



DEPARTMENT OF ADULT AND COMMUNITY EDUCATION

MEd in Adult and Community Education

***Unearthing the Transformative Power of Literacy Pedagogies:
A Comparative Contextual Analysis of African and Irish Footsteps to Enhance
Mozambican Adult Literacy Programmes***

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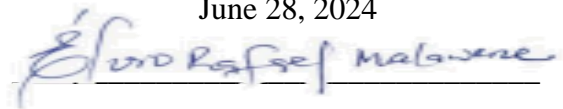
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DECLARATION

I declare on my honor that this Master's thesis work has never been presented, in its essence, for attaining any degree and constitutes the result of my research, with the text and bibliography containing the sources used.

June 28, 2024


Elvira Rafael Malwene

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family, Mozambican Communities, and Educators who have been a source of inspiration for me!

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I express my thanks to God who through His power, led me to overcome all difficulties encountered throughout the writing of this work.

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List of Abbreviations

The following abbreviations may be found in the text or the appendices.

ALAC: Active Learning for Active Citizenship

AEJA: (Portuguese-*Alfabetização de Educação de Jovens e Adultos*) Literacy for Adults and Youth

CTTLS: Certificate to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector

CVS: Council for Voluntary Service

DCLG: Department for Communities and Local Government

FRELIMO: Liberation Front of Mozambique

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

MINEDH: Ministry of Education and Human Development -Mozambique

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

OECD: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

DNEB- National Directorate of Basic Education

ENF Non-Formal Education

QQI: Quality and Qualification Ireland

DES: Department of Education and Science or Department of Education and Skills

FETAC: Further Education and Training Awards Council

SOLAS: SOLAS (Irish: *An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna*)-'Further Education and Skills Service'

MEPT: Movimento de Educação Para Todos-Moviment education for All

RENAMO (Portuguese) Resistência *Nacional Moçambicana*, 'Mozambican National Resistance'

RPL: Recognition of Prior Learning

VPL: Validation of Prior Learning

ABSTRACT

This Master's thesis explores into the unique educational landscapes of Ireland and Mozambique through a comparative analysis of literacy programs in both nations to promote active citizenship. While Mozambique, in its developmental journey, stands in contrast to Ireland, both are ex-colonized countries with educational systems positioned in different historical contexts and levels of development. Despite these, a shared commitment to global educational objectives, as outlined in UNICEF's 17 Sustainable Development Goals, particularly the goal of providing quality education for all, unites these two nations.

Through the lens of a Mozambican educator studying in Ireland, this study seeks to explore the transformative potential of adult literacy in enhancing critical thinking skills among citizens, enabling them to actively engage in addressing community challenges such as poverty and injustices. Drawing inspiration from historical insights and contemporary trends in adult education, the thesis highlights the pivotal role of literacy education in combating social inequalities and empowering communities towards social transformations beyond basic literacy skills.

Aligned with the philosophies of influential figures like Paulo Freire and pan-African pioneers like Julius Nyerere and Luis Cabral, the research also underscores the intricate connection between education, politics, and citizenship, emphasizing the need to address systemic issues impeding education and employment opportunities within Mozambican communities. By re-evaluating the concept of active citizenship and drawing from the wisdom of scholars like Marshal, Gaventa, and Gramsci, this study aims to spark a renaissance in community engagement and literacy education, urging individuals to play an active role in reshaping their societal features.

Keywords: Adult literacy, active citizenship, community agency, transformation, development, and education.

Chapter 1 - **Introduction**

Pursuing my studies in Ireland, helped me to comprehend adult education as a field of study with radical and critical foundations, empowering communities for broader transformations beyond functional literacy approaches to reading and writing.

The history of adult education establishment in Ireland as an ex-colonized nation with educational systems in very different timeframes and development levels to my own country inspires me to make a reflective comparison to enhance the Mozambican adult education programs. Despite the clear contrasts in the two countries' educational trajectories and their current standings, such as the development levels, a common thread emerges in their shared commitment to the global education objectives outlined in UNICEF's 17 Sustainable Development Goals. Notably, providing quality education to every individual, irrespective of their geographical and economic situation.

Additionally, I recognize that education intertwines intricately with politics and citizenship, shaping individuals' societal roles and responsibilities. In fact, over 13 years, my involvement in adult literacy programs in Mozambique first as a tutor of adult literacy and administrator through formal education (managing family literacy centers based in a school under my administration) has revealed sad realities, namely; the completion of basic literacy and some college-level programs often fail to translate into meaningful employment opportunities, leading to a significant number of students dropping out and seeking better prospects abroad. This exodus of young citizens, mostly under 30, paints a bleak picture of the country's future. Reflecting on Nelson Mandela's iconic words - "Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world" - and the vision of Samora Machel the first president of independent Mozambique to "Educate man to win the war, create a new society and develop the country," underscores the urgency of addressing the systemic issues afflicting education and employment prospects for all people within Mozambican communities.

Active citizenship is an important concept that repeatedly captured my attention at the beginning of my course as I learned the relationships between adult education, power dynamics, and agenda-setting in diverse educational and learning theories emphasizing community agency and participatory engagement. I grew increasingly curious about the dilemma of Mozambican citizens who seem to be trapped in a cycle of hopelessness, unable to overcome social struggles amidst pervasive poverty along with politics of fear. I believe that the apparent silence might result from

a lack of awareness of citizenship and a sense of belonging, limited community action, and transformational learning opportunities. This realization sparked my interest in redefining the concept of active citizenship, drawing inspiration from key pioneers in this field like Marshal, Gaventa, Gramsci, and more. Marshal (1950) states that “Civil rights are designed for use by reasonable and intelligent persons, who have learned to read and write. Education is a necessary prerequisite of civil freedom”.

The history of adult education and Further Education and Training (FET) in Ireland is common to other European Union (EU) countries. Connolly (1996) reports clear examples of community participation through active citizenship as well as the role of the state in community education initiatives. In the political and social sphere, later chapters will deeply discuss practical aspects and policy strategies led by SOLAS as the national government agency for FET and its predecessor, which influenced the establishment of adult education initiatives and how this benefited the development of active citizenship nationally. Great State recognition for adult education dates from the establishment of the Green Paper (DES, 1998) which later resulted in the ratification of the White Paper (DES, 2000), giving the context and development for the future (Fleming, 2001). This resembled a landmark document for those working in the field in Ireland, particularly regarding recognizing critical adult education and community education (Connolly, 2008).

According to Murtagh (2009), in 1973 through the Murphy Committee, the Irish state showed the first signals of becoming active in adult education. The final report of the Murphy Committee is important in the history of adult education because it was the first time the state recognized the existence of this distinct adult education sector. Recommendations of the Murphy Report (1973) included: i) providing a dedicated budget for adult education, ii) setting up an adult education section in the department, iii) providing grant aid to AONTAS as a national body for adult education, iv) introducing legislation to give effective force to implement to the recommendations, v) establishing county education committees with an adult education subcommittee, vi) appointing Adult Education Officers to develop adult education in the area. Community education also emerged as a bottom-up, democratic, and empowerment-focused movement. It developed as a distinct domain in the mid-1980s with the support of the state and the EU initiatives as listed below:

The Adult Literacy and Community Education Scheme by the Department of Education in 1985. The Community Development program by the Department of Social Welfare in 1990 (DES, 1998, p.90) and The Poverty Three program (1989- 1994) were funded by the EU (Frazer, 2007 p.50).

The LEADER program was funded by the EU, starting with a pilot program in 1989 (Daly, 2002, pp.530-531) which funded community education contributing to encountering social exclusion, poverty, and inequality (National Anti-Poverty Strategy, Government of Ireland, 1997 p.9) and imbued with self-help women's groups.

For the above arguments, in this comparative study, I propose to explore how literacy education can enhance the power of literate people to promote critical thinking skills, enabling them to actively participate in everyday community challenges of poverty and injustices. As a Mozambican educator pursuing my studies in Ireland, I am compelled to share a profound insight I gained in the initial weeks of my program. Through studying historical facts and current global trends in professionalization and further education, I have realized that adult education is a vibrant field equipped with vital tools to tackle social inequalities, empowering communities towards significant transformations beyond basic literacy skills in reading and writing.

Epigraph

"Education can either serve as a tool to perpetuate the current system and enforce conformity, or it can be a pathway to freedom. It is through education that individuals engage critically and creatively with reality, learning how to actively participate in reshaping their world"

Freire (1972 p. 56).

Origin of the study

In the realm of adult literacy, the mandate set by UNESCO underscores a vital linkage to social and economic priorities, advocating for educational endeavors that go beyond basic reading and writing skills. These programs are envisioned to impart not just literacy but also professional and technical expertise, ultimately fostering a more comprehensive engagement of both youth and adults in the social and economic sphere.

My journey towards working on a comparative exploration of literacy programs between Ireland and Mozambique, with a focus on nurturing active citizenship, has been shaped by a series of

impactful experiences. Before embarking on my teacher training course, I found myself volunteering at an adult literacy center within a church community in Mozambique. Here, the aspirations of the members revolved around simple yet profound goals—to write their names and delve into the teachings of the holy bible. This unconventional classroom setting, where lessons unfolded amidst the flow of daily life challenges, offered me a glimpse into the transformative power of literacy in the lives of individuals.

Post my teacher training, my role expanded beyond imparting literacy and numeracy skills. I ventured into providing not just knowledge but empowerment to young individuals, championing changes within rural communities through the medium of English as a foreign language. Despite the constraints of limited resources, I assumed various responsibilities encompassing school management tasks like planning, budgeting, and engagement with community leaders and health authorities. Addressing pertinent issues such as school dropouts, unwanted pregnancies, and drug abuse underscored the multifaceted nature of my engagement.

Drawing upon my networking prowess and insights gleaned from the Mozambican educational landscape, juxtaposed against the backdrop of a seemingly voiceless and uncritical society, a profound new challenge emerged. The task at hand resonated deeply—providing inclusive learning opportunities for individuals of all ages, genders, and educational backgrounds through innovative and pragmatic curricula. This endeavor, now informed not only by the rich experiences garnered from the Irish educational milieu but also by the evolving educational paradigms of African and Latin American schools, aspired towards community enrichment and empowerment.

Yet, amidst these aspirations lay discernible threats that demanded attention. Challenges such as the need for better coordination among various sectors and stakeholders in adult education, concerns regarding program quality, high rates of learner attrition, low enrollment of youth and adults in AEA programs, and the imperative to integrate the AEA budget into the Fast Track Initiative, all underscored the complex and multifaceted dimensions of the educational landscape in Mozambique. (Source: AEA Strategy 2010-2015, pp. 13-15).

Relevance of the Study

Working in rural communities in Mozambique, and observing the nature of problems faced by community members, I can certainly assume that their lives would be different if they had greater

critical awareness, and professional skills based on formal or informal education. Having land and water, fauna, sea life, vegetal heritage, and a variety of resources but still going through nutritional and health problems resembles a lack of knowledge. Being one of those who participate in this process amidst several limitations and failures, researching this worldwide topic is vital for providing comparisons and discussing elements like equal access to education, quality education, and voice to the voiceless along with curriculum and vocational goals, would assist communities on the socio-economic development through agency and empower inclusion in a lifelong learning process getting together different generations for the same purpose. For this and other reasons that our educational system listed as the national objective of education, I find it crucial to develop critical research in adult literacy education aimed at bringing visible transformative results.

The actions carried out by both the government and the Ministry of Education and Human Development (MINEDH) through the subsector of AEA literacy for youth and adults in Portuguese “alfabetização e educação de Adultos” have shown that Mozambique is still far from achieving the EFA (Education For All) and the QPA (Quality performance Assessment) (2010-2014) goals of literacy for 1,000,000 young and adult individuals per year until 2015, reducing the country's illiteracy rate to 38.4% by the end of the validity period of strategy 2, reforming AEA programs to make them more functional and empowering learners to transform what they learn into concrete daily actions as well as ensuring lifelong learning. (PARP 2011-2014 p. 29) Nevertheless, efforts at all levels continue to be made towards, on one hand, providing literacy to as many people as possible to respond with education for all, and on the other hand, ensuring that what young and adult individuals learn is linked to the practical knowledge they already possess, though informally. In this sense, for the author, the relevance of the research lies in the elements clarified below:

- It is a major concern in regional and international agendas, where the need to ensure quality education for all is defined;
- It remains in the general and specific objectives of UNESCO, MINEDH, and other organizations responsible for the education of young and adult individuals strategies;
- It continues to be part of the priorities of the National Directorate of Literacy and Adult Education (DINAEA) in Mozambique;

- It contributes to meeting the learning needs of people in rural communities, especially women whose illiteracy rate is much higher than that of men;
- It ensures the socio-economic development of rural communities through functional literacy.

[Why compare Mozambique to Ireland's adult literacy programs](#)

The rationale behind undertaking a comparative study of literacy programs between Ireland and Mozambique to foster active citizenship is deeply rooted in the capacity of case studies to influence social measures and shape societal outcomes. Observing the social interconnectedness of individuals influencing one another, it becomes apparent that examining the contexts of both Ireland and Mozambique, especially concerning adult education, is essential for understanding and remedying observed challenges.

Upon arriving in Ireland, the blunt contrasts in adult education practices and the amplitude of educational programs and history were outstanding, leaving me astonished. The structured approach to adult education in Ireland, notably absent in Mozambique, prompted a deep dive into the historical evolution of adult education in Ireland, exploring adult and further education institutions and engaging with adult literacy and community education experts. This immersive experience highlighted the transformative impact of education policies in Ireland over the past decades, particularly in addressing poverty and facilitating community engagement through adult education initiatives.

The history of adult education in Ireland catalyzed a comparison with Mozambique, encouraging contemplation on potential opportunities and strategies for progress. Reflecting on influential figures like Paulo Freire, Julius Nyerere, and Samora Machel, who shaped adult literacy programs in Brazil, Tanzania, and Mozambique, alongside their counterparts in Ireland underscored the pivotal role of community participation and governmental support in driving educational initiatives forward. Freire (1970) emphasizes the importance of utilizing an education approach rooted in students' lived experiences and cultural backgrounds. By incorporating generative words based on local knowledge and cultural contexts such as ethnicity, gender, religious values, beliefs, and locally agonizing problems (famine, STDs, and alcohol or drug abuse) in the teaching contents, educators enable learners to relate literacy and numeracy to their reality, fostering a sense of

relevance and empowering their socio-cultural identities. Freire (1970 p.64) argued for literacy education that developed conscientization and active citizenship.

The primary goal of this comparative exploration is not mere juxtaposition, but a nuanced analysis to unveil the underlying strengths and potentials of literacy programs in both countries, focusing on long-term impacts. By leveraging case studies and data collected through rigorous instruments and research approaches, this study aims to unearth the latent power within adult literacy approaches, shedding light on the dynamic possibilities for enhancing education and active citizenship in Mozambique based on the lessons learned from Ireland. Through this comparative lens, I aspire to pave the way for informed decision-making and transformative change through adult education and community empowerment.

By comparing how other regions and countries moved from the oppressed conditions of inequalities, injustices, and poverty through adult education this project is an attempt to expose, and discuss the intricacies of adult literacy teaching and its profound impact on building inclusive societies regardless of the nation's situation, suggesting strategies on how to create educational programs based on the community's needs.

Objectives and Research Questions

The primary issue to be studied is the ongoing priority of addressing literacy among the poorest individuals. Illiteracy is not merely a symptom of poverty but also a barrier to its alleviation, hindering support for citizens who miss educational opportunities. Despite a positive decrease in absolute illiteracy rates, the impact of escalating poverty in Mozambican communities remains a crucial factor contributing to rising illiteracy rates in specific local areas. There is still some confusion regarding the definitions of illiteracy and literacy. Illiteracy is often associated solely with the absence of formal education, limited to basic literacy skills of reading and writing. It is essential to recognize that literacy is a more intricate process involving varying levels of proficiency that is socially situated. "Theories of socially situated literacies provide a critical framework to explore how the material conditions of our lives influence learning as dynamic social practices (Street, 2001) ... Socially situated theories play a key role in shifting attention away from the autonomous or individualist approaches to literacy (Allatt, 2020; Barton & Hamilton, 1998). Instead literacies are presented as 'a set of social practices . . . associated with different domains of life . . . and embedded in broader social goals and cultural practices' (Barton & Hamilton, 1998,

p. 8). This echoes Freire's contention that literacy is not simply about understanding sounds, words, or texts, but that 'reading the word implies continually reading the world' (Freire, 1983, p. 10)." Grummell, (2023, p. 605). After an examination of adult education contexts in Ireland and Mozambique, incorporating experiences in the adult literacy process and Education holistically, the central research question posed is: ***"How can adult literacy programs go beyond basic reading and writing to enhance citizen participation?"***

In light of the above-stated problem, the following research questions were formulated:

1. What are the underlying characteristics, principles, and theories of adult literacy teaching in Ireland, and how could they inform literacy programs in developing countries like Mozambique
2. How has transformative literacy teaching been implemented in Africa and Ireland, and what are some key impacts and outcomes observed in these regions?
3. What are the perceived impacts of literacy teaching on active citizenship engagement in the African, and Irish contexts, and how do they compare to Mozambique?
4. In what ways can generative approaches to literacy and community projects be adapted to enhance literacy teaching initiatives, and participative and active citizenship in Mozambique?

These questions will be elaborated upon through the research aims outlined below:

1. Explore the historical and cultural contexts of transformative adult literacy teaching approaches in Africa, Latin America, and Ireland, and their potential relevance to Mozambican literacy programs.
2. Identify and analyze the challenges and barriers that hinder the promotion of adult literacy for active citizenship in Mozambique.
3. Propose practical recommendations for improving Mozambican literacy initiatives based on successful examples from Africa, Latin America, and Ireland, considering their potential transformative impact on active citizenship.
4. Explore and propose inclusive and vocational practices for adult literacy programs in Mozambique, focusing on professionalizing adult education to foster community development based on active citizenship.

