiness and encouragement to participants who then want to continue toward another level of improving their living conditions. Testimonies from people who have begun with a small project and who have succeeded are good examples of the strengths in capacity building of the new team using the Reflect process.

Common action

This is an action planned by the group in order to solve the common problem. It was surprising and joyful to assist in a weekly collection of 100 Rwf (0,16 dollar) per person in a group of 25 participants, the facilitators included, for a common mutual fund to solve the problem of health insurance cards. The story of Euphrasy Nyirahabimana, Fidel Habimana‘s daughter (see chapter 6) explains clearly the kind of action that might be taken in a family or community in order to solve current problems without external help. Poor people often think that they are incapable of solving their problems without help. But lack of commitment is the first barrier to be eradicated among people. They can do things if they have a will. Every Rwandan man can find 100 Rwf, but most of the time it is used for drinking. People living in the same suburb could take the initiative to solve a problem like the one encountered by Fidel Habimana’s family without seeking assistance from benefactors. This is a small example but one which could create change in the life of a whole community.

Community change and ‘look-back’

Community change requires social action. Every participant has to bring knowledge and skills which could help to tackle the issues and challenges experienced in the everyday life of community members. This requires taking time to work together, and then participants improve their relationships which allow them to participate in the analysis of what they could do to reach their goals. This is a good foundation for trusting each other in communal actions.

Change in a community is observed on the basis of the well-being of its members. A community where people have access to medical health services is alive. Members have the strength to do other kinds of jobs which continue to generate more income for their development. But in order to sustain this effort, people need to look back at the project and check if it is progressing smoothly, if there are no shortcomings, so as to solve problems on time. This kind of mid-term evaluation of the action is important for reviewing the action if necessary.

Inputs for reviewing action

It is rare to reach perfection while doing things, even in planning actions. After every evaluation there is a need to search for what could be brought in to improve actions and to reach good results. With regard to the subscription for health insurance, this can break down the ignorance among people who continue to look to traditional healers, despite the fact that they have a health insurance card. This suggests organizing a sensitisation session held by a health worker among members of the community concerned. Other examples of inputs might be to open a bank account with the remaining money to subscribe to health insurance in order to make other projects which generate regular income in the community. Every new element brought in implies planning and new actions and the circle restarts. There is no end for the attainment of an ideal. From an experience of a small action done without external help, many small or larger projects could be initiated, which might require the group to gain skills to run them and to ask for financial help. This happened in the Reflect ‘Groupthink’ Circle in the flower project, but there was little time for benefactors to be found, and participants agreed to do what they could with their limited resources. They used the money collected in the mutual fund, together with some donated by the researcher. It was not surprising to see this happen. The role of the facilitator is to help participants to bring new ideas so as to move forward. All these initiatives deserve to be sustained. This was made possible by selecting

leaders among members of the group concerned; otherwise we should not be supporting the sustainability of the project.

8.4.3 Empowerment prompts changes in the lives of people who apply Reflect

The use of the Reflect approach led to changes for the participants in terms of their families, community and work. In this study, changes were evaluated in the Modern Pottery Cooperative in which the Rwandan Potters living in Kacyiru District are members. In addition, changes related to gender were observed in families of Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle's members, at the Modern Pottery Cooperative where all participants in Reflect sessions work, and in the Rwandan Potter Community located in Kacyiru District.

