

*Full Length Research Paper*

# **Application of internal factors of urbanite female learner's participation in mass literacy programme for community based learning and outreach models**

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Community based learning and outreach is a strategy through which academic institutions worldwide including University of Ghana have successfully stayed relevant to less privileged communities; they exist in bringing benefits of education to their (less privileged communities) doorstep. Learner's participation has been an objective that any adult functional literacy program seeks to encourage for success. This study captured internal and external factors and their significance in influencing urbanite learners' participation in active classes, with high attendance and involvement. Literature survey and experience survey methods were used respectively to collect information from Institute of Continuing and Distance Education's literature; and data from functional literacy learners in six learning centres of Nima and Accra New Town, at East Ayawaso Sub-District, Accra. Sample size was 116. Chi-square analysis showed internal factors relating to learner were significant. Study generated the Learn-edge Group Outreach Network strategy, and the Community-based learning Access and Success model. Study concluded that applications of internal factors of Urbanite Woman Learner Participation in mass literacy programme did enhance community based learning and outreach of University of Ghana system. The strategy and model may worth advancing community-based learning and outreach of universities in African

**Key words:** Functional literacy, urbanite female, adult learners' participation, community-based learning, learn-edge.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Community members' notion of community based learning and outreach for development per se, neither created the necessary motivation for learning nor enhance the participation of adult learners in work-oriented and socio-cultural functional literacy programmes and lifelong learning. Success of such programmes has depended on learners' perception of its benefits and motivating their participation. Learners' participation therefore became crucial to the overall success of a tertiary educational institutions' community based learning and outreach for community development the overall access and success of a community based learning and

outreach for development programmes.

In literature, the abbreviation CBL has been used for "community based learning" or "community-based learning". In the study and practice of CBL (Eyler, 2009; Dolan, 2008), institutions and experts agree that it allows students to combine service in the community with academic inquiry. Community-based learning is a type of experiential learning; it is not simply community service nor is it an internship. Community-based learning is curriculum in Ghana. Adult learners' participation is indispensable to based, meaning that the community work is profoundly connected to and enhanced by the classroom

lectures and assignments. As an educational philosophy, community-based learning fosters reciprocal learning and critical engagement and prepares students to be responsible participants in both their profession and their communities. CBL is considered to be more of public literacy and is seen as “the 21<sup>st</sup> century approach to making education relevant and expedient New pedagogy, for enhancing public awareness and understanding” (Owens, 1994). In some academic institutions CBL has become an academic discipline and subject with courses and mainly in the formal academics.

The University of Ghana (UG), by policy, is promoting the formal, informal and the non-formal community based learning programmes (Butler, 2009). It collaborates with the Social Welfare and Ministry of Education's Non-Formal Education Division (NFED) especially in the non-formal programme. Several of these community-based programmes are located in urban areas like the one in this study. In some communities, patronage of the programme is very high, while in some areas patronage is low. NFED is referred to as the Functional Literacy Agency (FLA) in this study. The UG, Accra in its nationwide outreach provides academic leadership for a community based learning that for past two decades has collaborated with Social Welfare and Ministry of Education in the Mass Literacy Programme (Apt and Blavo, 1997), in collaboration with Commonwealth of Learning (Singh, 2003).

The study focused on the non-formal programme, and had for its objectives to (i) establish internal and external factors, (ii) test the influence of factors on learners' participation, and (iii) apply the significant factors to the creating of effective models of access and success for community based learning and outreach programmes. Hypothesis of the study is: There is no significant difference in the influences of internal and external factors on learners' participation in literacy programmes. It is expected to apply internal factors of urbanite female learners' participation in mass literacy programme for community based learning and outreach models in Accra.

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study employed survey method recommended by Gosling (1995) for sociological studies to collect quantitative and qualitative information.