Structure of the Thesis:

In the exploration of literacy pedagogies within the Mozambican context and beyond, this thesis embarks on a comprehensive analysis within a comparative approach. Each chapter describes with distinct purposes, forming an integral part of the research journey laid out as follows:

Chapter 1 discusses the origin and relevance of the study, in this foundational chapter, the study's focus on the actual of literacy programs in Mozambique and the rationale for comparing them to Irish adult literacy programs though with in differentiated contexts. A clear description of the study's objectives and the research questions that drive the investigation will set the stage for the subsequent chapters.

The chapter 2 brings literature review, explores existing literature surrounding adult learning and the historical evolution of adult education in Mozambique, as well to critically evaluate studies, theories, and practices pertaining to literacy pedagogies in both African and Irish contexts. It aims to provide a robust foundation for the theoretical framework that follows.

In the chapter 3 I expose the theoretical framework; groundwork of the study is laid, introducing radical pedagogies and exploring their potential impact on active citizenship within literacy programs, looking at Brazilian, Guinee Bissau and Tanzania as examples of literacy case studies that influenced the field of adult education worldwide including Mozambique. The chapter establishes a theoretical scaffold for understanding how literacy pedagogies can enact transformation, drawing insights from diverse educational landscapes.

The Chapter 4 of the study details the research methodology employed, this chapter outlines the qualitative paradigms utilized for data collection and analysis. It further clarifies the ontological perspective guiding the study's approach, offering an overview of the research methodology steps, ethical considerations, and strategies employed to uphold validity and reliability.

A presentation and analysis of the findings is presented in Chapter 5: Findings, Analysis, and Discussion; through the presentation and analysis of findings sourced from documentary materials and ethnographic accounts, this chapter uncovers key insights into literacy pedagogies in Mozambique, Ireland, and broader African contexts. The discussion delves into the implications

of these findings about the research questions while exploring cross-cultural data collection strategies that enrich the research landscape.

In chapter 6, Conclusion, several conclusions are drawn synthesizing the main findings, and their implications for literacy pedagogies in Mozambique, and offers reflections on the Implications of the study and encountered limitations during the study. Recommendations for future research and practical suggestions to enhance literacy programs in Mozambique are presented, drawing inspiration from the educational practices observed in African and Irish contexts.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

Concepts of Adult Learning and History of Adult Education in Mozambique

A long history of adult education is evident, with Rubenson (2010) providing a comprehensive overview of the historical evolution of adult education over centuries. He underscores that while forms of adult education traced back to the Platonic era, were also emerging ancient Egyptian, Chinese, and Indian civilizations for elite training, until the mid-20th century Adult Education was assumed when a more recognizable structure as a formal field of study and practice was affirmed (p.3).

Notably, in Europe around 1905, education initiatives were developed that aimed to offer a second chance to individuals who had missed out on education in their earlier ages, while in America in the 1920s, programs focused on teaching English to immigrants, aiding in their integration into society. Rubenson notes that “until 1920, adult education was indeed about the literacy of immigrants in the USA, University extension, workers' instruction, and the generic term of Adult education started to be used in the 1960s in the Nordic Countries including France” (2020, p. 4).

One significant contribution to the field came from Malcolm Knowles (1970), often revered as the father of Andragogy, who introduced the European concept of Andragogy to North American adult educators. Andragogy, unlike pedagogy, emphasizes the science of facilitating adult learning. Knowles proposed a continuum in learning approaches, ranging from teacher-directed to student-directed, underscoring the relevance of both strategies based on learners' levels of self-direction (1970, p. 4).

Alongside, as the field of adult education expanded, substantial discourse centered on shaping concepts and defining their societal and professional implications, focusing on desired or local objectives. Duke (1994) describes how adult education's status as a movement for social emancipation was evident in the growth of UNESCO's first conference of adult education in 1949 with 25 countries participating and continuing to grow each decade, with 129 countries participating in its sixth 2009 conference in Brazil, Belem (UNESCO, 2014, pp 44-50). UNESCO (1976, p. 2) adopted a definition of adult education, synthesizing the concepts presented by Houle (1972) and Verner (1962), featuring adult education's multifaceted role in societal development as:

“the entire body of organized education process, whatever the content level and method, whether formal, otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, colleges, and universities, as well as apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as an adult by the society to which they belong to develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical or professional qualification or turn them to a new direction and bring about changes in their attitudes or behavior in the twofold perspectives of full personal development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development, adult education, however, must not be considered as an entity in itself, it is a subordination and an integral part of a global scheme for lifelong education and learning”.

The international organizational efforts of UNESCO (1976) according to (Duke, 1994) in Rubenson (2010 p.3) indicate that “as an international movement, adult education has emerged as a vehicle to combat societal inequalities and foster cultural and social democracy development, pivotal for the advancement of democratic principles” Drawing from the UNESCO definition of adult education, Darkenwald and Merriam (1982, p. 9) extract two crucial aspects by emphasizing the pivotal role of social roles in adults, fostering shifts in knowledge, attitudes, values, and skills. They recognize adult education should be crafted to support adults to assume social roles that lead to transformations in knowledge, attitudes, values, and skills. This implies that adult education is intentionally structured to bring about changes in individuals whom society identifies as adults. On the other hand, Merriam and Brooke (1997, p.8) advance that the organizational strategies and curriculum of adult education should be apart from conventional educational domains. Based on this assertion, I understand that adult education is distinguished by its specific organizational methods and curriculum designed for adult learners, serving as a distinctive tool or a second chance for those who were excluded or discriminated against from other educational fields by several circumstances. In the line of andragogy (Knowles 1980), this suggests that adult education should be designed to meet the needs and characteristics of adult learners, who can direct his/her learning, considerable accumulated experience to support the learning process, learning needs related to changing roles, problem-centered and immediate knowledge application, motivated to learning by both internal and external factors (p. 43), in other words, adults possess specific needs and life goals that require timely solutions, which cannot be met solely through basic literacy and numeracy skills like reading and writing. For instance, in Mozambique, adults may seek to acquire greater

literacy to increase vocational skills to secure sustainable employment or engage in financial literacy programs to improve their economic well-being.

Furthermore, transformative and emancipatory learning paradigms, championed by critical social theorists like Freire and Mezirow, extended the scope of adult education further in terms of seeking to uncover and rectify oppressive structures, empowering individuals to reach their full potential. This is a significant aspect of adult education that is of interest to this thesis as it highlights the politicized role of adult education in enhancing critical and transformative literacy. By exploring these diverse perspectives and aspects of adult education, we gain a broader understanding of adult education and the contextual factors influencing adult learners' experiences and opportunities for growth, revealing diverse traditions within adult education as it evolved.

Adult education domains

To delineate adult learning realms by purpose, the European Commission in 2000 defined three distinct categories:

1. Formal Learning: Deliberate, objective-driven, and time-bound education leading to certifications from recognized institutions.
2. Non-formal Learning: Lifelong learning pursuits without formal certification, encompassing activities like seminars, workshops, arts, music, sports training, etc.
3. Informal Learning: Knowledge acquisition through daily life experiences at work, within families, or during leisure time, characterized by unstructured and spontaneous events.

These domains attempt to mark out the different aspects of adult education that Selman and Dampier (1991, p. 2) mention as moving into community and continuing education spaces. In several countries education sectors or domains tend to overlap to accommodate the community's needs. In the context of developing countries like Mozambique, adult literacy is assigned paramount importance in community life and development. It is expected to be a crucial tool for educating individuals on health, agriculture, nutrition, climate change awareness, civil rights, and tackling societal issues such as domestic violence and democracy participation. Literacy learning centers are often found in churches, workplaces, and community hubs, facilitated by both qualified and unqualified professionals. Over the past 15 years, many universities in Mozambique have

witnessed a flow of professional adult learners enrolling in continuing education departments or specialized distance learning programs.

Who is an adult learner?

While trying to understand who an adult learner is, international policy analysis from the International Adult Literacy Survey and Life Skills (OECD 2003) allows the exclusion of all regular full-time students except the following: “Full-time students, Subsidized by employers, full-time students over 19 in the elementary or secondary school programs and full-time students over 24 enrolled in post-secondary programs”. This functional definition, primarily based on age, is significant as it distinguishes adult learners from traditional students, recognizing the overlap between higher education and adult education systems. Moreover, it is crucial to consider the distinct attributes of adult learners within the specific educational landscapes of Ireland and Mozambique. Integrating the qualities of adult education outlined in previous sections, the conceptualization of adult learners in this study is rooted within situational literacy, which explores how material conditions influence learning as dynamic social practices, as articulated by Street (2001 p.10).

In essence, the determination of who an adult learner is, should not solely rely on age or educational level, but also on the circumstances under which they enter education. For instance, in Mozambique, girls as young as 15 who have not completed primary education may engage in literacy classes due to prior experiences linked to gender inequalities within families, geographical location, and poverty. Conversely, individuals aged 50 may pursue university or secondary education for professional and financial advancement.

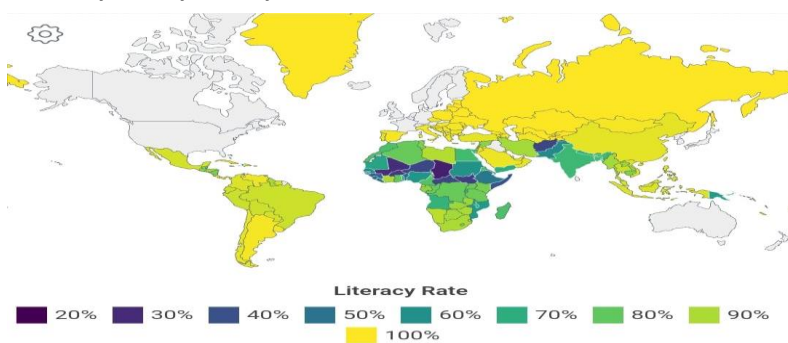
This perspective shifts the focus away from autonomous or individualist approaches to literacy, emphasizing literacies as social practices intertwined with various aspects of life and broader social and cultural contexts. This aligns with Freire's view that literacy expands beyond mere textual comprehension to include the ongoing interpretation of the world that surrounds us. By situating adult learners within these contexts and frameworks, this thesis offers valuable insights into the transformative power of literacy pedagogies in addressing social inequalities and fostering educational opportunities in Mozambique and beyond.

Adult literacy globally and in Mozambique

The UNESCO Institute for Statistics maps adult literacy globally and highlights significant ongoing global literacy challenges. The report pointed out that in low-income countries, one in three young individuals still struggle with reading, while the adult literacy rate stands at 86%, leaving approximately 750 million adults worldwide lacking basic reading and writing skills. Notably, there are 92 literate women globally for every 100 literate men, dropping this ratio in low-income countries to 77 literate women for every 100. Projections indicate that by 2030, the global youth literacy rate is expected to reach 94%, with adult literacy close behind at 90%. However, at the current pace, it is estimated that in low-income countries, less than 70% of adults and just over 80% of youth aged 15 to 24 will possess basic literacy skills by 2030.

World Population Review 2024 makes it clearer that “Poverty and illiteracy tend to go together. Education is often less available in poverty-stricken areas. Moreover, even when education is available, a struggling family might need their children to work and earn money instead of going to school. Most of the countries with the lowest literacy are in South Asia, West Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa—regions that also include most of the poorest countries in the world like Mozambique as you can see from the map below”.

Literacy Rate by Country 2024



<https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/literacy-rate-by-country>

A previous UNESCO Institute for Statistics report in 2016 highlighted Mozambique's literacy rates (low-income country), placing them between 60% and 70% for youth and adults. This data underscores the persistent issue of illiteracy, affecting approximately 40% of Mozambicans aged 15 and older.

Drawing on my experiences as an adult educator and literacy tutor, reflecting on these statistics and the conditions in which literacy classes in Mozambique take place, particularly in rural community centers, where sessions are often held in rudimentary settings like under big shadow trees or community meeting spaces, where willing individuals mostly without formal training step up as guides for adult learners, facilitating fundamental reading, writing, and numeracy tutorials using content-limited resources. These circumstances make me question the accuracy of the reported statistics and raise concerns about the quality of skills adult learners attain through various literacy programs given these limited resources and training.

Historical Evolution of Mozambican Adult Literacy Programs

For a reasonable comprehension of this section, it is essential to acknowledge that Mozambique existed as one of the Portuguese colonies that lasted for 4 centuries and ended in the 1970s with the proclamation of Independence led by the Liberation Movement Front (FRELIMO, 1975). Today, it boasts a population of approximately 32 million inhabitants, with over 60% being individuals under the age of 35 from which approximately 40% still cannot write and read due to many reasons such as lack of opportunities, poverty, and gender-related issues that are discussed below.

After the independence struggle, Mozambique was embroiled in a 16-year conflict marked by internal discord between RENAMO factions backed by the South African regime and the Mozambican Military forces. Initially, the conflict aimed to undermine neighboring nations that supported the indigenous black population in the region against Apartheid. Subsequently, the focus shifted towards the promotion of democracy and freedom within the governance movement, embracing a diluted form of socialism and the fight for democracy.

Crucial societal issues such as economic empowerment, democratic governance, and human development demanded the endorsement of cultural identity and a solid educational foundation, both of which were systematically denied to indigenous communities by the Portuguese authorities.

This urged a rapid movement for literacy led by the late President Samora Machel (1976-1986), emancipating young adults, women, and men to learn reading and writing to serve the newborn nation. Young people with minimal experience, including some of the military forces, and ordinary women were engaged to start teaching reading and writing (*alfabetização*) from the little writing

and reading skills acquired from the colonial system. As mentioned before, the civil war brought some regrets and losses to education in Mozambique that only ceased in 1994 with the peace accords. In a historical account of how adult and youth education evolved in Mozambique, Mário (2002, pp 3-4) identifies three historical stages:

From 1975 (the time of Mozambique's independence) until the mid-1980s. According to Mário, the important milestone at this stage was the consecration of the education of adults as one of the pillars of the National Education System. For Mario, this stage was characterized by a dynamic and multifaceted process of popular mobilization for the tasks of national reconstruction, the construction of national unity, and the affirmation of Mozambican identity. This linked adult education very clearly with the new nation's emergent political identity and purpose.

Second from the mid-80s to 1995. From Mário's perspective, this stage was characterized, on the one hand, by the significant increase in literacy and adult education activities due to the intensification of the 16 years of war waged by the then regime of apartheid of South Africa and, on the other, by the destruction of infrastructure and loss of human life that caused thousands of Mozambicans to migrate in neighboring countries and millions more found themselves in displaced condition. According to Mário, literacy campaigns began to be promoted only in large cities. Exceptions to this rule were initiatives by NGOs, religious groups, and individuals who maintained programs on a small scale and produced innovative language-based programs (p.4)

Third from 1995 to the present today, according to Mário (2002: pp 3-4), it is characterized by a process of rediscovery and rescue of literacy and adult education in the context of peace and social stability that the country experiences, and as an indispensable instrument of sustainable economic and social development centered on Mozambican men and women. During this period, the national education system enabled kids aged 7 and more to begin their education but also provided night shift for potential workers and young people with special literacy and numeracy classes for adults delivered under the big shadow trees in several communities, in churches, refugee camps with the help of several NGOs including UNICEF.

Policies of literacy and education for all in Mozambique

Mário (2002, p.4) postulates that the regulation of basic literacy and education in Mozambique is governed by various legal frameworks, including the Constitution of the Republic of Mozambique.

The constitution recognizes education as a fundamental right for all citizens (Article 88) and emphasizes its role in promoting national unity, eradicating illiteracy, advancing science and technology, and fostering moral and civic development (Article 113).

Despite these legal instruments and governmental programs, such as the Government Program for 2000-2004 aimed at revitalizing literacy to reduce illiteracy by 10%, challenges persist in the implementation of effective literacy programs in Mozambique. While there are ambitious goals outlined in these legal documents, the actual effectiveness and impact of literacy programs in Mozambique may face obstacles such as limited resources, insufficient training for educators, high dropout rates, and gender disparities. The discrepancy between policy intentions and on-the-ground realities may hinder the successful implementation of literacy initiatives and the achievement of desired outcomes.

Additionally, the adaptation of the National Education System by evolving economic and political models, as highlighted in Law No. 6/92, requires continuous assessment and adaptation to ensure relevance and effectiveness in addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by Mozambique's population, especially in the context of high illiteracy rates and limited access to quality education. The Action Plan for the Reduction of Absolute Poverty, 2001-2005 - PARPA identifies literacy and adult education as essential goals of the educational program; the National Strategy for Literacy and Adult Education and Non-Formal Education (AEA/ENF), with the main objective of eradicating illiteracy in the country, and the new Government Program 2005-2009 reiterating the goal of reducing illiteracy by 10%.

Mario continues, saying that in these documents, literacy is defined as *"learning to read, write, and numeracy, developed in a way to use them effectively to learn to learn and to meet basic needs."* (2006:6). The concept of learning to learn, which is integral to literacy, plays a vital role in the commitment to Education for All. It is a key objective of the Dakar Declaration, which Mozambique has embraced as a guiding framework for improving adult education, decreasing illiteracy rates, and fostering lifelong learning since 2000.

The Curriculum Plan for Literacy of the Ministry of Education of Mozambique, approved in 2000 and 2003, respectively, stated: that literacy is considered, on one hand, the acquisition of basic notions of reading, writing, and arithmetic, and on the other hand, a process that stimulates

participation in social, political, and economic activities and allows for continuous and lifelong education (MEPT, 2012). The adopted concept reflects a multifaceted understanding, as functional literacy is included as one of the local development activities, as well as a socially situated and politicized sense of literacy as civic engagement.