After four months of Reflect, members of the 'Groupthink' Circle began to question how decisions were being taken in their cooperative. In meetings, they gave ideas for changing things, such as reporting on everyday activities, on Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle's effectiveness, and attendance of Reflect sessions (because sometimes representatives of the Modern Pottery Cooperative changed the Circle's schedule without consulting the participants). Participants in the Reflect circle had understood their roles in the Reflect process and wanted others to respect this. The call for changes in their cooperative shows that empowerment was gained by participants. It began at the level of the individual first, but after sharing with the whole Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle, one could observe for example the decisions taken against some unsatisfactory cooperative representatives who were replaced by three participants of the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle, with two women among them. This could be related to what Bali Swain (2006) says about self-confidence and self-esteem playing an essential role in change. In this regard, members of the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle showed that they started to act as power holders. This supports Kabeer's (2001) idea that empowerment signifies increased participation in decision-making and it is this process through which people feel capable of making decisions by themselves. This illustrates empowerment gained among participants. When participants succeeded in making changes in their cooperative, it was a collaborative act like the one described by Stromquist (1995, p. 15) in chapter 2 as follows: Collective (political) empowerment happens when people "work together to achieve a more extensive impact than each could have had alone" (Rowlands,

1997, p. 15). However, collective empowerment can only be observed after a considerable time. The transformation cannot occur in one year of research.

Successful piloting and implementation of the Reflect approach among the Rwandan Potters Community depended on a number of interrelated variables, as identified by Bhalalusesa (2004) including clarity about its meaning to potential users, and the degree of difficulty experienced by users.

Kanyesigye (1998) pointed out that the non-literate in Uganda are considered to be ignorant, stupid, superstitious and lacking the ability to plan. These stereotypes have also historically characterised the Rwandan Potters (see chapter 1). However, this study has shown that these stereotypes are false. This is confirmed by the achievements of the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle which was piloted in Gataba Village, during one year, from June 2010 to June 2011. There is no doubt that the Reflect approach has been successful in the Rwandan Potter Community because this new approach to literacy has shown that the Rwandan Potters can learn how to read the world and the word (Freire). Recognising the role of Reflect in transforming people into subjects who are able to read the world and the word, Freire commented:

> This is exactly what I sought to do - but you give it more structure and stronger roots. The literacy process will be based on people's own experience, their language and their reality - so that the transition from reading the world to reading the word will be more organic and clearer. This is very exciting work. … Please feel free to use my name in the title of the new approach to literacy. (Archer & Cottingham, March 1996, Serial No. 17)

Chambers added:

> I have read your manual with fascination and excitement. My own experiences with adult literacy programmes have been uniformly negative, and at last here is an approach which looks credible in terms of maintaining interest and commitment. (Archer & Cottingham, March 1996, Serial No. 17)

Like Freire and Chambers, two founding Fathers of the Reflect approach, with their theories and tools respectively, I used this approach in order to achieve what three women participants were proud to announce after they had learned to read in Kinyarwanda. They stated: "*Ntacyo watubeshya mu gusoma, kwandika no kubara*" (Now, we have mastered reading, writing and counting; nothing remains hidden from us). Their husbands testified that their wives read

journals for the whole family in the evening, after completing their daily work. Others added that they are also able to read the world, meaning they were able to reflect on problems in their surroundings and search for solutions.

This is a historical moment in the Rwandan Potter Community which can be explained by Archer and Cottingham‘s (1996) argument that literacy can become the focus of high profile mobilisation linked to wider social change touching everyone's lives. Archer and Cottingham asked themselves if people should wait for such moments or should perhaps try to create such moments on a local scale. These are moments where people, at the village level, see a real opportunity to change their lives and where, in the process of learning, people organise and engage in actions which will contribute to change. They conclude that if there is a will to create such ‘moments’, the Reflect approach gives hope. The success of the Reflect approach among the Rwandan Potter Community is not without problems. The following challenges constitute some limitations to this research. However, remediation is envisaged in order to go forward in improving this research and in ensuring the sustainability of the project.

8.5 Challenges, perspectives and sustainability

The challenges to the Reflect ‘Groupthink’ Circle during a year of action research could be classified as follows: resources (money, skilled people and time); location of the literacy class; the facilitators’ ability to lead the Reflect Circle; the scale of the projects in the Reflect Circle; the weight of literacy interests in comparison with other pressing community problems; sustainability of the Reflect ‘Groupthink’ Circle, and the researcher‘s commitments.

8.5.1 Resources for conducting research

When I started this action research in June 2010, the Reflect ‘Groupthink’ Circle held its sessions in the open air. Participants realised that among the issues they were facing, a classroom was the first that could be solved. This required finding the means to build a classroom. The facilitators and participants sat together and planned this activity as described in chapter 6. They thought about possible benefactors, but due to the time constraints of the project, it was not possible to design an ad hoc project, submit it to benefactors and wait until they provided assistance. It was in summer, the hot sun was shining from morning to evening,

it was necessary to have a classroom in a few days. The researcher‘s limited time for research obliged her to analyse with the group what could help at that time, without waiting for the Circle to solve this problem, step by step. If this process had been undertaken without urgency, it would have allowed participants to gain abilities and skills to negotiate and advocate for their community.

As a remedy to such a situation, exercises of negotiation and advocacy were done in the cooperative ‘Modern Pottery Cooperative’ and in the Reflect ‘Groupthink’ Circle itself. One participant was designated by her colleagues to have talks with the Modern Pottery Cooperative representatives about the group’s plan to construct a literacy class. The talk centred on getting a plot on which they could build a literacy class and getting financial support as far as possible. The whole group asked the researcher to help with the acquisition of other materials, which she agreed to do. The Reflect ‘Groupthink’ Circle decided to use their own labour to build the literacy class, but builders were also paid by the Modern Pottery Cooperative.

8.5.2 Setbacks to project initiatives and perspectives

As the literature review underlined, the fact that people on the periphery, especially poor and marginalized people are still exploited by the rich ones, makes them suffer from lack of development, specifically on educational, socio-economic and cultural aspects. The aim of this study was to reflect on causes of their situation and to tackle them through common actions, by using the Reflect approach. Therefore, some projects were initiated such as exploiting the marshland belonging to their cooperative; but the limited time we had did not allow participants to design a project proposal and to get funders on board. The Potters planted vegetables and maize on a small scale; and they solved the pressing problem of getting school materials for their children. As Rwandan Potters were not used to farming, this was difficult for them. Even though they tried hard and enjoyed their harvest; it was not easy to get them to continue. After the first harvest, they did not want to do the work by themselves, saying that they needed money to hire people from outside their community to cultivate their fields. They chose instead to begin the flower project because they themselves make pots and know how to take care of flowers. They said that the only problem they encountered in putting this project into practice was related to funds for paying for flower seeds or bedding plants because they were expensive.

The flower project proposal, which was written up by the facilitators based on participants' ideas, did not attract benefactors who could provide financial help. In total, flowers were planted in 60 pots, too few to solve problems in the Potters' families. As advice, Bhalalusesa states the following:

> If the Reflect methodology is to achieve the expected outputs as a developmental tool, participants need to move into larger projects, but these need considerable capital investment and skilled, innovative and knowledgeable facilitators capable of leading the participants in critically analysing their problems, identifying viable projects and writing project proposals. Continued technical and material support is imperative. (Bhalalusesa, 2004, no. 61)

The flower project showed that it could at least help members of the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle, so it was decided to follow-up our project proposal in order to get funds; to extend the project by planting flowers in Modern Pottery Cooperative's marshland; and also to increase the number of flowers planted in pots. We have found that the flower project in Kigali City can generate substantial income, and can improve the living conditions of the Reflect Circle's members and their families as well. Given this opportunity, the poverty reduction process and socio-economic progress is already under way.