The current landscape of adult literacy programs in Mozambique

Despite the extensive legal frameworks and meticulously designed goals established over three decades, by UNESCO, including the CONFINTEA VI (2009a) in Nairobi, Kenya, the Belém Framework for Action (2009b), the World Data on Education 7th Edition for Mozambique-Geneva (2010), the Human Development Reports of 2007/8 (2010, and 2011), and the Millennium Development Goals for Mozambique in 2010, all referenced in Roberto Luis's 2012 report "*Ensino e Educação de Jovens e Adultos em Moçambique by the MPT PP 7-17*," illustrate that numerous revisions and interventions have been put in place to empower communities through education. The government's initiatives, including two revisions of the national curriculum, were aimed at adopting a more humanistic and task-oriented approach to address the challenging living conditions faced by a significant portion of the Mozambican population. However, the present state of education in Mozambique highlights substantial deficiencies and shortcomings that diverge from the envisioned objectives.

In my experience spanning over a decade in both teaching and managerial roles in Mozambique's educational sector, I can sadly state that adult literacy programs are not prioritized at the level they are stated in the legislation above.

These challenges have been brought to light by civil society and media, pointing out issues like exam malpractice, corrupt practices leading to automatic student promotions, inadequate teaching resources, low subsidies for adult educators, and a notable lack of infrastructure support. I remember receiving a small monthly stipend of 500 MZN, which was about USD 7.8 at that time and has now been adjusted to around USD 10.8. This meager payment not only undermines the efforts of educators but also puts a financial strain on those striving to bring positive change through education.

Reflecting on this situation leads to questions about the true motives of international partners and advocates supporting global adult education literacy initiatives. It prompts one to consider whether

the support genuinely aims to raise literacy levels and community transformation or development in countries or if it is merely a mask of global illiteracy statistics. Moreover, a closer examination reveals underlying power dynamics, with historical negotiations between the Global North and African authorities perpetuating hegemonic structures that have influenced these nations for decades.

These challenges highlight the urgent need for comprehensive reforms and increased support for adult literacy programs in Mozambique to address the systemic deficiencies and improve the quality of education provided to communities. This analysis requires a thorough review of educational laws, governmental initiatives, budgetary allocations, and planned activities dedicated to adult education. For a clear understanding of the real situation of how many individuals above 15 years are assumed to be able to read and write in Mozambique, we will bring the most recent formal data reported by the Mozambican Statistics Institute. The table below presents the illiteracy rate in the population, given by the percentage of people who cannot read and/or write, for individuals above 15 years old, between 1997 and 2017.

The results show a significant decrease in the illiteracy rate in the population. Over 20 years, from 1997 to 2017, the proportion of the population unable to read and/or write dropped from 60.6% to 38.5%, representing a 36.0% decrease in the rate. On the other hand, the proportion of the population who can read and write increased from 36.4% to 60.5%. It should be noted that the growth in the proportion of the population who can read and write was more pronounced in the first decade, from 1997 to 2007 than in the second, from 2007 to 2017. In the first ten years considered, the percentage of literate individuals grew by 24.1%, while in the second decade, the increase was approximately 20.7%.

Table 1: Illiteracy for individuals aged 15 years and older, by year, Mozambique 1997, 2007, and 2017.

	1997		2007		2017	
	People	%	People	%	People	%
Can write and read	345,895	37.5	573,161	49.1	867,173	68.1
Cannot write and Read	575,853	62.4	593,797	49.6	551,594	39.9

Source: INE (National Institute of Statistics), Census 1997, 2007, 2017

From the facts illustrated above, it is evident that adult literacy in Mozambique remains a substantial issue amongst its population. Another key factor that is more impactful is the drop-out phenomenon at primary levels of young people who haven't acquired reading and writing skills, making the numbers of illiteracy in the future even bigger than what is currently counted.

One notable deficiency in adult education goals in Mozambique is the absence of critical reflection and problem-solving skills among students and the whole social sphere. Presently, the majority of Mozambicans face problems in which functional education and community initiatives could help to some extent; such as access to food, healthcare, security, and other social services. Civil society remains passive, while scholars, social activists, and politicians face daily threats to their lives within a judicial power unable to clarify most of these violent actions to citizens.

This scenario underscores the importance of adult education focusing not only on literacy and numeracy for statistical purposes but also on nurturing active citizens by fostering awareness of global issues such as human rights, freedom of speech, sustainable agriculture, natural resource management, health, nutrition, fair wealth distribution, and political consciousness to unleash the community's human potential.

Given that a substantial portion of Mozambican society comprises young individuals facing economic, educational, and recent political challenges, participatory and transformative lifelong learning emerges as a recommended approach for educators to cultivate active citizenship. Embracing radical and transformative learning theories, particularly drawing inspiration from Paulo Freire's radical adult education pedagogy, is crucial in addressing the pressing issues faced by Mozambican society. The following chapter will delve into these learning theories and their relevance to the current Mozambican context.

Chapter 3. Theoretical Framework

Introduction - Radical Pedagogies and Active Citizenship

In this chapter, I review the relationship between radical pedagogies and active citizenship, analyzing the intersecting elements of educational approaches and their practical implications for the informed framework which will draw upon Paulo Freire's liberatory approaches and his advocates to guide the exploration of these concepts.

The influence of Paulo Freire in Latin American pedagogical approaches

Paulo Freire (1921–1997) is the key inspiration in critical pedagogy. His work transcends mere instructional methods; it challenges learners to examine power structures, question societal norms, and dismantle oppressive systems.

Freire “*opposes the practice of domination through education —denies that man is abstract, isolated, independent, and unattached to the world; he also denies that the world exists as a reality apart from people. Authentic reflection considers neither abstract man nor the world without people, but people in their relations with the world*” (1970 p.64). For a more human and just society, he comprehended the source of oppressive forces lodged and empowered by educational systems.

In the first chapter of *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Freire (1970 p. 35) exposes the relationship between the master and slave (oppressor and oppressed) to illustrate the concepts of brutal dehumanization based on power-oriented social classes building wrong beliefs and ill-written history. This is what allowed the colonial powers to use the bible and perpetuate inequalities through what they called “God’s will” or destiny. We find this reality still operating in poor countries with low democratic standards; where education and the politics of fear and military forces are simultaneously used to silence community voices displaying themselves as the only political option. Freire argues for the need to raise learners’ critical consciousness which is according to him “*the process of gaining an in-depth understanding of the world around you*” (Freire & Macedo, 1987 p. 43) In my perspective, the apparent paralysis of Mozambican society can be explained by Freire’s (1987) conception of the “fear and difficulties” that gradually sink the marginalized and benefit select politicians in power. Within this situation, lies an opportunity

for adult and literacy educators to empower rural communities by implementing targeted programs to challenge the existing power structures.

Freire emphasizes the importance of utilizing an education approach rooted in students' lived experiences and cultural backgrounds. By incorporating generative words based on local knowledge and cultural contexts such as ethnicity, gender, religious values, beliefs, and locally agonizing problems (such as famine, STDs, and alcohol or drug abuse) in the teaching contents, educators enable learners to relate literacy and numeracy to their reality, fostering a sense of relevance and empowering their socio-cultural identities. He suggests that “*We need dialogical teachers who find the word as an instrument that makes dialogue possible for reflection and action, in such a radical interaction that if one is sacrificed—even in part—the other immediately suffers given the fact that humans are not built in silence, but in word, in work, in action-reflection*” (Freire 1987 p.40). This is the desired teacher for the liberatory pedagogy, whose actions and goals are not measured by how much he/she earns but by how much loving and generous to others matters for unified transformation or progression based on mutual negotiation.

Dialogue as the process of Reading the World

Reflecting on my limited understanding of adult education when I joined this course, I realized that adult learning goes beyond just teaching people to read and write, to empowering individuals to interpret their contexts and stand against societal injustices and governmental power. To achieve this, we need well-trained teacher educators and support from social stakeholders. Similarly, educators need to understand students' backgrounds and community contexts to deliver transformative education artistically and intentionally, fostering not only literacy but also empowerment and societal change. Critical theorists similarly focus on education as a force for empowerment, with Giroux stating that “*We need students who know what it means to be a subject, and not just an object*” and to be “*troublemakers*” (Giroux, Human Restoration Project, July 30, 2022)

Citing Baldwin (1963) in the same speech, Giroux (2022) contends that our actual type of students need to have enough confidence in their knowledge and their modes of self-determination to feel the energy of what it means to be an agent. He continues by saying that “it doesn't make sense to use the same methods to teach people disrespecting the local context, their age, and their social

needs or their primordial objectives as they pursue education” (p.3). Freire instead argues that “conversation is part of the process towards creativity and enlightenment among the oppressed” (1970 p.74). His dialogical method of teaching upholds that “everyone carries experience, that encourages an equitable exchange of ideas, and that empowering non-oppressive relationships (self or with others) are at the core of pedagogy” (1970 p.61). As education gets free from the banking approach, teachers are challenged to allow a problem-posing method through an open dialogue which in turn demands a more artistic and emancipatory approach allowing learners to discuss and solve social inequalities as they learn the real sense of humanity.

According to Freire (1970 p.60), utilizing problem-posing education means fostering an educational system that empowers individuals to critically analyze the root causes of societal problems such as poverty, illiteracy, gender disparities, and lack of access to quality education. Rather than viewing education as a passive transfer of knowledge, problem-posing education promotes a dialogue-based learning approach where both educators and learners actively participate in constructing knowledge, challenging assumptions, and envisioning a better future.

Looking at how Freirean-inspired adult literacy campaigns worked in Brazil, Tanzania, and Guinea-Bissau we find their timely pertinence in critiquing colonial and oppressive educational systems that are resembled in another version in contexts like Mozambique, not based on racial but political power perpetuating domination through the government's nominal engagement and inadequate allocation of resources for educational endeavors limiting funding and infrastructure, preferring other sectors seen as important to maintain the regime such as military and judicial.

In Brazil, Paulo Freire's influence on adult literacy campaigns has been profound, emphasizing "critical literacy" over "functional literacy" to nurture critical thinking and civic engagement. While successful in empowering marginalized communities, challenges arose from socio-economic disparities and resource limitations. The key takeaway is the necessity of customizing literacy programs to address societal inequalities effectively.

Guinea-Bissau similarly embraced Freire's pedagogy, empowering citizens through critical awareness. However, challenges arose due to disruptions from political motivations conflicting

with educational objectives, emphasizing the importance of balancing transformative ideals with practical implementation strategies to ensure sustainability and support.

Tanzania's shift towards "critical literacy" for socio-economic empowerment highlights the transformative potential of education beyond basic skills. Despite successes in enhancing personal freedoms and economic advancement, the country faced obstacles from resource constraints and socio-economic factors, highlighting the need for sustainable support systems and comprehensive strategies to maintain literacy gains.

These case studies underscore the necessity of aligning literacy initiatives with local realities and needs, stressing the fundamental right to literacy and its profound impact on individuals and communities. By leveraging these insights, your research on the transformative power of literacy pedagogies can enhance Mozambican literacy programs effectively, addressing challenges like poverty, illiteracy, and low civic engagement profiles. Lessons from global campaigns like those in Guinea-Bissau illuminate the critical considerations for successful implementation, urging a critical analysis of local circumstances and tailored approaches to maximize impact and foster social awareness among learners.

Liberatory Approaches and African Pedagogical Influences

An exploration of the history of independence movements in the African continent reveals a strong strand of liberatory pedagogies advocated by Pan-African leaders like Julius Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah, Amilcar Cabral, and others, who sought to eliminate colonial influences and create a sense of humanity and equality between oppressors and the oppressed in the spirit of Paulo Freire. I would contend that Africa is currently undergoing the consequences of not effectively emulating the values of critical education approaches like the pedagogy of the oppressed.

In this critical scenario, pan-African individuals like Amilcar Cabral placed a similar emphasis on collective solidarity and empowerment as he “embraced and promoted collaborative efforts aimed at integrating education with cultural activities such as theater, fostering national identity, and preserving history. Moreover, he emphasized collective work, including the development of new production processes, to empower individuals to grasp their reality and envisage a more prosperous future that even assisted fellows from the Islands of Cabo-Verde” (Silva M. & Cassiani S. in Cabral, 2008, p.154).

When defending African culture, Cabral never wanted to compete with European culture, much less go against scientific knowledge. Thus, he advocated for an education for the future, connected to science, because 'our culture must develop on a basis of science, it must be scientific, meaning, not believing in imaginary things' (Cabral, 1978, p.141)

Another theme from Cabral's ideology cited by Silva & Cassiani (2022) is unity also shared by Kwame Nkrumah in neighboring Ghana who believed that the termination of colonialism was the first step toward complete liberation (Hayne 1998:356). "Amílcar Cabral's objective was to fight against Portuguese colonialism and rebuild a new nation united with Africa, referring to some authors like Fanon (1975), Gramsci (1968), and Vidson (1975) point out that the biggest challenge for African nations is the unity of the people, considering the situation of the African continent and the influence of colonialism, which left deep marks on the original peoples." To make this possible Cabral brings two distinctive teacher roles to categorize them namely; "a progressive educator works among and with the oppressor to improve his academy but also aims to bring the oppressor to a more socialist view and the revolutionary educator is historically and socially involved in the struggle to free his people from oppression through community realities with necessary competencies aimed not simply at transmitting knowledge but also at acting as a facilitator of learning" (pp 11-12). In my role as a Mozambican educator and administrator, based on the traditional values of communal togetherness, recovering Cabral's approaches to adult education, and literacy programs in Mozambique, can play a pivotal role in fostering active citizenship rooted in collective solidarity, cooperation, and unity without any great sacrifices as this is how Africa is traditionally built, these programs have the potential to bring communities together in profound ways.

Mozambique, often referred to as the land of good people, embodies a culture of communal living where individuals treat each other as family and are ready to share a loaf of bread and a fireplace when needed. This sense of unity and belonging forms the foundation for collaborative efforts to thrive and prosper collectively. When education emphasizes the importance of understanding systemic issues rather than placing blame on individuals, it empowers all members of society to contribute positively, regardless of their background or origin.

Amilcar Cabral's belief in the power of unity and collective action resonates strongly in the context of Mozambique and Africa as a whole. As we embrace and implement these ideals in adult education programs, we can witness a transformative shift towards community-driven initiatives and a heightened consciousness among individuals to actively participate in the betterment of society.

By promoting a culture of togetherness, understanding, and shared goals through literacy programs, we can pave the way for a more enlightened and harmonious community where individuals work collaboratively for the common good. This approach not only challenges historical divisions and classifications but also lays the groundwork for meaningful and lasting change in Mozambique's educational landscape and beyond.

Coming to citizenship and adult or even popular education, *Mwalimu*, a Swahili name for 'teacher'; Julius Nyerere stands as a big influencer in East and Southern African countries hosting and training liberatory independence movements for freedom along with educational practices used in most of the newly independent nations in the 1970s. Nyerere's (1978: 33) "Unjama" (or family hood in Swahili) theory mentions three key roles of an adult educator namely: helping the learner to develop his/her potential and capacity and choosing teaching methods that place active participation of both teacher and students in the learning process. The third important consideration in the choice of a method is that every adult knows something about the subject he is interested in. This educator should be the vehicle to connect communalism and family hood (*unjama*), seen as 'the most fundamental element in the African society' based on three principles: 'equality and respect for human dignity; sharing of the resources which are produced by our efforts; work by everyone and exploitation by none' (Nyerere, 1967a, pp. 5–6).

I believe that Julius Nyerere's emphasis on the communal essence of African societies and the active involvement of learners drawing from real-life experiences are pivotal in shaping educational approaches in African countries like Mozambique. This is substantiated by two main factors: firstly, the strong ties to traditions and intergenerational connectivity that Africans value as essential for prosperity and continuity; and secondly, the collective response to resource scarcity where community members come together to accomplish tasks beyond individual capacity, such as digging a well to secure a water source. In such communal endeavours, a wealth of knowledge

and experiences is transmitted from the older generation to the youth, ensuring the preservation and continuity of valuable insights and practices. Within this context, introducing literacy classes can serve as a valuable enhancement, facilitating greater success and progress within these communities by leveraging the traditional wisdom and practical skills passed down through generations.

Samora Machel, Mozambique's first president, drew inspiration from Nyerere's vision and incorporated comparable principles into the post-independence policies of Mozambique. As part of this initiative, Machel established adult literacy centers within "*Zonas Libertadas*" - areas liberated as colonial powers retreated - with a focus on instilling social ideologies aimed at cultivating a new kind of citizen, known as "the new man."

"We create the objective conditions for establishing new relationships among people, dismantling the foundations on which the old mindset rested, and creating conditions to foster the new mindset. However, there is a demanding task of educating consciousness, not only because a shift in mindset does not automatically come with the transformation of the infrastructure, but also because the new mindset actively opposes the enormous and heavy heritage that we carry with us. The task of educating people to acquire the new mindset logically emerges as a pressing need for the consolidation and development of the revolutionary process" (MACHEL, 1974, p.11; 12)

In general, the pan-African pedagogies advocated for unity and sovereignty, shaping Mozambique's policies in areas like land reform, education, and economic planning. Nyerere's emphasis was on rural development and community involvement. Ultimately, the influence of Nyerere and Nkrumah on Mozambique's development trajectory is evident in the country's economic, social, and political policies following independence but faded along with the introduction of capitalism forcing the adoption of competitive individualism over scarce resources that in my understanding is the root for the civil wars, corruption and poverty in Mozambique.

Another drawback stemming from the competitive education system, particularly in the context of global literacy standards, is the excessive focus on gathering statistics regarding literacy rates. This approach often results in merely empty figures that do not necessarily benefit the community, serving more as metrics for statistical purposes and funding allocation discussions. There are

concerns regarding the efficacy of international organizations entrusted with measuring educational quality globally, especially in terms of the dependency on quantitative assessments and the actual impact of literacy statistics.

For instance, when it is reported that 70% of Mozambicans can read and write, it prompts the question: beyond literacy skills, what practical abilities do these individuals possess for their advancement? Education is deemed a key factor in overcoming various challenges, yet issues like poverty and health disparities persist even among “literate” populations. The emphasis on numerical growth in literacy rates fails to address crucial human development capacities and indicators, such as access to necessities like food, healthcare, or protection of fundamental rights that require a well-rounded citizenry. It raises important concerns about the true advancement brought about by a system of education focused primarily on numerical outcomes rather than holistic human development.