8.5.3 The relationship between illiteracy and other community problems

As the Rwandan potters grouped in the Modern Pottery Cooperative needed to gain reading and writing skills as quickly as possible, they did not simultaneously and spontaneously think about other problems they faced in their daily lives. This was noticed by the facilitators at the beginning of the Reflect sessions when participants whispered that they had to begin to learn how to read and write because they believed they would be sent away from their cooperative if they remained illiterate. For this reason, reading and writing took up most of the time during the first semester which started on 1st June and ended on 30 September 2010. They had in mind that once they acquired these skills, all other problems would be solved. One participant argued that: '*N'ubundu twasigaye inyuma kubera kutamenya gusoma no kwandika ndetse no kubara. Nitubimenya n'ibindi bizashoboka.'* (Already we have been left behind due to the fact that we cannot read and write. If we acquire these skills, everything else will come). This means that, for them, literacy is synonymous with reading, writing and

numeracy, and it would be a good springboard for other initiatives. This was also observed in implementing the Reflect approach in Uganda where the emphasis was placed on reading and writing to the detriment of empowerment and numeracy (Riddell, 2001), and in the Sudan where Gamil and Ezibon report that**:**

> 26% of Reflect circles have tended to concentrate on literacy as in reading, writing and numeracy as the critical learning need at the expense of general learning that the Reflect approach emphasises. The circles do not reflect further on their environment - how critical community or social problems can be solved. (Gamil & Ezibon, 2008, p. 16)

Initially in the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle, reading and writing received more emphasis than other achievements, such as livelihood, health, nutrition, and so on. This constituted a challenge for the facilitators and the researcher who were piloting the Reflect approach. It also reminds us that Reflect is a demanding approach in terms of facilitation.

8.5.4 Facilitators' Status and Training

The Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle was facilitated by three facilitators (two women and one man) who belong to the Rwandan Potter Community. They worked without any remuneration, but an honorarium was occasionally given to them by the researcher to motivate them. Concerning their qualifications, the two women had completed primary school grade 8, but the man had added three years of post primary school, known as CERAI. This man showed a better understanding of the Reflect approach during the 10 day training session. Unfortunately, he resigned after one week because he wanted to be remunerated. Although he was nominated by his colleagues from the Modern Pottery Cooperative as someone who was able to lead them, he was someone who could not work without payment, despite the fact that discussions led by the facilitators during the said workshop had convinced others that in the Reflect circle, people work for their common interests, and consequently there is no remuneration. Some of these problems encountered in Rwanda were also observed in Malawi and Lesotho (chapter 4).

The resignation of one facilitator, which threatened to derail the Reflect circle, obliged the researcher to bring one experienced facilitator from outside the Rwandan Potter Community. This facilitator was paid monthly for eight months in order to reinforce the two women who

had agreed to work on a voluntary basis. As the researcher had time constraints, there was no alternative to solve the problem. Here I recognise that the principle of the Reflect approach, which indicates that all facilitators must be chosen by the community, was not respected. In order to minimize the risk of making the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle dependent on external facilitators, I limited the time allocated to the experienced facilitator to eight months. After that, the two women were able to continue alone with the researcher's help.

Another challenge experienced in the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle is that the Rwandan Potters lacked skilled people who could grasp the Reflect methodology, which demands knowledge and innovation. The researcher had to follow up and support the facilitators to strengthen their skills to sustain their projects. Regular refresher sessions had to be organised to support the Reflect methodology, how to use PRA tools, and to gain the sense of the benefits of this approach in improving the welfare of the Rwandan Potter Community in general and participants in the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle in particular.

8.5.5 Problems with changing mindsets

Although the Rwandan Potters recognised that farming was not a traditional skill in their communities, they realized that they must exploit their marshland and cultivate vegetables and fruits so as to combat malnutrition among their children. But when the time came for removing weeds from the soil, the majority did not appear. When they discussed the low attendance in activities related to taking care of plants, they said that it was very hard for them to farm. The facilitators and participants decided together to feel free to discuss any issues and to search for possible solutions.

People face challenges in their lives and are confronted by continuous change. This is also being experienced by Rwandan Potters because they are abandoning their ancient occupations, such as hunting and pottery which no longer allow them to live decently. They have to learn to do other jobs and to take care of the environment in order to survive. Even if many of them resist changing their behaviour, those who participated in the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle were persuaded to change their mindsets in order to improve their living conditions. This echoes insights by Kotter (cited in Deutschman, 2005, p. 55) who said that behaviour change happens mostly by speaking to people and finding ways to help them to see their problems and to search for solutions. To address this challenge, the Reflect

'Groupthink' Circle tried to find a solution which was to use the Modern Pottery Cooperative's marshland to grow crops in order to provide food and safeguard the environment Lack of technical and financial support later led to their abandoning this solution.