These considerations shed light on the downsides of a profit-driven, numbers-oriented educational model that neglects the broader spectrum of well-being and empowerment that should come with learning. It is essential to critically examine the impacts of capitalist-driven global educational paradigms on countries like Mozambique and assess the true benefits and drawbacks they entail for individual and community progress.

[Overview of Irish Adult Education & Community Education as Foundations for Transformation](#)

Taking a comparative approach bridging from the pre-colonial period and wars (World War I in 1914, the Easter Rising in 1916, Independence War and Civil War) and the limited financial context of the newly established Irish Free State in 1922 (Murtagh 2014, p15), this account intends to provide a comparison and source of motivation for Mozambican education policymakers and the broader readership. It is vital to reflect on how the Irish education system transcended oppression to attain its present status and the footsteps, challenges, and solutions provided.

Murtagh (2014, p. 14) points out, that the foundation of Further Education and Training (FET) in Ireland traces back to the British administration, with Horace Plunkett being one of the founding members putting forth the following recommendations: “1. *Reform the education system*; 2. *Place a renewed emphasis on industrially related education*, 3. *Create a Department of Agriculture and*

Industry for Ireland,” (Byrne, cited in Hyland & Milne, 1987, p.8). From my point of view, these practical changes represent a focus on education for the citizens of Independent Ireland, particularly in Further Education and Training (FET), aiming to impart essential vocational skills to address basic human needs like nutrition and family income through education. This resonates with two African proverbs: "An empty sack cannot stand on its own" and "Give the hungry a hoe to farm, not only food, for he will remain an eternal beggar."

The Two Sides of the Catholic Church

Drawing from my experiences in Mozambique and historical narratives detailing how Christianity was manipulated through the Bible to perpetuate distress rooted in blind faith, facilitating Portuguese colonial penetration and persisting post-independence to shape educational practices, the influence of the Catholic Church in Irish education is informative. The influence of the Catholic Church on Irish education reflects a double-edged sword.

I have learned similar instances in Ireland where the institutionalization of the English language stemmed from these unsettling chapters in history, providing potential learning for Mozambique. O’Donoghue (1999, p.3), mentions that “*The church's primary concern was with the ‘salvation of souls’ and it saw the control of schools as being vital in this task. ...Most primary schools were managed by a priest of the parish, in which the appointment of the teachers, was subject to the regulations of the Department of Education about academic and teaching qualifications*”. The interesting fact that differs from the situation in Mozambique, as stated by O’Donoghue, is that the Catholic curriculum in Ireland placed significant emphasis on teaching the Irish language, promoting Gaelic culture, and instilling the "3Rs" - Reverence, Respect, and Responsibility - in both Irish and English. The religious education focused on catechism, utilizing a question-and-answer format that emphasized the imparting of 'facts' to suggest religious certainty was attainable. However, on the flip side, the Irish language became associated with disaffection, defeat, poverty, and ignorance, discouraging people from learning it if they sought to be perceived as civilized (O’Donoghue 1999, p.6)

Recognizing the apparent neutrality of religious establishments, particularly evident in the Catholic Church's role in post-independence Ireland, it continued to play a significant role, utilizing its infrastructure, human resources (such as priests doubling as educators), and financial influence to support its educational and spiritual mission in Ireland as highlighted by O’Donoghue

& Harford (2011, p. 232). While the Catholic Church exercised substantial authority over Irish education, deeply rooted in historical context, societal changes eventually began to challenge its undemocratic dominance. Tom Inglis aptly explains the power dynamics between the Catholic Church and the state following independence:

"Since 1922, the predominant power structures in Irish society have been the state and the Catholic Church. While the state's authority is evident across a wide spectrum of social domains, the Church primarily exerts its influence in areas such as education, healthcare, and moral guidance. Contentious interactions between these two power entities have predominantly revolved around moral issues, particularly concerning health, education, and family matters. The historical relationship between the Church and state in modern Ireland has been characterized not by conflict but by a peaceful coexistence, each entity upholding the authority of the other." Inglis (1998, p. 77)

My point to this situation is to use history as something we can't do anything to change but scaffold from it a relay race where each team member must smoothly receive the baton from the previous runner to commence their leg of the race. The state relied on the church's established presence to fulfill its responsibilities. According to Murtagh (2014), the early Irish Free State concentrated on developing educational curricula at primary and post-primary levels to firmly embed the Irish language, history, and culture in the educational framework. In contrast, Further Education and Training (FET) was somewhat neglected due to a lack of emphasis on vocational education.

To conclude, an African proverb comes to mind: "When washing your baby, be careful not to spill the dirty water along with the baby." This illustrates that despite the adverse impacts of colonization, Ireland maintained significant ties with the Catholic Church, ensuring a legacy of adult education embedded with core principles and skills such as understanding, communication, participation, spirituality, and inter-religious learning. These foundations have been sustained over generations through a multitude of educational infrastructures that continue to benefit people in Ireland and worldwide. Similarly, Mozambique would capitalize on the huge presence of the Catholic Church and other religious affiliations to get support in educating the vast majority of adult believers who cannot write and read.

Role of Civil Society & Urban Organizations

Community-driven perspectives do play an important role when it comes to active citizenship and participation. I was impacted when I learned how the Irish social organizations raised to support local initiatives for education and inclusion.

According to Connolly 2014, p. 53 citing (Powell and Geoghegan 2000) “It was recognized community education had the power to address profound social issues, through community development” She extended by saying that *–the activists also developed local links with libraries, schools, community centers, churches and so on to launch advertise and recruit for the programmes as well as other aspects of putting on new educational initiatives that had qualities in common, including good welcome –I recognized when I started; hospitality, with a tea and coffee as part of the provision, with the underlying acknowledgment that the informal learning of the tea break was a vital as the formal learning; care and especially childcare; commitment strategic thinking, equality, and justice; and many other dimensions, identified by the research undertaken over the past years (AONTAS, 2009a).*

Let me refer to one of the most impacting accounts stated by Connolly (2014), “*Mary Foley, one of the founder members of Leixlip Women’s Studies established with two key aims: to provide daytime classes for women with crèche facilities, and to use their resources as much as possible getting much of their available time to study while maintaining their maternity right. They were according to Foley, the first self-funded, independent women’s education group with a crèche in Ireland*” (Foley, 2011 in Connolly, 2014, p. 54). Connolly reinforces that “this empowerment was also expressed in local politics, in community-based responses to local issues, such as unemployment, drug misuse, community safety, and so on” For example, *activists in the women’s studies project in Leixlip were very active in the Town council.* Foley, 2011 in Connolly, (2014, p. 54)

Financial Literacy Strategies

Financial literacy plays a crucial role in understanding and managing money effectively. According to a recent NALA (2022) report, Ireland, compared to other Northern European countries, faces challenges with low financial literacy rates. It is essential to recognize that

financial literacy encompasses knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors related to financial resilience, capability, and exclusion. Research indicates that literacy and numeracy are key factors that predict financial literacy levels (p.14)

The transition towards digital banking services, fueled by factors like the COVID-19 pandemic, has posed challenges for individuals with limited digital literacy. The shift from traditional in-person and phone banking to online and mobile banking applications has highlighted the need for improved digital competencies among the population.

To address the literacy and financial literacy needs in Ireland, initiatives like the National Adult Literacy Agency (NALA) and the ETB Adult Literacy Service provide essential support through literacy courses and distance education services. These programs, funded by the Irish Government and the European Union, emphasize a learner-focused approach tailored to individual needs and interests.

Possible Contributions to Mozambican Literacy Context

Implementing similar literacy strategies in Mozambique, a region with limited funding and low literacy rates could have a significant impact. Capitalizing the electronic banking services like M-Pesa (mobile money service) introduced by Safaricom in (2007) Kenya which stretched in many African countries, including Mozambique, has transformed financial inclusion in Africa by supporting financial literacy in the following ways: *Accessibility, Cost-Effective Transactions, Empowering Small Businesses and Social Impact* demonstrating how innovative mobile money services can drive positive change and empower individuals and businesses in underserved communities. Additionally, Collaborating with local educational institutions, NGOs, and community organizations can help expand the reach of literacy programs in Mozambique. Volunteer tutors, similar to those in Ireland, can provide valuable support to adult learners seeking to improve their literacy skills. Additionally, developing a comprehensive adult literacy and financial literacy strategy aligned with the country's socio-economic context can promote inclusive participation in education, employment, and community engagement.

Understanding active citizenship: From theory to practice in Mozambique

“As long as the general population is passive, apathetic, diverted to consumerism or hatred of the vulnerable, then the powerful can do as they please, and those who survive will be left to contemplate the outcome.”
Chomsky (2016, p. 54)

Chomsky's impactful statement on passive citizenship serves as a reminder of the consequences of societal apathy and diversion towards consumerism or marginalization of vulnerable groups. As an educator coming from a society where ‘*there is freedom of speech (Act 9 in the Constitution of Republic of Mozambique) but no freedom after speech*’, based on daily facts of social activists, journalists, and government staff, the imperative for active and engaged citizenship is a need to respond prevailing oppression that takes together the other basic human rights, limiting quality education, economic independence, and security concerns within the country and globally.

My journey through the concept of ‘Active Citizenship’ embarked during the initial stages of this course has been transformative, with lectures elucidating the intricate relationship between citizen engagement and state responsiveness. These insightful discussions highlighted the transformative potential inherent in well-informed and empowered societies, emphasizing the principles of Choice, Empowerment, and Participation as pivotal to reshaping societal dynamics and fostering meaningful civic engagement.

The critical recognition of active citizenship as a part of human agency and rights, as set forth by Cornwall and Gaventa, reflects the evolving of civic participation towards inclusive governance and social responsibility as defended by Lister (1998 p.228) in Cornwall and Gaventa, (2000 p.33) saying that “*the right of participation in decision-making in social, economic, cultural and political life should be included in the nexus of basic human rights... Citizenship as participation can be seen as representing an expression of human agency in the political arena, broadly defined; citizenship as rights enables people to act as agents*”. Marshall on citizenship and social classing argued that in a modern society defined by social inequalities (linked to capitalism and social class), social rights are required to provide the indispensable preconditions for all members of the national community to be able to join in the “*life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society*” (Marshall, 1950 p.11), and thus, to substantiate their participation as full citizens. “*Citizenship has throughout history been a legal and political status accorded by the state to the individual and a bond of loyalty owed by the individual to the state*” (Heater 2004, p. 194).

Crick (2002) recognizes that active citizenship encompasses not only political participation but also values such as responsibility, solidarity, and public-mindedness. Additionally, active

citizenship is not confined to a specific socioeconomic group or limited to particular forms of activism and is not solely about protest movements or acts of civil disobedience, but even small acts of participation, such as recycling or volunteering, can contribute to active citizenship promoting social change or civic betterment. To complement what in practice means to be an active citizen (Robinson 2023) citing Nussbaum proposes that world citizenship education involves the development of three capacities. Drawing on Socrates' notion of the "examined life", she argues that the first capacity involves: the "*critical examination of oneself and one's traditions*" (Nussbaum 2002, p. 293) and the development of critical, analytical skills.

Nurturing citizenship through education and empowerment in Mozambique

In reflecting on the synergy between active citizenship and educational pathways in Mozambique, the interplay between formal, non-formal, and informal education serves as a cornerstone for citizen empowerment. The Adult Literacy and Education Strategy from 2010-2015 articulates the crucial roles of each education pathway in enhancing technical skills, professional qualifications, and community development. While formal education provides structured learning beyond compulsory schooling, non-formal education nurtures understanding and relations with the world, and informal education enriches cultural expressions within communities (AEA Strategy, 2010-2015).

Governments, partnering organizations, and the Ministry of Education and Human Development in Mozambique are collectively striving to enhance literacy skills for social and professional advancement, yet face challenges in operationalizing these strategies effectively. Resource constraints often result in adult education centers being nestled within primary or secondary schools, leading to a scarcity of adequate facilities and teaching materials. The curriculum has been expanded to offer certifiable education for adults covering basic literacy and numeracy up to the equivalent of grades 1 to 6 in national education, aimed at fostering lifelong learning and skill enhancement (Alzira & Buque and Quive, 2017 p.18).

The implementation of adult education initiatives in Mozambique faces hurdles, with a notable misalignment between teaching methods tailored for children versus those suitable for adult learners. The efficacy of adult education programs comes under scrutiny, spotlighting the necessity for a situational curriculum that resonates with adult learners' needs and aspirations, ensuring

substantive educational outcomes. While direct reference to active citizenship may be absent, the emphasis on literacy, life skills, and community engagement indirectly nurtures the qualities and values essential for active civic participation.

As Mozambique navigates the challenges and opportunities within its adult education landscape, a deeper exploration of how community participation is woven into these programs becomes crucial. Through a lens that prioritizes practical outcomes over mere data collection of figures to say how many can read or write, the intersection of community engagement with adult education has the potential to catalyze societal change and advance educational outcomes. The journey of enhancing adult education programs in Mozambique converges with the broader narrative of adult education across Africa, with multifaceted approaches, challenges, and lessons that pave the way for a more inclusive, informed, and empowered citizenry.

Reinforcing active citizenship in Mozambique

In my view, Mozambique can benefit from this capacity to promote a culture of critical analysis within its educational systems. Encouraging educators, technicians, and traditional leaders to scrutinize entrenched customs, such as restrictions on expressing dissenting opinions, fear, and passivity towards social injustices. Looking at the macro poverty outlook indicators from the World Bank Mozambique has seen slow growth, limited structural transformation, and widespread poverty. Growth plunged from 8 percent in 1993–2015 to 3 percent in 2016–2019, owing to multiple shocks, including the hidden debt crisis, insurgency, and tropical cyclones hitting the coastal areas on cyclical bases every year (World Bank: Nowcast: 2015-2021 & Forecasts 2022 to 2024) Active citizenship education is crucial for Mozambique due to this variety of pressing challenges facing the country. The same forecast demonstrated that the poverty rate is expected to remain high, averaging 63.1 percent in 2022-2024, and limited human capital investment highlights the need for citizens to be equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to participate effectively in the economy. On the other hand, social and political issues, including insecurity, inequality, and governance issues, emphasize the importance of empowering citizens to demand transparency and accountability. Environmental challenges like climate vulnerability and resource management underscore the necessity for citizens to engage in sustainable practices.

(p. 1-2)

The second capacity to see oneself as a human being who is bound to all humans with ties of concern which is the ability of citizens to see themselves as not simply citizens of some local region or group but also, above all, as human beings bound to all other human beings by ties of recognition and concern (ibid., p. 295). I acknowledge the Mozambican community as similar to other Africans where society is more bound and connected in several matters; solidarity is one of the social norms. These values can be amplified through adult education programs focusing on empathy-building, cross-cultural understanding, and promoting solidarity among citizens.

The third capacity essential to world citizenship is what Nussbaum terms “the narrative imagination” (ibid., p. 299). She explains this as the ability to think about what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person’s story, and to understand the emotions, wishes, and desires that someone might have or feel. This approach in view, can help promote inclusivity, and dismantle stereotypes, fostering a more cohesive and cooperative society driven by mutual respect and understanding enabling to identify the common social problems and trace communal solutions.

As Lukes (2005) notes, the current system subtly perpetuates a cycle where hidden power influences individuals' perceptions and acceptance of the status quo, impeding critical questioning, it becomes imperative to create opportunities for meaningful dialogue and discourse within educational settings. In Mozambique, where government control is fading along with the increase of poverty and even formal education faces financial and quality challenges, adult and community education can capitalize on this opportunity to spearhead initiatives for popular awakening and sustainable development with less budgeting fostering spaces for collaborative learning and advocacy, paving the way for a more empowered and engaged citizenry. Empowering educators, civic agents, and youth to engage in community work and advocate for progressive educational practices can challenge oppressive power structures and promote a more inclusive and participatory society in Mozambique and beyond.

Public Communication and Active Citizenship in Mozambique

Mozambique is one of the poorest and least developed societies in the world. A World Bank report cited by Carlos Shenga and Robert Mattes (2008) proves that although poverty and lack of infrastructure have many social and political consequences, perhaps the most important, from the

perspective of the country's democratic development, are the limitations that these obstacles place on the ability of its inhabitants to act with full citizenship. Even compared to other poor societies, Mozambicans suffer from extremely low levels of formal education (the adult literacy rate is 46%, compared to an average of 61% in low-income countries) (World Bank 2008) and extremely low levels of access to public information. The country has only 3 newspapers per 1000 people (compared to 44 in low-income countries), 14 televisions per 1000 people (compared to 84), and 44 radios per 1000 people (compared to 198) (World Bank 2005: 310-312).

My understanding about the internet facilities mentioned above is that the vast spread of news and information is undoubtedly bringing a broader awareness of problems like public crimes, social imbalances, and corruption episodes, highlighting weak social services like education, health system, and transport. The level of control exerted by the government system is also exposed, compelling people to take a stand or speak out. When citizens organize social movements to protest against such situations, they are met with fear, violence, and even assassination in some cases. This instills a sense of fear and reluctance in people to speak up for what is right, as they risk grave consequences for doing so. I think that community initiatives rooted in liberatory activism can best progressively address these issues.

The UNICEF report (2021) entitled *Transformative Education in Africa* suggests that in most African countries where education and power are controlled by the politics of fear, it is crucial to foster peaceful and community-based strategies that empower people without clashing with those in power with participatory approaches that can be effective such as:

- **Coexistence** emphasizes living together harmoniously despite differences.
- **Reconciliation** involves addressing historical grievances, healing wounds, and promoting forgiveness.
- **Community-based organizations** play a vital role in advocating for education, health, and social services
- **Civil society organizations (CSOs)** can monitor government actions, advocate for accountability, and promote human rights. Supporting CSOs ensures a vibrant civil society.
- **Livelihood diversification** reduces dependency on specific sectors, making communities more resilient to economic shocks. (pp 16-18)

Conclusion

The concept of active citizenship was woven into local initiatives led by women's education groups, fostering community involvement and civic responsibility. In contrast, Mozambique faces stark challenges in adult education, marked by limited resources, inadequate infrastructure, and a disconnection between curriculum content and learners' needs. The struggle for active citizenship intersects with poverty, illiteracy, and low access to information, hindering citizens' full engagement and empowerment.

The interplay of power and education in Mozambique underscores the need for participatory approaches, liberatory activism, and community-led initiatives to address societal injustices, shape critical thinking skills, and foster a culture of social change. By bridging historical legacies with present challenges, Mozambique can leverage its communal values, empower educators and citizens, and embrace diverse perspectives to cultivate a more inclusive and participatory society. Through collaborative efforts, dialogue, and grassroots initiatives, Mozambique can use community education initiatives that promote social equity, civic responsibility, and active citizenship, aligning with global movements for positive societal transformation.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Introduction

I have embarked on a journey to explore the history and context of adult basic literacy education in Ireland, to enhance literacy programs in Mozambique to cultivate active citizenship through reflective community engagement. This methodology chapter of my thesis focuses on how I developed research to comprehend the power and impact associated with literate individuals within the community. This revelation initially struck me profoundly as I embarked on my academic journey and delved into the Master's course, many questions flooded my mind, particularly regarding Mozambique's prevalent approach to literacy education. Blessed with a wealth of bibliographical resources and human capital steeped in nearly three to four decades of experience in this field, my decision-making process was significantly influenced.

The choice to draw upon the experiences and advancements related to adult and community education in Ireland since independence, addressing issues such as poverty, health crises, and substance abuse, was pivotal. It marked a transition from traditional literacy programs towards more comprehensive professional and social support structures—a shift that resonated deeply with the current societal landscape. This study aims to identify commonalities and shared learning between Ireland and Mozambique, despite existing within distinct time frames, to extract insights that can be effectively applied in Mozambique today.

This chapter covers the characterization of the research, the ontological and epistemological perspectives driving this research, research strategies, methods of data collection, approaches to interviewing and research design, sampling, and planning of research activities. It also describes the data collection process, based on the methods and instruments used during the research. It clarifies the research stages and, finally, describes the validity and reliability of the different instruments, ending with the presentation of ethical issues as well as the profile of the research participants.

Methodology

The Etymological Dictionary (2008-2016 p.1) conceptualized methodology as deriving from the Greek word 'Méthodos,' which translates to 'a path to a specific end,' encompasses reflection, direction, or reasoning based on the context in which the term is applied. In the semantic domain, methodology is the order in which various processes must be arranged to achieve a desired outcome. It can represent a direction in mathematics and the discovery of laws in philosophy. In essence, the methodology is a repeatable procedure used to achieve something tangible (material) or intangible (conceptual). In line with these definitions, this research will adopt an inductive method, with the researcher starting from smaller premises to arrive at broader generalizations. Methodologies, as noted by Walsh et al (2006, p. 70), stem from the researcher's epistemological and philosophical/political position. Therefore, it is crucial to outline the methodologies from the outset, exploring my ontological and epistemological viewpoints as central pillars of the research. By examining where my beliefs align within existing research paradigms and identifying the resonance with certain approaches, I aim to establish a solid foundation for this comparative study that delves into the transformative strides taken by Ireland in utilizing adult education to enhance the lives of citizens and promote active community participation. This exploration is guided by a commitment to support Mozambique, a developing country with limited educational structures, by harnessing the power of literacy programs to foster societal development and civic engagement.

Main research paradigms

This research is inscribed post-positivist in nature based on a constructivist paradigm. According to Dilthey (1958, citing Schwandt, 2000 pp. 192-206) 'to understand the meaning of human action requires grasping the subjective consciousness or intent of the actor from the inside.'

The socially constructed accounts of people's experiences of education are particularly fitting for my research due to the emphasis on understanding diverse perspectives within educational contexts. Post-positivist researchers, as highlighted by Ryan (2015, p. 23 citing Schratz & Walter, 1995, pp. 1-2), advocate for an inclusive approach to knowledge construction, where empirical evidence is interpreted through individuals' socially constructed narratives of their experiences. This resonates with my decision to adopt Yin's (2014) concept of a case study as an empirical inquiry into contemporary phenomena within real-life settings, especially when boundaries between the phenomenon and its context are blurred (p.16). By exploring factors that influence the impact of adult literacy programs on fostering community participation in Ireland compared to

Mozambique, these two socially constructed case studies provide valuable insights into the complexities of literacy educational experiences and their societal implications in both contexts.

How knowledge is acquired in my perspective

Epistemology, as defined by Crotty (1998) and echoed by Mukhles (2020), delves into the theory of knowledge embedded within a study's theoretical perspective and methodology. It encompasses studying how people or systems of people know things and how they think they know things (Keeney, 1983, p.13 cited in Scully, 2002, p.10). Thus it concerns our understanding of knowing and how we come to acquire knowledge. In the context of this research, the focal point of inquiry revolves around the social construction of the 'literacy for active citizenry,' as discussed by Gaventa and Cornwall (2001), who posit that knowledge serves as a vital resource for individuals to advance their collective struggles and empower themselves (p. 470).

In conducting this research, my epistemological perspective has been significantly shaped by my time as a student in the Department of Adult Education, practical experiences and observation in the field (adult education centers in Dublin city) matched with in-depth interactions with influential individuals in Ireland and personal reflections on my involvement as an educator and manager in adult literacy programs in Mozambique. These environments have sparked my curiosity to explore how Ireland's adult education initiatives have not only positively impacted local communities but have also been evident on a global scale. Reflecting on my journey, from encountering traditional 'banking' approaches in education devoid of substantial learning to experiencing transformative and purposeful knowledge acquisition, I have come to appreciate the importance of learner-centered frameworks and the value of accreditation. This has motivated me to channel these insights towards enhancing community involvement in Mozambique, a country facing significant educational challenges.

Building upon this theoretical foundation, the epistemological perspective of this study, as articulated by Ryan (2015), explores how individuals and systems acquire knowledge and interpret their understanding. Embracing a worldview intertwined with historical, social, and scientific foundations, this research situates researchers within intricate contexts to comprehend the impact of literacy programs and citizenship initiatives in Mozambique. By contextualizing findings within

the broader context of transformative ideals and societal change, this study aims to uncover the transformative potential of literacy pedagogies in fostering empowerment and social change.

Ontological Perspective

An ontological position ‘involves asking what you see as the very nature and essence of things in the social world’. (Mason, 2002, p. 14) Therefore in this research, I uphold the idea of the interconnection between human behaviors and social relations, underscoring the dynamic construction of reality through individual experiences and societal settings. By examining literacy pedagogies in Mozambique being a prototype of many African countries, and Irish settings, I aim to uncover the diverse ways individuals engage with education and citizenship within specific cultural and historical frameworks. Through the lens of transformational and critical social theories, this exploration emphasizes the capacity to generate new knowledge that can fuel social movements striving for change and social justice as stated by Freire & Macedo (1987, p. 11) “To be literate is not to be free, it is to be present and active in the struggle for reclaiming one’s voice, history and future.”

Taking inspiration from critical social theories and transformative ideals, my research aims to untangle the intricate links between human behaviors, social structures, and educational practices geared toward transformation. By situating findings in broader socio-historical contexts, this study aims to unveil the transformative potential of literacy programs in empowering individuals and catalyzing societal change, both in Mozambique and beyond.

Research Methodology Overview

“The choice of data collection instruments depends on various factors related to the research, namely, the nature of the phenomena, the research objects, financial resources, the human resources, and other elements that arise in the field of investigation”(Lakatos & Marconi, 2001, p.155)

For this study, an integrated set of methodologies were used with the unique purpose to generate insights and evidence on the impact of literacy teaching to raise active citizenship, its processes, and its impact on the social and professional lives of the adults involved in literacy learning centers in Mozambique and Ireland. For comparative purposes, uniformity in the essence of the

methodologies and research questions was relatively maintained in both the Mozambican and Irish contexts, as described below.

The section aims to explain how key insights derived from analyzing data collected through questionnaires distributed to adult learners and interviews held with educators and experts in adult/further education in both regions. By structuring and interpreting the gathered information into thematic frameworks that correspond to the survey and interview inquiries, comparisons are drawn regarding the efficacy of literacy programs in cultivating active citizenship in the two countries.

Cross-Cultural Data Collection Strategies: Remote Interviews, Field Observations, and Collaborative Approaches in Adult Literacy Research

Data was gathered through a hybrid questionnaire format, with online surveys in Mozambique and Ireland aimed at learners enrolled in adult basic or literacy courses promoting active citizenship. 15 adult literacy learners participated from Mozambique out of 20 invited, and 6 learners out of 10 invited in Ireland. Additionally, personal and intermediary consultancy was conducted with adult educators and education board staff in Mozambique and Ireland to gather statistical information and explore their training background, teaching practices, and the observed impacts on learners' development of active citizenship. I have interviewed 4 adult educators in Mozambique, and 4 adult educators in Ireland.

Field observation, which involved visiting adult/basic education centers in Dublin city, given my current location in Ireland for academic purposes, I report on the context in Mozambique based on personal experience and literature. I used a topic guide of questions for observations and informal conversations with people in these centers, delving into their opinions, beliefs, or various factual information about themselves or their environment.

Conducting in-person interviews or administering questionnaires in Mozambique posed logistical challenges due to my location in Ireland. To overcome this, I counted on the support of colleagues and educators in Mozambique to connect with literacy students. These local allies facilitated the use of online tools like Google Forms to conduct interviews remotely and promptly deliver results. Given the economic context of Mozambique to use the internet to support this data collection

effort, I provided funds equivalent to 500 Mozambican Metical (\approx \$7) per collaborator to cover data costs, enabling my four colleagues/ research assistants to capture information through audio recordings and live surveys then share with me via WhatsApp for analysis.

The significant challenge lies in aligning the timeframe and educational concepts concerning adult education and citizenship between the two countries, posing potential difficulty in adapting data collection instruments and subsequent analysis. The complexity of these contexts emphasizes the need to meticulously ensure that the research sample and methods capture the diverse nuances present, enabling the study to draw pertinent and meaningful conclusions. By addressing these challenges proactively and maintaining a focus on sample and methods diversity that is attuned to the social and cultural distinctiveness of both countries, the research aims to navigate the complexities of adult education systems and citizenship perceptions in both case study sites.

Documentary Research

As stated by Corbin & Strauss, 2008 in Bowin (2009 p.2) document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents; both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material. Like other analytical methods in qualitative research, document analysis requires that data be examined and interpreted to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge.

In this study documentary analysis serves as a pivotal method within this study, enabling the systematic gathering of insights and evidence on the impact of literacy programs in promoting active citizenship among adult learners in Mozambique and Ireland. This method places a significant emphasis on understanding how literacy teaching influences the social and professional lives of learners, with a specific focus on the intermediary role of educators in fostering civic engagement. By delving into documentary sources, this research aims to maintain consistency in data collection across both geographical contexts, facilitating a robust comparative analysis to draw meaningful conclusions.

The documentary research's initial focus was gathering essential historical and developmental data concerning literacy rates, national and international summits, and agendas aiming at community participation and citizenship achievement rates and the overall learning environment within adult education centers in Mozambique and Ireland. This data provides valuable insights for evaluating

literacy programs' effectiveness and practicality across diverse settings. However, challenges such as data accessibility and organization emerged during this process, underscoring the need for meticulous planning and structured data handling. To address these challenges proactively, a systematic approach to documentation and categorization was employed to ensure the smooth progression of the research and maintain data integrity.

Key Resources Used in Documentary Analysis

In Ireland, pivotal policy documents such as the Murphy Committee Report (1973), the Green Paper (1998), and the White Paper (2000) by the Department of Education and Science have laid foundational aspects for the development of adult education in the country. Furthermore, an analysis of the SOLAS establishment and various community education initiatives that significantly contributed to the growth and evolution of adult education programs in Ireland was explored. In Mozambique, the reliance on annual reports, literacy journals, statistics, and reports from reputable organizations such as the World Bank, IMF, and UNESCO, along with significant legal documents from the Ministry of Education and Human Development (MINEDH) have been instrumental in tracking the shaping of the landscape of adult literacy programs in the country. Key resources including the Literacy Curriculum Plan (2nd edition) by MINEDH and the Transforming our World: 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development guide have provided valuable insights with focus on sustainable development goals and educational initiatives in Mozambique. Moreover, the collaboration with NGOs aligning with educational visions has further enriched document analysis in the research.

Analyzing documentary and ethnographic accounts

In my research, the utilization of documentary analysis served as a foundational method to gain deep insights into the historical, educational, and societal landscapes of Mozambique and beyond. By meticulously examining a variety of written materials such as reports, legal documents, and educational archives, I was able to uncover patterns, trends, and cultural shifts related to literacy teaching and educational systems. This method of analysis enabled me to contextualize the past, understand the current challenges, and establish a baseline for future studies in adult education.

Moreover, incorporating ethnographic methods into my research alongside documentary analysis, interviews, and surveys was instrumental in enriching the blend of the findings. Being new to the field of adult education studies and not being an Irish citizen, my strategic use of ethnographic interviews and observations provided holistic insights into my learning about the experiences, beliefs, and behaviors of adult literacy learners and educators in Ireland. By immersing myself in these specific communities and engaging in coffee talks and detailed observations of the adult education learning environments, I could capture personal narratives that added depth and nuance to my analysis. This was allied with reflective journaling of observations about my experiences as an educator in Mozambique. The contrast of different cultural contexts through documentary analysis and ethnographic research broadened my understanding of adult education practices and highlighted the importance of incorporating diverse perspectives to inform policy decisions and resource allocation in the field.

Case Study Analysis

This research adopts a transformative perspective, focusing on generating knowledge to tackle specific challenges in applied contexts. With a comparative outlook, the study explores the distinct contexts of literacy programs in Mozambique's Adult Literacy for AEJA and further education centers across Dublin City in Ireland. The aim is to identify common interests and shared knowledge opportunities for leveraging and implementing best practices in Mozambique, drawing on Ireland's experiences in adult and community education.

A crucial aspect of this research lies in bridging the gap between objective realities and the subjective experiences of individuals, through a case study approach of adult literacy learners and educators' experiences in Ireland and Mozambique. Case studies, like other forms of qualitative research as stated by Merriam (2016 p.37) seek meaning and understanding using the researcher as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, employing an inductive investigative strategy resulting in richly descriptive outcomes. For this project, I engaged with key individuals including adult learners and educators from both countries, and built a picture of adult literacy in both contexts, drawing on Merriam's (2016) assertion that a case study entails a detailed exploration and examination of a specific system within a defined context. This approach highlights the importance of discerning between the central focus of the study, referred to as the

case, and the insights generated through the research process (p.38). For instance, Yen also argues that a case study is particularly well-suited for scenarios where disentangling the phenomenon from its context is impossible, emphasizing the unity of the study (Steake 2000, p.5). By adopting a case study approach, the research concentrated on the exploration of specific systems within defined contexts to extract richly descriptive outcomes. Challenges in this method involved establishing rapport and gaining the trust of participants to ensure their openness during observations and interviews. Responding to these challenges involved building relationships, and ensuring confidentiality. To enhance my research experience, I had the privilege of visiting adult education centers in Dublin with the invaluable support of colleagues and students in the Department of Adult & Community Education. This included engaging in interviews during field trips with key figures in Irish adult and community education in Dublin, where I gained access to in-depth insights into the stages, development, and overall impact of the sector in Ireland. I am deeply appreciative of their support and the nurturing environment they provided, allowing participants to share their experiences openly and comfortably.

My exploration in Mozambique relied heavily on my personal experiences and understanding of the local landscape where adult literacy programs operate. However, to ensure a comprehensive report, I also conducted online surveys and engaged research assistants in Mozambique. They visited various centers under guided observation aspects and utilized an interview guide which I had designed to capture valuable insights and responses in person. This collaborative effort enabled me to gain updated and diverse perspectives, enriching the research findings with a well-rounded view of adult education practices in both countries. During these case studies, I used interviews with educators and online surveys with literacy learners as a way of gathering data, as discussed in the following sections.

Analyzing Interviews with adult educators

The interview component of the research targeted adult educators and education board staff to gain insights into literacy provision and the impact of educational practices on fostering active citizenship. Challenges in conducting interviews included time constraints and the need for effective communication to extract detailed insights from participants. In overcoming these challenges, a flexible approach was adopted with mutual agreements on scheduling and

availability, and strategic utilization of a recording app for interviews, and structured guides to maintain consistency and relevance of questions. Enhanced by active listening and rapport-building, participants were encouraged to share candid responses. These interviews were conducted during field visits with adult educators, offering valuable perspectives in the contexts where adult education was occurring, giving me a keen sense of the context of the adult literacy education of which they were speaking.

In Mozambique, supported by research assistants, structured interviews and phone calls with adult educators enabled rich data gathering. These followed an interview guide exploring similar themes to those discussed in Ireland. Participants displayed not only openness to take part in the survey but also eagerness to share their experiences about their literacy program experiences and citizenship education amongst communities in Mozambique.

Questionnaires through Online Surveys

Through the use of surveys, data collection focused on gathering information from adult learners enrolled in literacy programs in Ireland and Mozambique to understand their educational experiences and social engagement. Key concerns in survey implementation revolved around ensuring participant engagement and response accuracy. To mitigate these concerns, efforts were made to simplify survey questions, provide clear instructions, and establish channels for participants to seek clarification if needed. Additionally, data validation techniques were employed to ensure the reliability and accuracy of survey responses.

Because of time and location constraints and learners' commitments to their final assessments, coupled with the need to quickly establish trust with participants, data collection was structured to be efficient and effective. I used online surveys both in Mozambique and Ireland for adult learners. Surveys were meticulously administered through university IT system of MS forms, ensuring a streamlined approach to gathering essential feedback. The questionnaire, shaped in collaboration with educators and administrators, aimed to elucidate the field experiences and perspectives of learners enrolled in diverse programs. The survey enquired into learners' educational experiences and their impact on social engagement, local decision-making, and community involvement. Furthermore, participants were prompted to express individual challenges related to active

participation in community issues, fostering a comprehensive understanding of their perspectives and insights.