8.5.6 The Researcher's roles in the research

In a research study using the Reflect approach, the researcher has multiple roles. As an action researcher in the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle, I played several roles such as being an interviewer, a participant-observer, a writer of field notes, and a benefactor. These roles are demanding in terms of time and commitments. As an action researcher, I had to manage time for interviews, observations and writing field notes during the process of action research. In action research, these roles are often played simultaneously. In order to perform these roles successfully at different stages of my research project, I relied on advice from Mumford (2001, p.15) who suggests the following when using action research as a method for collecting, analysing and interpreting data:

> The first, essential, part of any research project is deciding on, and clarifying, the subject for study. Next comes identifying appropriate theory that can provide an intellectual basis for the proposed research area and choosing research methods that will enable this theory to be tested out. (Mumford, 2001, p. 15)

Action research was a new process of enquiry for me and I had problems finding relevant literature about it. I searched several times for relevant information. I read any action research-related document I could find until I understood the process of action-reflection, and then I put it into practice. After ten days of Reflect training, I was able to apply the process.

As a facilitator, I had to collaborate with the other facilitators. Initially this was very difficult because the one who was most skilled resigned because he was not paid. This obliged me to pay an experienced external facilitator to reinforce the remaining two who were members of the community I was investigating. Using the knowledge I had gained through reading, I worked with the facilitators. They had practical skills and I had read a lot. Our knowledge and skills complemented one another as we put Reflect into practice.

As a benefactor, I was obliged to finance the project when it was necessary to solve a common problem encountered in the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle. For example, we began our literacy class in the open air. Here, I was obliged to buy some furniture for the literacy class and then to pay for materials for building the literacy classroom. It was not easy for me because I was not prepared for this. I had planned for training sessions and transport for reaching the site, but in reality action research was a demanding process in terms of financial resources. In this regard, Mumford (2001) says that the most important thing to accomplish when using action research is to find an organization that will welcome the research and obtain the required funding for carrying out the research. Each of these activities is fraught with difficulty, such as knowing how to design a project plan and submit it, waiting for a reply, and so on. Here, both the researcher and the facilitators had limited experience in project planning, and the participants who were called on to solve their problems themselves did not yet have the skills to do it. In this case, the facilitators tried to find out how to design a small project which could generate income, and with participants' ideas, we came up with a flower project. I used my money to finance a small part of the project which consisted of planting flowers in vases with the aim of selling them at Christmas and Easter festivals. Members of the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle said that they could learn how to collect their savings and open a bank account so as to solve problems at their homes, such as improving nutrition, having medical insurance every year, clothing and paying school fees and uniforms for their children.

8.5.7 The research site

It is a well known fact that to learn well people need a quiet space which is set aside for this purpose. But this was not the case in the early phase of the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle. Reflect sessions were held in the open air in the vicinity of the office-house belonging to the Modern Pottery Cooperative. The literacy classroom was built alongside the Modern Pottery Cooperative's building. This house serves both as the cooperative's office and a storeroom. It also serves as a place for welcoming customers for its products, such as vases, pots, filters, and other clay materials. We did not have an alternative. We could have used a participant's home but they have small houses (see photograph 1 in chapter 1). We also did not have money to build elsewhere or the permission to do so. We built a Reflect circle literacy classroom in front the Modern Pottery Cooperative's house-office (see photograph 5 in chapter 6) and that is the place where Reflect activities were carried out. It was difficult to

safeguard literacy class materials, to keep tools and displays made by the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle and so on.