During my research, I encountered a significant language challenge due to the differences between the official languages in Mozambique (Portuguese) and Ireland (English). Collecting data and referencing materials required me to translate between the two languages, presenting a unique challenge for some individuals. The process involved translating documents, citations, recordings, and responses in real time, drawing upon my background in translating and interpreting to navigate this linguistic barrier effectively. Utilizing both online and offline translators facilitated this process. Furthermore, the ability to operate in both languages enhanced the accessibility of the research findings, making the information more available for deeper investigations in both language contexts.

The culmination of the questionnaire encouraged learners to share personal anecdotes, thoughts, and concerns relevant to the sector, enriching the data collection process with firsthand experiences and reflections from the participants. (See Appendix 1 & 3)

Ethical considerations

In this study, adherence to key principles of GDPR, ethical concerns and considerations of freedom of expression challenges in Mozambique and Ireland, paramount importance was placed on gatekeepers. Several ethical issues were managed effectively to uphold research integrity and ensure participant protection which the researcher addressed:

Participant Engagement and Informed Consent in Mozambique and Ireland as stated by Arifin (2018 p.2) “should be given freely (voluntary), subjects should understand what is being asked of them, and involved persons must be competent to consent.” The researcher ensured that participants were available and willing to participate in surveys and interviews involved building trust and rapport with the community through my research assistants. Building upon the trust from the respondents, I explained to my research assistant how to address the respondents and share and explain the consent forms before exposing them to the surveys. But it was also important engaging with community leaders and explaining the study's objectives clearly in local languages,

participants were more inclined to provide informed consent and actively engage in the research process.

Cultural Sensitivities in Mozambique: Recognizing and respecting the diverse cultural backgrounds in Mozambique was essential. The research team took care to align their actions and communications with local customs and traditions, thereby fostering a sense of inclusivity and trust among participants. For instance, understanding the significance of oral traditions in some communities helped to adapt data collection methods to be more culturally sensitive. Gender issues like having the third person during the interview if women were to be interviewed.

Anonymity and Confidentiality Aligning with (Brandimarte et al., 2013) during research processes, no participants should have to worry about getting hurt because their private information got out because they took part in the research. Participating in research is always voluntary, and everyone who takes part has to be assured of their safety(p.340) Guaranteeing anonymity and confidentiality in a context like Mozambique required specific strategies. The researcher explained verbally and included in the survey a notice ensuring data was anonymized, securely stored, and disposed of according to local regulations, participants felt reassured that their information was protected. This approach not only respected their privacy but also aligned with local data protection norms.

Power Dynamics and Informed Consent in Ireland: Given the educational landscape in Ireland, where power dynamics and personal security policies can influence interactions, obtaining informed consent was crucial. By allowing participants to decline participation or withdraw consent at any stage, the study promoted autonomy and agency, mitigating potential power differentials that could impact the research process.

Finesse and Transparency in Ireland: In Ireland, where research ethics are held to high standards, maintaining finesse and transparency throughout the study was pivotal. By critically reflecting on data collection procedures and ensuring methodological rigor, bias was minimized, and data integrity was upheld. Transparent communication with participants also enhanced trust and credibility, essential elements in the Irish research context.

Validity and reliability of results

When selecting data collection instruments for educational purposes, two main features, as outlined by Harrison (1983 pp. 10-11), are considered:

Reliability per Harrison (1983 p.10), involves the examiner's ability to ensure data accuracy and stability over time. Based on its objectives, multiple methods, such as semi-structured interviews, the examination of existing documentary data and statistical analysis, interviews, and surveys with adult learners, educators, policymakers, and community leaders corroborated to gather primary and confident data. Additionally, document analysis examined existing literature and policies to provide historical facts and a comprehensive analysis of the Irish and Mozambican contexts.

An instrument is reliable if its measurements are accurate and consistent when applied at different times. In Mozambique, given the fact that some data was collected remotely, to ensure the stability and accuracy of responses across multiple coders and data sets were achieved we used, recording devices, and transcription of digital files that were translated by the researcher who has been working in the official translation services in Mozambique for more than 12 years.

Validity: An instrument is valid if it measures what it aims to measure. Validity in qualitative research in Ireland and Mozambique naturally took distinctive characteristics. To ensure that instruments measure what they aim to measure, the researcher and assistants focused on aligning data collection instruments with the cultural and linguistic diversity present. By engaging with adult learners, educators, policymakers, and community leaders through interviews and surveys, researchers can verify the validity of their data by capturing a comprehensive range of perspectives and experiences.

Triangulation using ethnographies

Aligning with Davies (1999 p.64) who points out that “people make sense of their lives, for the most part, in terms of specific events, and sequences of events. Most people do not articulate how the sociological categories of race, gender, class and ethnicity, and so on have shaped their subjectivities, learning and experience, or how the larger historical processes, such as social movements or demographic transitions, have affected them. Yet, what is remembered is

remembered precisely because it is socially significant”. In the context of Irish educational research, where historical contexts and policies play a significant role, while in Mozambique cultural or traditional aspects are given much importance, utilizing the method triangulation which “involves using data sources or diverse methods including ethnographies to validate findings” Cooper (1997 pp 556-561) enhance the study's validity and reliability. By combining various research methods such as document analysis of existing literature and policies, conducting interviews, and employing statistical analysis, researchers can ensure a more robust and comprehensive understanding of the long history of Irish adult/basic education. This approach aligns with the post-positivist nature of the study, emphasizing the importance of triangulating data from multiple sources to validate findings.

In navigating this study, I had the privilege of engaging with adult educators who exhibited remarkable openness and enthusiasm to participate, driven by a shared sense of solidarity and a deep belief in the power of adult education and community involvement for catalyzing global change. This receptiveness was instrumental in capturing reliable data infused with elements of deep reflectivity from participants in both Mozambique and Ireland. It was a unique opportunity where the researcher's own experiences in adult literacy teaching in Mozambique seamlessly intertwined with the narratives gathered. These unexpected yet profoundly impactful encounters shed light on the potential for transformative adult education practices, drawing illuminating parallels between the advancements seen in Ireland and the promising opportunities for positive change within the Mozambican community.

Chapter 5: Findings, Analysis, and Discussion

This chapter presents and discusses the outcomes derived from both documentary and field research in the dual contexts previously introduced. These findings aim not merely to juxtapose, but to provide inspiration for enhancing adult literacy in both settings, with a specific focus on informing the Mozambican perspective. Given the current landscape of social challenges in Mozambique, it is essential to explore an educational intervention strategy for improving the functional literacy of both young individuals and adults involved in rural socio-economic activities.

The research involved the researcher firsthand in accessing the experiences of participants, bridging the gap between theoretical classroom knowledge and practical application. Engaging with individuals directly in the field allowed for a deeper understanding of their daily struggles and successes and showcased the importance of crafting an educational strategy not to solve holistically the challenges, but to mitigate and alleviate them through proactive approaches agency from the community to anticipate socio-economic conditions with all the available resources and knowledge. Progressively, this chapter will draw upon data collected through three main instruments: documentary research, surveys conducted with adult learners, and interviews with adult educators and literacy tutors. Additionally, personal insights from the researcher, who has firsthand experience with adult literacy programs both as a tutor and later as an administrator, will provide valuable context and depth to the analysis presented.

Findings resulting from documentary research and ethnographies

As a professional in the field of education from Mozambique, I was initially surprised to uncover the rich history and robust movements within adult education research. Through my examination of key documents and conversations with seasoned individuals in the field, I came to realize that the seemingly commonplace practices, such as conducting literacy classes under trees due to budget constraints in my country, are actually deeply rooted in a formal field of study that has existed for over a century. This field of adult literacy and education is supported by extensive libraries and university departments globally, with European and North American traditions

emphasizing psychological and educational approaches, as detailed in previous discussions (Merriam, 1993, p. 3).

Adult literacy programs in Mozambique are grounded under another influence of liberatory approaches with the critical view of pan-African scholars like Julius Nyerere, Luis Cabral, and Nkrumah from whom the former president of Mozambique Samora Machel got support in ideologies and material in the case of Tanzanian communities.

The earlier exploration of the history of independence movements in the African continent reveals a strong strand of liberatory pedagogies advocated by Pan-African independence leaders like Julius Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah, Amilcar Cabral, and others, who sought to eliminate colonial influences in their countries and create a sense of humanity and equality between oppressors and the oppressed in the spirit of liberatory pedagogues, including Paulo Freire. A strong sense of learning collectively from people's experiences is still at the heart of literacy approaches in Mozambique as later findings will discuss.

However, the document analysis reveals significant gaps in practice. I would contend that Africa is currently undergoing the consequences of not effectively emulating the values of these liberatory approaches outlined in Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. This is evident as, from the 1980s, a significant gap emerged between education and ideological aspirations in many countries, creating tyrannies that resulted in civil wars, development regrets, and hunger. While African leaders advocated for freedom and liberation, they didn't accomplish what Freire (1970 p.28) calls "the humanistic and historical task of the oppressed: to liberate themselves as well". The lasting impact of colonialism resulted in deep-rooted racial divisions and greed overshadowing efforts for visible economic development.

Within Europe, different dynamics are evident from the literature review and interviews with educators. They describe how different forms of oppression and colonialism were present, as a legacy of Ireland's past as a colony of the UK, when Ireland went through a civil war and extreme poverty in the post-independence decades. While Ireland's history shows its shift to modernization where after joining the European Union (formerly EEC), this was combined with global influences and societal challenges. Telling her personal story, a community educator recounts "*Upon*

relocating to Rialto, one of the poorest areas in Dublin, where my husband is from, I experienced the profound impact of AIDS, yeah, at that time there wasn't one family that wasn't affected by AIDS. There was a health massacre going on right in the city center and this wasn't being addressed or recognized by the government in the early '90s, intensified by the proliferation of heroin since the '70s, the lack of awareness and access to adequate treatment further perpetuated the dire situation"

Another Irish adult educator describes the context in Ireland at the time *"In the 70s the population was 3 million, a quarter of a million people emigrate a quarter of America. And there was a quarter of a million people unemployed. Yeah, do you know what I mean, really, and truly it was a devastating era"*.

Both educators have worked with adult education academically and with the community throughout their lives, they share and laugh together saying *"Because few people were able to buy clocks, they had to share the same clock, using a brush handle was used to tap the roof/ceil and alert the kids upstairs, and two or three families used the same TV". "In some small apartments where six or eight people lived, children did not have their bedrooms, and there was only one shared toilet"*.

This practice, reminiscent of my childhood in Africa near the equator, where the movement of the sun and changing shadows served as time indicators, underscores the resourcefulness in the absence of clocks.

My understanding from these personal stories is that the struggle against poverty and the importance of education is evident in both African and Irish contexts, with homelessness and housing issues requiring attention in both regions. While Africa faces severe poverty and living conditions, Europe struggles with homelessness exacerbated by high housing costs. As seen through my voluntary work serving immigrants and homeless individuals in Ireland, solidarity and communal support (a more visible part of community life in Africa) play crucial roles in addressing social challenges and transforming lives against the individualist and capitalist approach evident in Europe, though with a society with higher levels of formal education. This underscores the need for an exchange of approaches and a shift towards more collaborative and supportive initiatives

globally, leveraging resources and community-driven solutions for human development and reducing social imbalances.

Analyzing Adult Learners Questionnaires

For a comprehensive analysis of the adult learner's responses about adult education and literacy programs impact active citizenship various themes emerged. The coding of responses from questionnaires sheds light on crucial aspects such as age demographics, gender distribution, and the educational achievements and aspirations of adult learners toward active citizenship. The study also delves into the frequency of class attendance and the confidence levels in literacy skills among participants, offering insights into their learning environments and the impact of Adult Learning Centers in both Mozambique and Ireland.

Furthermore, the thesis explores the type of content learned in adult basic and further education settings, as well as the perceptions of active citizenship held by learners in these programs. These key themes aimed to provide recommendations for enhancing community participation in adult education initiatives, fostering a deeper understanding of the challenges and opportunities present in these educational contexts.

The questionnaire was crafted to gather uniform data from students engaged in basic adult or further education across both countries. In organizing the data analysis into themes, the questionnaire was meticulously designed to gather comprehensive and consistent data from adult learners involved in basic or further education programs in both Mozambique and Ireland. The questionnaire structure was influenced by the themes identified during the initial literature review process, aligning with a method commonly employed to analyze qualitative data. Drawing from research methodologies described by Ryan (2014, p. 178), this thematic approach involves categorizing responses to the eleven questions into distinct themes that emerge from the research questions and theoretical framework. These thematic categories may stem from the researcher's theoretical orientation, the nature of the research questions, or insights gained from participants, writers, and various documentary sources. By labeling sections of data with these thematic categories, the analysis seeks to bring clarity and structure to the data, enabling a deeper exploration of the research findings.

Age Demography and Gender

Regarding age demographics, learners participating in the research in Ireland span from 31 to 74 years old, while in Mozambique, the age range varies from 18 to 74 years old. In Ireland, 4 male and 3 female participants enrolled in adult, basic, and further education programs participated in the research, whereas in Mozambique, the distribution was 10 female and 3 male participants. The comparative analysis of literature and policy research in Ireland and Mozambique, reveals that Ireland tends to attract adult learners in a real sense seeking a second chance or simply to further their education with a considerable number of immigrants. In contrast, Mozambique's literacy programs cater to a broader age range, providing opportunities for both younger and older individuals.

Gender disparities in Mozambique, characterized by a higher representation of females than males, based on literature and my experience in rural settings, can be attributed to factors such as early marriages. This phenomenon often involves girls as young as 14 or 15 being coerced into forced marriages, which typically last for less than three years. Upon deciding to resume their education, many of these young women view literacy programs as a valuable means of reclaiming lost time. Societal pressures and masculinity beliefs that men shouldn't display their 'inabilities' to read and write and prefer to move to neighboring countries for "better" opportunities lead to a higher representation of women in literacy programs.

Adult education achievement and aspirations towards active citizenship

In Mozambique, individuals participating in study/ adult literacy programs usually have not gone beyond level 5, with Level 6 remaining elusive for many participants. Achievements primarily centered on fundamental literacy skills, enabling tasks like reading, writing, and document signing avoiding fingerprints on their Identity documents, and during voting processes. Contrasting this with Ireland, where students predominantly began literacy programs within the past half-year to a month, aspirations were geared toward attaining new job opportunities and enhancing professional skills, notably in the realm of computer literacy. The significance placed on goals and aspirations in driving adult education reveals a transformative potential within individuals seeking personal growth and career advancement. This dichotomy between Mozambique's emphasis on practical literacy and Ireland's focus on vocational competencies underscores the need for tailored program

designs that cater to distinct educational needs and aspirations. By empowering individuals through relevant literacy skills and professional development, these programs can play a pivotal role in fostering active citizenship and driving societal engagement and transformation.

Frequency of class attendance and confidence levels in literacy skills

The questionnaire revealed that in Mozambique a significant majority, 78%, attend adult literacy classes only once per week. This suggests that access to adult basic education every week is available among respondents in Mozambique. In contrast, the responses from Irish adult/basic education centers showed that a high percentage, 90%, attend classes three times per week. This indicates a more intensive engagement with adult basic education in Ireland compared to Mozambique.

The questionnaire highlighted a notable disparity in confidence levels among respondents in Mozambique, with only 44% expressing confidence in their adult basic education concerning literacy and numeracy skills. This lower confidence level could point to potential challenges or gaps in the education system. Conversely, in Ireland, a significant 80% of respondents reported feeling confident about their adult basic education and its focus on literacy and numeracy skills. This higher confidence level suggests a more positive perception of the educational support available in Irish adult literacy/basic education centers.

The disparity in attendance frequency between Mozambique and Ireland reflects varying levels of access and intensity in adult basic education programs in both regions. The higher frequency of classes attended in Irish centers may indicate a more structured and comprehensive educational approach than Mozambique's more sporadic attendance.

The contrasting confidence levels in literacy and numeracy skills highlight potential differences in the two countries' effectiveness and support provided by adult basic education programs. The lower confidence levels in Mozambique could point to challenges in the educational system, such as limited resources or gaps in instruction. Meanwhile, the higher confidence levels in Ireland suggest a more robust and effective approach to literacy and numeracy skill development.

This analysis underscores the importance of examining not just the frequency of attendance but also the quality and impact of adult basic education programs on learners' confidence levels and skill development. Addressing disparities in access, intensity, and effectiveness of adult basic education programs can contribute to empowering individuals with essential literacy and numeracy skills, ultimately enhancing their opportunities for active citizenship and socioeconomic participation.

Learning environments and their impact: adult learning centers in Mozambique and Ireland

The responses from Ireland highlight the positive impact of the structured classroom environment, with a focus on the facilitation of learning through group dynamics, supportive teachers, and collaborative interactions among students and tutors. During visits to the adult education centers in central Dublin, interactions with educators and administrators highlighted a well-prepared educational system with strong community involvement and government support. The centers boast well-structured programs, physical infrastructure, and special classrooms for diverse activities like arts, music, and gardening, creating a conducive learning environment. The centers are coordinated and subsidized, with amenities like free coffee enhancing the overall experience for learners. Below I have extracted some answers from learners expressing how they feel and describing their learning environment while looking at some photos taken from the visit:

"Classroom, like the classroom, makes it easier to learn"

"Classroom, I like the group and the room."

"Good great teachers 🙌 I have to thank God"

"Classroom. Works well, cos get help from other students and the tutor".

In Ireland, the classroom or learning space is viewed as an essential space that fosters education, teamwork, and assistance, indicative of its role in promoting effective learning experiences (see figure 1 and 2 overleaf). Overall, my documentary and field observations corroborate with Maloney's (2020, p.209) account in the Education Yearbook saying that adult and community education sector is a cornerstone of the national Education and Training Boards (ETBs) Further Education and Training (FET) provision. The system offers flexible lifelong learning opportunities, emphasizing social inclusion and access to work-based learning for individuals aged sixteen and above. Educational delivery modes include classroom-based, online, and blended learning, catering to learners' diverse needs and roles.



Figure 1: Gardening lesson captured during a visit to the Adult Education Center in Dublin City.

Fig 2: Adult Literacy class in ETB, Dublin



Conversely, the responses from Mozambique reveal the challenges faced by learners studying in less-than-ideal conditions such as under trees or in makeshift rooms lacking basic resources (see Figures 3 below) that describe flagrant situations of lack of materials, proper funding, and adequate space hindering the quality of education provided. Center administrators, like the school administrator managing the secondary schools in the region, struggle to coordinate adult education centers that rely heavily on limited resources from secondary schools such as chalk and paper. Based on some of the answers I understand that despite these challenges, there is a sense of resilience and adaptability among the Mozambican learners, demonstrating their determination to learn and progress despite environmental limitations, with the respondents describing how:

"We had classes under the shadows of the cashew tree. I did not feel any negative influence, perhaps a positive one because I was interested in learning, and as an adult, I did not feel bad because of the unfavorable environment"

"Under a Mahogany tree, the influence was somewhat because I attended classes, and sometimes we would see people moving around the school and the street. But as an adult, I was able to deal with it."

Figure 3. <https://evidencias.co.mz/2022/02/24/Continuam-baixos-os-niveis-de-retencao-de-Mulheres-em-programas-de-alfabetizacao/>



This stark contrast underscores the disparity in resources and conditions between adult learning centers in Ireland and Mozambique. While Ireland boasts well-equipped and well-administered centers with strong community support, Mozambique's centers struggle to provide a conducive learning environment, leaving many adult learners to study under challenging conditions. This case study sheds light on the varying experiences of staff and learners in adult education centers in two different contexts, highlighting the importance of resources and support in facilitating effective learning opportunities.

Type of content learned in adult basic/further education

The responses from Ireland indicate a varied and comprehensive educational curriculum, covering topics such as language skills (English as a second language, spelling), practical skills (gardening, computer literacy, Health and Safety), and creative writing. Quoting some responses from the participants when asked about the content learned lately they said;

English as a second language, gardening, literacy." "Spelling" "Computers I got a cert and done level 2 as well as" "Literacy, computers and Health and Safety, creative writing" "Spelling"

This diverse range of subjects reflects a holistic approach to adult education, catering to different skill sets and interests which has sparked my understanding. In contrast to Mozambique where there are high numbers of people seeking literacy education; literacy levels are higher amongst the general population in Ireland, with literacy learning engaging different groups in Irish society, including a substantial number of immigrants seeking asylum or new settlements in Ireland from other countries, looking for a fresh start in education. The emphasis on learning English as a second language or foreign language plays a crucial role in helping them integrate into their new society. This aspect adds depth to the adult education system in Ireland, calling for further attention and studies to determine if adult education is still primarily addressing literacy issues or transitioning towards developmental, societal, and professional concerns for fostering active citizenship.

The system's focus on activities like gardening, crafting, performing, or linguistic exercises indicates a shift towards more than just literacy but broader skill development and inclusion. Recognizing that many of these learners are not fully illiterate but struggle with English communication, the system now leans into language acquisition as well as traditional literacy skills. This approach highlights Ireland's commitment to providing a second chance and welcoming immigrants into its educational framework, emphasizing inclusivity and opportunity for all individuals, regardless of their background.

In contrast, the responses from Mozambique shed light on a curriculum that places a practical emphasis on literacy and numeracy, with a low interest in citizen participation in national development through traditional academic subjects, particularly numeracy, and literacy. Reflecting on some of the respondents' experiences, there seems to be a directed emphasis on enhancing writing and reading skills in the Mozambique context as revealed by the following responses:

"It's been a long time since I attended, but the last class must have been about writing because I remember the teacher insisting a lot on improving our writing and reading skills."

And five respondents coincided saying *"Decomposition of natural numbers."*

This pedagogical approach which resembles to the concept of "banking" education discussed by Freire (1970), merely preserves the existing educational framework in a transmission model rather

than fostering an innovative and inclusive approach to teaching and learning. Freire's insight prompts a call for education that transcends basic literacy and numeracy, encouraging learners to critically engage with their socio-political surroundings. By delving into socio-political contexts, learners can develop a profound awareness of social inequalities, thereby fostering active participation and critical consciousness.

The incorporation of tasks, role-plays, and practical skills drawn from the learners' immediate environment becomes crucial elements in encouraging a more critical and holistic approach to education. This approach invites learners to not only read words but also to interpret the world around them, fostering a deeper understanding of societal dynamics and promoting active involvement in addressing social issues, as outlined by textual components in the curriculum.

Overall, while the Irish responses highlight a diverse set of skills and knowledge acquired in the classroom setting, the Mozambique responses demonstrate a curriculum emphasizing practical literacy. Both sets of responses underscore the importance of tailored and relevant educational content in fostering holistic development and empowerment among adult learners in different cultural and societal contexts.

Active citizenship perception among adult learners

In Ireland, the responses regarding adult education's impact on political involvement, community decision-making skills, and civic behavior varied. While no participants reported an increase in local political involvement or the acquisition of skills for community decision-making, a minority (20%) acknowledged an improvement in handling personal and familial matters in a civic-minded way. A significant majority (60%) did not perceive adult education as significantly influencing their political engagement, community decision-making abilities, or civic behavior. Moreover, a portion of respondents (20%) chose "Other," suggesting potential additional factors or outcomes of adult education not explicitly mentioned. One of the respondents said:

"It gives me the feeling that I can do more once I have started. I'd be more confident about joining other groups" another simply said, *"I don't vote."*

Conversely, in Mozambique, responses indicated a modest increase in local political involvement (11%), appointing proper voting without using a fingerprint as a result of their reading and writing skills. Nonetheless, a vast majority (88%) noted an improvement in handling personal and family matters in a civic-minded manner. Responses from Mozambican adult learners:

"From these classes, I started managing my business personally without involving my children in its control and calculating the change if the customer pays more than the amount due. I began marking prices on the items in the stall, and customers no longer needed to inquire about the prices of my products."

"I can manage my limited financial resources. Nowadays, I have vision problems, but in the past, when I went to the city, I could interpret signs at locations and public transportation."

"Even today, though old, I can go to the store, check my change, and complain if it is not correct. I can read without difficulty. When I did not have vision problems, I could select my children's names on the phone and call them when necessary."

These contrasting findings underscore the importance of aligning adult education programs with civic engagement goals and personal development needs. While Ireland demonstrates room for improvement in political and community engagement aspects, Mozambique showcases a pronounced positive impact on personal conduct and familial interactions through adult education. Strengthening the alignment of adult education outcomes with broader civic engagement targets can enhance active citizenship, community empowerment, and personal growth in both contexts.

Barriers and challenges in developing active citizenship through adult education

Adult learners did not express strong opinions regarding their involvement with active citizenship bringing short answers like:

- *"None"*
- *"I'm not involved in voting, I'm an Irish citizen."*
- *"Not looking to develop greater active citizenship"*
- *"Don't know"*

The responses from Ireland can be interpreted as indicating a lack of interest or active engagement in developing greater active citizenship through Basic, Community, or Further Education on the part of participants. The participants expressed this sentiment across a range of areas, from a lack of involvement in voting to a disinterest in actively pursuing opportunities for enhanced citizenship. These responses highlight a potential disconnection or disengagement from civic participation and community involvement among some individuals in Ireland, pointing towards challenges in fostering active citizenship through educational initiatives probably prioritizing other social learning interests.

In Mozambique, responses highlighted the challenges and complexities of active citizenship engagement, especially in terms of the lack of resources for literacy learning and the lack of progression opportunities:

"The lack of involvement from authorities to monitor the progress of classes in the community leads to even volunteers giving up due to the absence of supervision and support. Additionally, volunteers should receive training to enhance the program's organization." The second said *"Absence of opportunities for continuity."* Another one responded *"I have no answer, it's a bit difficult, but barriers exist even though it's challenging to pinpoint them. Even after training, I continue with farming; this is related to some barriers."* The other one claimed the *"Lack of opportunities to utilize acquired knowledge to enhance community income."* The last two reported the lack of consideration to those attending adult literacy programs saying that *"Lack of respect in society, as in my community, adults attending literacy classes are not respected."* *"The greatest barrier is the lack of value within the community."*

On the contrary, the Mozambican responses to my understanding highlight various challenges and barriers in developing active citizenship through Basic, Community, or Further Education. Learners were very aware of issues such as the lack of monitoring by authorities, insufficient support leading to volunteer dropout, and the absence of continuous opportunities that hinder community engagement and sustainability. Factors like the difficulty in identifying barriers, limited income-generating opportunities from acquired knowledge, societal disrespect towards adult learners, and the overall lack of community value contribute to obstacles in fostering active

citizenship through education. These responses underscore the critical need for enhanced support, training, societal recognition, and community empowerment initiatives to overcome barriers and promote active citizenship in Mozambique.

Recommendations and suggestions for enhancing community participation in adult education programs by learners

In the spirit of fostering active citizenship and empowerment in education, it is essential to consider the words of Paulo Freire: "Leaders who do not act dialogically but insist on imposing their decisions, do not organize the people – they manipulate them. They do not liberate, nor are they liberated: they oppress" (Freire, 1970, p. 62). By seeking input and suggestions from learners on how to improve adult education locally and globally, we embrace in a small way the principles of dialogue, participation, and collective empowerment, moving away from oppressive practices towards more collaborative and emancipatory education.

In Ireland, adult learners contributed by saying that programs: *"Should bring more technology in the classes "and "avoiding to mix different levels" or "I don't come to class for community participation"*

The feedback from Ireland's adult learners suggests a desire to incorporate more technology into classes, highlighting the potential benefits of modernizing educational methods. However, some learners may not attend classes with a focus on community participation and prefer not to mix different levels within the same class. These responses indicate varying preferences and challenges in promoting community involvement among adult learners in Ireland.

The Mozambican responses pertinently highlighted a range of recommendations and claims aimed at enhancing community participation in adult education programs. One of the respondents said *"The state should create more job opportunities focusing on educated citizens. Additionally, increasing subsidies for literacy teachers to enhance their dedication."* emphasizing the role of employment opportunities in leveraging their skills and knowledge. This aligns with the broader goal of enhancing economic prospects and societal contributions of educated individuals within the community.

Moreover, the call for increased budget as stated by the second advancing that we need *"Improving conditions and providing classrooms specifically for adult education to motivate more interested individuals to become educators."* providing additional support to teachers, we not only bolster their commitment but also acknowledge the significance of their work in shaping the educational landscape.

Additionally, the emphasis on active community involvement and heightened supervision speaks to the need for instilling a culture of seriousness and accountability among both learners and educators, expressed by the third respondent in these words *"Active community involvement and increased supervision to instill greater seriousness among both learners and educators."* This approach underscores the importance of fostering a conducive learning environment where dedication and engagement are paramount for successful educational outcomes.

Furthermore, the recommendation from one of the respondents said *" I desired additional vocational training opportunities other than reading and writing upon successful completion of the last level to further engage adults in community development through applicable skills such as sewing, cooking, and agriculture."* This showcases tangible material desired and success stories emerging from literacy programs that would not only inspire participants but also demonstrate the vocational benefits and professional growth opportunities stemming from adult literacy programs.

These answers highlight the remarkable ability of Mozambican adults, and adult learners in general, to engage in education with a sense of purpose and objectivity under the principles of andragogy by Knowles (1984) namely; self-directed learning showcasing maturity, self-awareness demonstrating experience, relevance to current roles desiring higher performance for more income and problem-centered instruction which serve as the motive (intrinsic motivation) allowing them to take charge of their educational journey based on their learning preferences and styles. (Knowles, M. S., Holton, E. F. III, Swanson, R. A., & Robinson, P. A. 2020 pp.1-5)

Insights from adult educators & literacy tutors

In this section, I presented and analyzed valuable insights from interviews with adult educators in Mozambique and Ireland who have extensive adult and community education backgrounds. The primary objective was to comprehensively understand how both countries have progressed over time in alignment with the current context from educators' perspectives. In Mozambique, the collaboration involved utilizing mobile phones for recording and transmitting answers. At the same time, in Ireland, the interviews were conducted at length in an adult literacy or adult education setting, allowing for observations and in-depth and extended discussions beyond the planned interview questions. The interview questions covered a range of topics, including the educators' training in adult education, the promotion of learner participation in active citizenship, the guiding principles and theories in teaching practices, observed changes in learners resulting from their educational experiences, and the influence of these changes on the promotion of active citizenship. Additionally, participants were encouraged to provide any additional insights or contributions that had not been previously addressed, ensuring a comprehensive exploration of the topic.

Qualifications of adult basic /further education educator

In Ireland, all respondents converged in saying that a Level 7 equivalent to a university undergraduate bachelor's degree is required, along with assessed experience in the field to relevant groups, to qualify as an adult basic/further education educator. One of the educator who is also an administrator said:

“Tutors need to have a level seven, and of course, they would need to have experience teaching adults. We also look for experience in teaching adults who are disadvantaged or who you know to deal with communities with poverty, addiction, and homelessness....”

In Mozambique, respondents also converged in agreeing that grade 7 is the required level, with one educator saying that *“I was not trained, but I have been contracted to work as a tutor after having completed my Grade 10, But the requirement is grade 7”*, a primary education cycle completed. While there is specific training available for adult literacy educators, it is not deemed a mandatory prerequisite for engaging in this role, highlighting the importance of

willingness to volunteer and a desire to contribute to adult education despite formal training not being a strict requirement.

My interpretation is that, in Ireland, there is a significant and regulated emphasis on qualifications and experience for adult and basic education tutors, which directly impacts learning outcomes and the economic standing of the tutors. This focus on qualifications serves to improve the quality of education services provided, aligning with specific objectives and enhancing the professionalization of the sector as a whole.

Conversely, in Mozambique, there is a notable shift in perspective where individuals with a primary school education level are afforded opportunities to work as adult literacy educators. This approach suggests leveraging available resources and empowering individuals at various educational levels, although the primary focus remains on literacy and numeracy.

The historical foundation of adult literacy programs in Mozambique centered predominantly on basic literacy skills, reflecting the core objectives of the national education system at that time. Comparatively, in Ireland, payment structures for educators are linked to qualifications, leading to potentially higher payments, and emphasizing intrinsic motivation, quality outcomes, and effective supervision within the sector as a career pathway. In contrast, the minimal pay, below USD 7 a month for adult educators with limited qualifications in Mozambique, poses challenges in terms of supervision, professionalism, and overall vulnerability of the sector.

The impact of adult education on learner's active citizenship

As discussed in the previous section, the responses from Mozambican learners resembled a notable impact of adult basic/further education on active citizenship, with learners demonstrating increased engagement and participation in community affairs. Educators reiterated this, explaining that by attending literacy classes, *“These learners have developed a different perspective and a more proactive approach to community issues, highlighting a positive shift in their civic involvement and elections”*.

On the other hand, one of the Irish respondents highlights a focus on providing resources and training to educators in the realm of emergent societal issues relevant for active citizenship such

as climate change education. They describe initiatives such as mentoring programs, resource development, curriculum creation, and training sessions aim to equip teachers and tutors with the necessary tools and knowledge to effectively integrate climate change education into their teaching practices.

This approach signifies a broader impact of adult education on active citizenship by preparing educators to foster environmental awareness and action among learners, thereby empowering individuals to engage in environmental issues and contribute to sustainable community development. Amidst these positive points, one of the educators stated the following limitation to demonstrate a challenge in the system to assess *“Progress, which primarily focuses on quantitative metrics like certificates and classroom attendance, cannot assess citizenship skills, empowerment, and community engagement”*.

Knowledge and appropriateness of adult/basic and further education

The responses from Ireland paint a picture of an adult education system that places a strong emphasis on foundational education tailored for adults, with a focus on empowering learners and filling gaps in their skill sets that may have been overlooked earlier in life. By providing opportunities for individuals to re-enter the education system and enhance their capabilities, *“the Irish adult education system serves as a platform for second chances and personal growth”* declared one of the respondents, extending also that this approach not only supports lifelong learning but also creates a supportive and non-judgmental environment where individuals can thrive and develop to their full potential. The emphasis on empowering adults and offering tailored education programs highlights a commitment to inclusive and accessible learning opportunities that cater to diverse learner needs. Another respondent in the interview referred to this approach as ‘humanistic’ referring to the approach of Carl Rogers. As discussed in the conceptual framework chapter, this person-centered perspective notably focusing on individual experiences and innate goodness, contends that learners are best nurtured by encouraging autonomy, internal motivation, and holistic development rather than external behavioral incentives.

In Mozambique, the responses reflect a similar commitment to adult education but shrunk on the encouragement and mastery of foundational skills such as writing, counting, and reading. An

educator emphasizes the belief that it is never too late for individuals to pursue education, promoting a growth mindset and resilience in a culture of continuous learning. By instilling confidence and providing opportunities for skill development, adult educators in Mozambique play a vital role in empowering adult learners and creating a supportive educational environment that values personal advancement even among several challenges of its socio-economic and political context.

Conclusion and Implications of the findings and discussion

In concluding this chapter, it is essential to reflect on the pivotal findings derived from both the documentary and field research conducted in Mozambique and Ireland. The exploration of adult literacy programs unveiled critical insights into the challenges and opportunities present in each context, with a particular focus on enhancing functional literacy and fostering active citizenship. The findings underscored the importance of bridging theoretical knowledge with practical application, emphasizing the need for educational strategies not just to solve challenges holistically but to strategically mitigate them, empowering communities to proactively address socio-economic conditions with available resources and knowledge.

Implications for Adult Education:

The implications of this study in Ireland and Mozambique highlight the need for contextual educational strategies to meet learner needs effectively and integrate them into society. It reveals that while Mozambique emphasizes literacy programs despite obstacles, a misdirected agenda leads to underfunding and inadequate infrastructure, potentially marginalizing the sector. These challenges are likely to bend Mozambican adult learner's expectancy on literacy programmes as solution to social issues, aligning with Knowles (1980) and Freire's (1970) perspectives on self-direction, learner experience, relevance, problem-centered learning, critical consciousness, and liberation in adult education.