8.5.8 Sustainability of the Reflect approach in the Rwandan Potter Community

Even if Reflect is still in the early stage of its development in the Rwandan Potter Community, collaboration and motivation among members of the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle testify to the sustainability of the project. When you meet members of the Circle, the first impression is their unity and common understanding about their living conditions. They share everything as they always work together without hiding things. This is no doubt related to the continuation of their project after the period of the research. As they have participated in building their literacy class, they have a need to use it as long as they are part of Modern Pottery Cooperative. They use it to meet, to refresh their skills, to review the learning materials they produce in Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle, and to reflect on various initiatives aimed at solving problems related to under-development, which still affects their lives.

Besides the literacy programme, other projects initiated by using the Reflect approach may also be sustained. Among them, family planning, which indicates that the majority have understood the necessity to limit births (see chapter 6), although there are still problems related to religious beliefs. With regard to their subscription to health insurance, this will be sustained for a long period of time because Potters have themselves decided to use the money from their common funds to pay for a medical card for every family in need.

However, they are still reluctant to combat poor nutrition by cultivating vegetables because they are not used to doing it. Only a few agreed to try. They propose to hire someone to do it for them while they have limited funds. It is therefore a long process of sensitization to persuade them to keep a kitchen garden. These are the main focus points because the Rwandan Potters have few or no other alternatives. They have no forests for their survival, today. They are obliged to learn to do unusual work in order to improve their living conditions**.** In this regard, government support and other benefactors' commitments are needed.

Another project initiated using Reflect is the flower project. The sustainability of this project depends on available funds to cultivate the marshland, to buy plants and to create nurseries. Up to now, the marshland is not cultivated. The time to develop the project and wait for help financial assistance was too short; but as action research has no end, a project proposal has been submitted and may be financed one day. What members of the Reflect 'Groupthink' Circle are proud of today is that with their own means and with the researcher's help, they have planted flowers in pots made by them. This is encouraging and gives hope for the sustainability of their project. They do not want to stay in endemic poverty as they have now had the opportunity to know Reflect and its benefits to help them be aware of what they can do to solve their problems and to develop like others.

Based on the above comments, the sustainability of the Reflect approach in the Rwandan Potter Community is in no doubt. At this level, the fifth research question 'What challenges were encountered when using the Reflect approach and how were they managed?' was answered. However we know that a problem needs to be treated as a whole, and usually requires holistic solutions. For this reason, this study cannot pretend to be exhaustive on this matter. Further research might complete the present study in order to continue the process of action research for improving the living conditions of the Rwandan Potter Community.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Permission to conduct research

COPORWA Kigali Kigali, 27 July 2009

Object: Response to your letter of 24 July 2009, requesting for permission to conduct a research survey within COPORWA.

Dear NIMUSABE Rita Paradie:

Thank you for your interest in our community 'COPORWA'. As requested in your letter of 24 July 2009, I would like to announce to you our agreement about your research survey to be conducted within our community.

With your academic and work backgrounds and your interest in '*Paolo Freire's pedagogy as an approach for educating Rwandan Marginalized People*', you could bring a fair amount of knowledge and experience to our community in seeking for solutions of some problems which it faces.

Completion of your independent study will bring benefits to both of us and all members of COPORWA are available to help you in carrying out your study.

Yours sincerely

Director of COPORWA

Appendix B: Participation consent form

I hereby agree to participate in action research conducted by Rita Paradie NIMUSABE on 'Piloting the Reflect approach with a Rwandan Potter Community'.

I understand that:

- She will be inquiring about Piloting the Reflect approach with a Rwandan Potters Community.
- Participation in action research is voluntary.
- I may refuse to answer any questions I would prefer to.
- I may withdraw from the study any time.
- Recording and taking photos are admitted.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(*Icyemezo cy'ubushake bwo kujya mu bushakashatsi*

Niyemeje muri iyi nyandiko gukorana na Rita Paradie NIMUSABE mu bushakashatsi-ngiro akora kuri 'Piloting the Reflect approach with a Rwandan Potter Community'.
Nsobanukiwe kandi nemeye ko:

- *Azakora icukumburabumenyi kuby' uko Reflect yakoreshwa mu muryango nyarwanda w'ababumbyi.*
- *Kujya muri ubu bushakashatsi ni ubushake bwanjye bwite.*
- *Mfite uburenganzira bwo kwanga gusubiza ibibazo mu gihe ntabyumva cyangwa ntabyemera.*
- *Mfite uburenganzira bwo guhagarika kujya muri ubu bushakashatsi igihe cyose nshakiye.*
- *Gufata amajwi n'amafoto biremewe.*

Isinya: _____ *Italiki:* _____)

Appendix C: Ethics Clearance

Wits School of Education

27 St Andrews Road, Parktown, Johannesburg, 2193 • Private Bag 3, Wits 2050, South Africa
Tel: +27 11 717-3007 • Fax: +27 11 717-3009 • E-mail: enquiries@educ.wits.ac.za • Website: www.wits.ac.za

STUDENT NUMBER: 416589
Protocol: 2009ECE139C

03 March 2010

Mrs Rita Nimusabe
Nyarugene District
Rugunga Avenue
0000

Dear Mrs Nimusabe

Application for Ethics Clearance: Doctor of Philosophy

I have a pleasure in advising you that the Ethics Committee in Education of the Faculty of Humanities, acting on behalf of the Senate has agreed to approve your application for ethics clearance submitted for your proposal entitled:

Paulo Freire's pedagogy as an approach for educating marginalized people in Rwanda.

The Protocol Number above should be submitted to the Graduate Studies in Education Committee upon submission of your final research report.

Yours sincerely

Matsie Mabeta
Wits School of Education

Cc: Supervisor Prof. J Castle (via email)

Appendix D: Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tools used in the study

The table below outlines PRA tools selected by Reflect 'Groupthink' circle and the context in which they were used.

Tool (¥)	**Context in which the tool was used**
Map	Mapping was used to represent the Modern Pottery Cooperative, what it possesses and what it lacks (issues faced) in order to found out contents of discussion.
Story telling	Story telling was used to help participants to be aware of some problems they face in their lives and for which they do not take time to discuss and to search for solutions. In this study, it was about the problem of health.
Tree	Here, a tree stands for the logical way of handling problems. The roots represent the causes of illiteracy, while the trunk the extent of this problem and its the branches its consequences among Rwandan Potters.
Daily routine diagram	A daily routine diagram was used to schedule people's activities in order to gauge the weight of the work done by everyone and to help people assume shared responsibilities.
Agriculture calendar	Agriculture calendar was used to identify periods appropriate to rear crops in Modern Pottery Cooperative's field according to Rwandan seasons in combatting malnutrition in the community.
Historical profile	The historical profile was used to get better understanding of the causes and extent of HIV/AIDS in Rwanda in general, and in Rwandan Potters Communinty in particular in order to increase the awareness of the threat in their life.
Pairwise/ ranking matrix	In this study, the ranking matrix was used to compare consequences of illiteracy, prioritorise them and decide the most important ones that were worth to be tackled first.

(¥): Each PRA tool used allowed participants to reinforce literacy skills and the power to face issues encountered in the live

Appendix E: Planning activities of Reflect "Groupthink" circle

Activities*	**Period**	**People involved**
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
And so on		

*****Activities were sorted out by participants during REFLECT sessions

Appendix F: Text elaborated by REFLECT "Groupthink" Circle (p.154)