Additionally, the study suggests that global educational organizations like the World Bank and UNESCO may sensationalize literacy statistics, leading to deflected growth evidence facilitating oppressive agendas to maintain the status quo. A more holistic and humanistic approach to

assessment should be placed along with critical reflection against the role of these institutions when reporting figures resembling an increase in literacy rates while communities are still voiceless and oppressed.

Analyzing the findings through frameworks inspired by scholars like Freire, Cabral, and Machel there's potential to develop a curriculum relevant to the context in Mozambique through relationship building allowing “learning which is driven by citizens’ priorities, based on existing knowledge and skills rather than starting from general knowledge” Freire (1970 p .63) The core concept is that education should transcend the traditional one-way approach where teachers simply deposit information into passive students, as described by Freire as the "banking" education. Instead, he advocates for a problem-posing method where learners participate actively in dialogue, critically examine their surroundings, and work together to find solutions collaboratively. In the same view, the study highlights the need for Irish community initiatives to reintegrate important values, counteracting challenges posed by individualism and consumerism.

Implications for Educator's Practice:

Emerging from experiences in adult literacy in Mozambique and Ireland practices throughout history, this study emphasizes the importance of a participatory educational approach. As an educator, I am urged to adjust my approaches to adult education to address socioeconomic challenges effectively, and engaging dialogical education to foster community participation and engagement. Engaging with liberatory pedagogies advocated by Pan-African leaders and Freire underlines collective learning from individual experiences.

Pedagogical Reflection - In my professional journey, the connection between education and power became clear into this course as conducted research for this thesis. The study's outcomes have prompted me to focus more on examining the disparities between theoretical concepts and real-world applications, highlighting the urgent need to bridge these gaps to empower individuals and actively promote citizenship through involvement in shaping adult education programmes.

Influenced by Freire’s work, this study enlightened the need to challenge oppressive systems in adult education to address power dynamics and structural issues within the education sector to empower learners and foster active citizenship. The marginalized status of both learners and educators in Mozambique calls for a social critique of power and a deeper understanding of societal forces at play.

In conclusion, my thesis journey has not only deepened my understanding of adult education but has also built in me the critical importance of addressing structural barriers, promoting community participation, and fostering a culture of social change. Moving forward, these insights paved the way for collaborative efforts, dialogues, and grassroots initiatives to create a more inclusive and participatory society in Mozambique and beyond I am ready to find local academic and community allies to expand and implement this knowledge productively.

Final thoughts:

This study believes in an inclusive and transformative approach to adult education, aligning with the ideologies of Pan-African leaders and Freire. Emphasizing community-led initiatives and holistic education practices can address societal injustices effectively with less clutches on activists and educators. The study calls for educators to bridge the gap between theory and practice, empowering individuals and promoting active citizenship. Future research could explore the impacts of adult education programs on civic engagement and personal growth through VPL (validation of prior learning experiences and skills, emphasizing the need to support learners in overcoming challenges through transformational changes.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

The contemporary contrasting educational environments in Ireland and Mozambique revealed significant disparities in resources and approaches though with a similar contextual beginning. While Ireland demonstrated well-equipped and structured learning centers, Mozambique faced challenges with limited resources and inadequate facilities, illustrating the need for tailored program designs to cater to diverse educational needs and aspirations as well as community intensified participation speaking up and acting to press local organizations and government to bring more resources and support for the sector.

The impact of adult education on active citizenship varied between the two countries. Mozambican learners demonstrated interest in engagement in community and personal development, with consequences such as improved business management and financial literacy but with a lack of resources and further skills building. Irish participants showed a mixed response

in terms of political involvement and community participation with students from migrant backgrounds looking for social inclusion rather than active citizenship.

Challenges and barriers in developing active citizenship through adult education programs were highlighted, with Mozambican adult learners reporting the lack absence of training opportunities and limited resources. In contrast, Irish learners expressed a lack of interest or engagement in enhancing active citizenship through their education, focusing more on their vocational professional, and social skills which demonstrate a more clarified societal and economic agenda, with the government machinery addressing community issues from these basis within.

Study limitations

During the conception of this study, design, and conception, the researcher encountered considerable limitations, namely:

- ✚ In Mozambique, researchers and research assistants encountered challenges in finding available literacy learners and teachers due to varying schedules, including teachers' strikes related to extra-time payments and salaries. These disruptions led to irregular appearances of learners and educators at the centers, affecting data collection efforts.
- ✚ As an international student in Ireland, additional effort was required to establish connections with gatekeepers who could facilitate access to adult education centers. This process of building relationships and earning trust within the community posed logistical time hurdles for the researcher.
- ✚ Difficulties arose in managing data collection and observation due to conflicting school calendars between the university and literacy centers, impacting the researcher's ability to balance learner engagement time with academic assessments and fieldwork requirements.
- ✚ Limited availability of literature about adult education in Mozambique presented challenges and restricted the scope of documentary research. However, with support from experienced scholars, the researcher managed to compile relevant literature for the study.
- ✚ When conducting online surveys or interviews, the researcher acknowledged the potential for disguised or biased responses from participants. The academic language used in the surveys may have been a barrier, necessitating further explanation in person. Ensuring a diverse and representative participant pool also proved challenging.

- ✚ Accessing a diverse range of adult learners, educators, and policymakers from both Mozambique and Ireland proved to be a logistical challenge, impacting the depth and breadth of survey data and interview findings. The limitations in participant diversity and availability affected the overall comprehensiveness of the research outcomes of this exploratory study.

Study Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, this study brings forth the following series of recommendations that aim to enhance community participation, increase educational opportunities, and empower individuals in both Ireland and Mozambique, fostering active citizenship and societal engagement through innovative and inclusive adult education practices. These recommendations focus on the key areas of policy and funding, pedagogy and training, and partnership and community empowerment.

For the development and pertinence of adult literacy programmes in the Mozambican context, based on the findings, this study recommends and suggests the following:

1. Ministry of Education (MINEDH) Coordination: Ensure coordination with different stakeholders to create a functional adult education system where learners gain practical skills for personal development and contribute to efficiency in human capital growth.
2. Establish a National Fund for Literacy and Adult Education: The creation of a National Fund can help support adult education initiatives, reducing dependence on international funding with strict agendas, and allowing more flexibility and autonomy.
3. Training and Funding Policies: Establish policies for training, funding, and equipping adult literacy programs to increase literacy rates, currently around 60%. It is not conceivable to keep getting unqualified staff to teach adults to pay them less than \$ 10 on an irregular basis and then expect success and quality literacy teaching.
4. Periodical Evaluation by DINAEA: Conduct regular evaluations to review the adult education curriculum, provide specific training for literacy teachers and educators to address challenges, and improve the quality of education.

5. **Pedagogical Workshops:** Organize workshops at community education centers supported by NGOs to address teaching challenges, encourage analytical thinking, and foster a culture of continuous dialogue among literacy teachers and educators.
6. **Expanding Educational Opportunities:** Introduce university courses, certificate programs, and Lifelong Learning Departments to expand educational opportunities and skill development, utilizing African cultural and creative skills through RPL/VPL initiatives.
7. **Community-NGO Partnerships:** Work with community initiatives and NGOs to design short-term training programs, focusing on life skills development, poverty alleviation, and health education. Encourage community-driven initiatives through RPL and VPL.
8. **Provincial and District Involvement:** organize forums to share experiences, train educators, and discuss strategies to equip learners with practical skills, especially in rural areas.
9. **Empower Communities:** Align education strategies with community aspirations to promote active citizenship and emphasize citizenship education. Encourage RPL and VPL in various fields to drive community-driven initiatives.
10. At the country level, I would recommend that Mozambicans in general including scholars critically reevaluate its current state and directions, particularly focusing on the living conditions and increasing distance experienced by its citizens. It's crucial to address issues at the community level related to freedom of speech, survival conditions, and deepening poverty levels, as these factors can erode the societal sense of love, respect, and unity.

For continued and robust adult/basic and community education in Ireland, based on the findings of this study I forward the following recommendations:

- Move beyond purely quantitative assessments to a more humanistic appreciation of the impact of adult education on personal growth, well-being, and overall development, acknowledging that community participation and citizenship are not just about academic achievement, but also about empowerment and self-improvement. This should recognize that skills development evaluates not only cognitive skills but also practical skills relevant to daily life and employment, and assesses communication, problem-solving, and digital literacy skills in a broader appreciation of community empowerment and inclusion.
- The Irish adult education centers should further develop their capacity to recognize the diverse needs of learners; some adult learners are immigrants who struggle with language

barriers rather than literacy issues. Creating separate environments for English as a second language or English as a foreign language to literacy services is crucial, while still retaining the inclusive aspects of both approaches and also acknowledging where language and literacy issues may intersect for some learners.

- Community education should continue to respond to societal needs, especially current challenges of homelessness and human suffering in the urban areas of Dublin City. Scholars should initiate studies aiming to restore community sense in adult education programs that characterized the very foundation of Irish society after independence. These programs can provide life skills, mental health support, and pathways to employment along with social care services. Collaborate more with local organizations to promote greater awareness of human rights and social justice within the community, encourage learners to engage in civic activities, and advocate for their rights and consciousness of alcoholism and substance abuse prevention and rehabilitation in Irish society.

Conclusion

At this point in my thesis, as an educator who values the transformative impact of education, I compare it to a fascinating journey full of remarkable discoveries through the historical development of adult education. This journey is contextualized by Mezirow's (2003 p.63) idea that “adult educators play a crucial role in nurturing adults' ability to think critically, aiding them in acquiring the skills and awareness needed to reflect on assumptions and engage more actively in critical discussions.”

My integration of diverse perspectives, from Pan-African scholars to critical theorists of Freire and Irish community participation to molding adult education as a tool to fight social injustices, and domination, has provided a nuanced understanding of the challenges and opportunities in adult education. This broader perspective highlights the importance of contextual literacy programmes to address the diverse needs and aspirations of individuals with a focus on oppressed communities throughout history to the contemporary era.

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List of Appendixes

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Appendix 1: INFORMATION AND CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Information Sheet-International

I am Elvio Rafael Malawene, a master's student, in the Department of Adult and Community Education, Maynooth University, as part of the MEd Adult Education programme.

As part of the requirements for my Masters, I am undertaking a research study` under the supervision of Dr Bernie Grummell, Department of Adult and Community Education.

The study is concerned with comparing the impact of adult literacy programmes to raise active citizenship in international and Irish contexts as a way of enhancing the Mozambican Literacy Programs for transformative action at the community level.

The study will involve completing an online survey or interview, depending on which option you would prefer. It will focus on your experiences of providing and engaging in adult literacy programmes to inform my research on adult literacy in Mozambique. The interview will take 30 minutes of your time

You have been asked to join this study because of your valuable experience and knowledge on adult learning and of course your responses and opinions can provide future researchers a ground field to improve contextual adult learning programs for the community.

This study has been reviewed and received ethical approval from Maynooth University Department of Adult and Community Education. You may have a copy of this approval if you request it.

You are under no obligation whatsoever to take part in this research. However, we hope that you will agree to take part and give us some of your time to respond our short questionnaire or interview with the researcher. It is entirely up to you to decide whether or not you would like to take part. If you decide to do so, you will be asked to sign a consent form and given a copy and the information sheet for your own records. If you decide to take part, you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and/or to withdraw your information up until such time as the research findings are processed, analyzed, published and anonymized during a period of 2 years. A decision to withdraw at any time, or a decision not to take part, will not affect your relationship with the university or literacy centre.

All the information collected about you during the research will be kept confidential. No names will be identified at any time other than for contacting you during the research period. All hard copy information will be held in a locked cabinet at the researchers' place of work, electronic information will be encrypted and held securely on MU PC or servers and will be accessed only by my supervisor Dr Bernie Grummell, and the course directors Michael Murray and Angela McGinn, Maynooth University.

All the information you provide will be kept safe and anonymized in such a way that it will not be possible to identify you. No information will be distributed to any other unauthorized individual or third party. If you so wish, the data that you provide can also be made available to you at your discretion.

'It must be recognized that, in some circumstances, the confidentiality of research data and records may be overridden by courts in the event of litigation or in the course of investigation by lawful authority. In

such circumstances, the University will take all reasonable steps within law to ensure that confidentiality is maintained to the greatest possible extent.'

The research will be written up and presented to several audiences as a thesis, workshops and journals, articles, and reports. A copy of the research findings will be made available to you upon request.

While I do not envisage any negative consequences for you in taking part, it is possible that talking about your experience may cause some distress. If this is the case, I will discuss it with you and link you with education support services. At the end of the interview or a questionnaire, I will discuss with you how you found the experience and how you are feeling. You may contact my supervisor Bernie Grummell by the following email bernie.grummell@mu.ie if you feel the research has not been carried out as described above.

If you need any further information, you can contact me:

If you agree to take part in the study, please complete and sign the consent form overleaf.

Thank you for taking the time to read this

Appendix 2: Consent Form for interview

I.....agree to participate in Elvio Malawene’s research study titled **Unearthing the Transformative Power of Literacy Pedagogies: A Comparative Documentary Analysis of Adult Literacy Internationally to Enhance Mozambican Literacy Programmes**].

Please tick each statement below:

The purpose and nature of the study have been explained to me verbally & in writing. I’ve been able to ask questions, which were answered satisfactorily.

I am participating voluntarily.

I permit my interview or Questionnaire with (your name) _____to be recorded

I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, at any time, whether that is before it starts or while I am participating.

I understand that I can withdraw permission to use the data up to April 2024

It has been explained to me how my data will be managed and that I may access it on request.

I understand the limits of confidentiality as described in the information sheet

I understand that my data, in an anonymous format, may be used in further research projects and any subsequent publications if I give permission below:

[Select as appropriate]

I agree to the quotation/publication of extracts from my interview

I do not agree to the quotation/publication of extracts from my interview

I agree for my data to be used for further research projects

I do not agree for my data to be used for further research projects

Signed.....Date.....Participant Name in block capitals

I the undersigned have taken the time to fully explain to the above participant the nature and purpose of this study in a manner that they could understand. I have explained the risks involved as well as the possible benefits. I have invited them to ask questions on any aspect of the study that concerned them.

Signed.....Date.....Researcher Name in block capitals

Appendix 2: Questionnaire applied to the Irish Adult learners

Adult Basic, Community, and/or Further Education Impact Research Study

Jun 16, 2024

Please answer the following questions evaluating each of the criteria listed. It will take approximately 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire and feel free to ask for support from your tutor. At the end of the questionnaire, if you find it relevant, please leave your general comments about the survey.

1. What is your Age? _____

2. Gender

Woman

Man

Non-binary

Prefer not to say

3. When did begin attending Adult Basic, Community, and/or Further Education classes? Why did you begin? What level have you Completed?

1 2 3 4 5 Other

4. How often do you attend adult Basic, Community, and/or Further Education per week?

Extremely confident

Somewhat confident

Neutral

Somewhat confident

Not confident

5. How confident do you feel about your Adult Basic, Community, and/or Further Education focusing on your literacy and numeracy skills?

6. Please describe where your classes/sessions occur and say how this environment influences your learning experience, describe (i.e. classroom, meeting room, etc)

7. Could you please share what are you currently learning or learning in the last completed class?

8. What would you like to do better when you have completed your Basic, Community, and/or Further Education? *

9. In what ways do you believe Adult Basic, Community, and/or Further Education classes have influenced your understanding of active citizenship and increased your

Participation in social life? *

Enhanced your involvement in local politics.

Provided you with skills to actively engage in community decision-making.

Improved your ability to navigate personal and family matters in a civic-minded way.

All of the above

None Above

Other

10. Please describe or give an example of your community participation based on your choice of option from the previous question.

11. What barriers and challenges do you find in developing greater active citizenship through your Basic, Community, and/or Further Education?

12. Based on your experience, what recommendations and initiatives do you believe could be implemented in adult Basic, Community, and/or Further Education programs to enable greater community participation? *

Appendix 3: Questionnaire applied to Mozambican Adult learners

Impacto de Alfabetização na Promoção da Cidadania Ativa comunitária

Jun 16, 2024

1. Idade ____
2. Genero: Masculino Feminino Prefero não falar ____
3. Quando começou a frequentar aulas de Educação Continuada?
Que nível você completou?
1 2 3 4 5 Other__
4. "Com que frequência você frequenta aulas de alfabetização/educação continuada por semana?
Extremamente capaz
De alguma forma capaz
De alguma forma incapaz
Extremamente incapaz
5. Como você se sente em relação às suas habilidades de alfabetização e numeracia?
Fale nos ambientes das suas aulas; onde normalmente decorrem as suas aulas (sala de aulas, de baixo de uma árvore ou outro lugar)
Descreva como esse ambiente influencia no seu aprendizado.
6. Você poderia nos falar do conteúdo que está aprendendo atualmente ou aprendeu na última aula concluída?
7. O que você gostaria de fazer melhor quando tiver desenvolvido habilidades de alfabetização mais avançadas?
8. O que você gostaria de fazer melhor quando tiver desenvolvido habilidades de alfabetização mais avançadas?
Aumentou seu envolvimento na política local
Habilidades para se envolver activamente na tomada de decisões comunitárias.
Melhorou sua capacidade de lidar com questões pessoais e familiares de maneira cívica
Todas as opções acima
Nenhuma das opções acima
Outros
9. De que maneiras você acredita que as aulas de alfabetização e educação continuada influenciaram sua compreensão da cidadania ativa e aumentaram sua participação na vida social?
10. Por favor, descreva ou dê um exemplo da sua participação na comunidade com base na Opção escolhida na pergunta anterior.
11. Quais são as barreiras e desafios que você encontra para desenvolver uma cidadania ativa por meio da sua educação?
12. Com base em sua experiência, que recomendações e iniciativas você acredita que poderiam ser implementadas em programas de alfabetização para permitir uma maior participação da comunidade?