Duhugukire gusoma, kwandika no kubara

"Abatazi gusoma no kubara nabo ye! Barareba ariko batabona, bagura bakabiba. Bacuruza nabi, wabahamagarira gusoma no kubara bakarakara. Nifuje kubavura ubujiji; bakisekera bagataha badakize. Bati: "Iyo tuje gusoma badusekana agasuzuguro bavuga ko tuje guta igihe." Uwababona mu makaravati n'amasuti bagiye gusezerana, Padiri ati: "Soma. " Bacurika urupapuro bagatitimira bakaruca bakarumira! None muremare akabo! Baraseka iki? Ejo muzisomera amabaruwa; bibiriya muzi akayivamo, ikorowani muyisemura ak'abarabu. Muzatora abadepite mubisomera mutareba amafoto gusa. Perezida w'igihugu mumutore n'amakaramu. Badutorere kuyobora hose; dusomere amadisikuru mu ruhame bose babireba. Mugire vuba rero; muze musome, mubare mube abasemuzi b'abafite amaso batabona. Abo baseka batabona gusa gusa! Ewe nabo, nibigumanire agasuzuguro kabo n'ubujiji. Naho wowe, iyizire ujijuke, maze ujijure abana bawe, ababa hafi yawe abagabo n'abagore": (Ihuriro ry'abunguranabitekerezo, Gicurasi, 2011)

(**Join forces and take action aigainst illiteracy**

"Oh, people who do not know write and read! They look up without seeing, they buy with loss, they are inept to sell, and when they are called up to read and write they become furious. I wished to heal their ignorance, but they laughed and returned home with their illness.

"When we go to the literacy class for learning to write and to read, we are laughed out of court by people saying contemptuously that we waste our time! But consider how those illiterate people behave! They dress up in suits and ties for church and weddings, but when the priest says: "Let us pray", they fumble about, drop their prayer books and fall silent! Then, would you let yourself being handicapped by illiteracy like them? What are they laughing about? Tommorow, you will be able to read your emails, to go through the Bible, to interpret the Koran like the Arab people. You will elect your representatives to sit in the National Legislative Assembly basing your judgement not on the appearance of their photos, but on reading their names and agenda. You will elect the president of the Republic with pencils. We will be elected to lead other people in various sectors of life; we will publically read and address speeches in the eye of people.

"Let us hurry up to learn reading, writing and calcution. Doing so, we could interpret for others who cannot read and write. For those who are scornful of learning to read and write, let them remain in their disdain and ignorance. But you, rise up and join those who are attending literacy classes and becoming skilled, and bring others either your children or someone else to gain the essential literacy ability.") (Reflect 'Groupthink' circle, May 2011)

Appendix G: Evaluation of activities by participants in the Reflect circle

Issues raised #	**Means and results of discussion**	**Challenges and remedy**
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
And so on		

During REFLECT sessions various issues affecting the group were discussed and prioritized by participants, and the ways of settling them.

Appendix H: The Observation checklist

In order to get a spontaneous picture of life, behaviours and patterns of practices in their naturalness and completeness, I have carried out a participant observation with focus on the following aspects:

Categories of behaviours/ practices	**Items for observation**	**Comments**
Daily activities according to gender	Men‘s activities	
	Women‘s activities	
Decision making among the householders	Matters dealt with by men	
	Matters dealt with by women	
Literacy abilities	Literacy interest	
	The use of printed materials	
	Influence of literacy on life	
Food and nutrition	Most popular meal with potters	
	Availability/scarcity of food	
	Patterns of cooking	
	Means to produce food	
Handling money	Gender claiming responsibility for it	
	Saving habits	
	Redistribution of money to householders	

Housing and settlement	Evacuation of dirty water and waste products away from buildings	
	People’s accessibility to roads	
	Organized housing	
Health practices	Use of traditional remedies	
	Use of modern remedies	
	Turning to traditional healer for receiving cure for illness	
	Turning to Health centres to receive cure for illness	
Water conveyance	Infrastructures of running water	
	Accessibility to running water	
	Use of stagnant water	
	Treatment or preparation of drinking water	
Leisure and entertainment	Leisure time among women	
	Leisure time among men	
	Leisure occupations for women	
	Leisure occupations for men	
School attendance	Children‘s school attendance	
	Motivation for school attendance	
	Children tasked with jobs	
	Children leaving school	