Population area of the study was Accra Metropolitan District. Social unit of the study was functional literacy learners (N=203) in MASSLIP's community-based learning centres at Nima and Accra New Town, both located in the East Ayawaso Sub-District. The major languages of the study area are Ga, Twi, Frafra and Hausa, though learning is mainly in Twi. Six learning centres were selected: five (5) in Nima and one (1) in Accra New Town.

Judgemental and convenience samplings were used in selecting the centres as they were very active; with them, learners were able to complete their first year learning units and advance to the second year learning units; and were close together in terms of their location. A simple random sampling technique was used to select the respondents from all the six centres. Respondents were randomly selected from each of the six centres. Sample size

(S=116) was determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1970).

Data collection and processing was done using questionnaire related to socio-demographic characteristics of learners, learners' perception of the functional literacy programme, the design and delivery of the programme and the influence of community. Literature survey was done on relevant literature belonging to Institute of Continuing and Distance Education (ICDE), UG on how community based learning collaborated with the NFED in Accra. After processing the data viable number of 116 respondents was captured for study. Data were presented in tables and figures and analysed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences for descriptive statistics and non-parametric test of Chi-Square for the hypothesis of the study.

## RESULTS

The followings were the descriptive statistics findings of this study in tabular form. It included socio-demographic characteristics of respondents (Table 1), and respondents' perception of the programme (Table 2). Further, Tables 3, 4 and 5 respectively showed the respondents' class attendance; agency's communication, design and delivery of programme; Influence of the community. Table 6 showed the non-linear Chi-square analysis of respondents' participation and the factors. Figures 1 and 2 presented the models generated out information that resulted from the literature survey of ICDE documents during the study.

### Establishing internal and external factors

#### *Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents*

Table 1 shows the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents including age, marital status, level of education and occupation.

The female on whom the study focused formed 83.6% of the literacy class size, showing that majority of participants in urban areas were females. And 67.24% were married and those aged 30s-40s formed 56.04% of the respondents. Those with no formal education were 61.24%. For primary occupation the largest percentage (63.72%) was petty trading.

#### *Respondents' perception of the literacy programme*

This is related to the ability of learners to conceptualize the value of the innovation of functional literacy. Their degree of acceptance of the programme or being willing to enroll for functional literacy programme depends on their perception of it. In Table 2, 62 (53.45%) perceived the innovation to be functional literacy, and 54 (46.55%) of respondents had perception of the programme as non-functional literacy.

#### *Respondents' participation in class attendance*

Table 3 shows that almost all participants (94.9%)

**Table 1.** Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents.

Variable	Frequency	Percent
<b>Age (Year)</b>		
10-19	13	11.21
20-29	15	12.93
30-39	32	27.59
40-49	33	28.45
50-59	17	14.66
60-69	4	3.44
70+	2	1.72
Total	116	100.00
<b>Marital status</b>		
Married	78	67.24
Never Married	20	17.24
Single	18	15.52
Total	116	100.00
<b>Level of education</b>		
No Formal Education	71	61.21
Primary School	20	17.24
Middle School	16	13.79
Junior High School	8	6.89
Vocation School	1	0.86
Total	116	100.00
<b>Occupation</b>		
Unemployed	10	8.62
Petty Traders	74	63.79
Tradeswomen	18	15.52
Housewives	4	3.45
Apprentices	4	3.45
Students	6	5.17
Total	116	100.00

**Table 2.** Perception of programme.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Traditional literacy	54	46.55
Functional literacy	62	53.45
Total	116	100.00

attended class three times or more monthly. This showed a typically active class in the area.

**Table 3.** Class attendance.

Variable	Frequency (a month)	Percentage
Non	0	0.0
Once	2	1.7
Twice	4	3.4
Thrice	51	44.0
Four times	59	50.9
Total	116	100.00

### ***The design and delivery of the programme***

Table 4 shows responses to questions regarding variables of FLA's communication, design and delivery of programme.

Table 4 indicates the results from certain questions posed to learners as to the approach used by the agency.

On the goals of the programme, 51.7% indicated that they were aware of the goals of the programme; while 25.9% said they were not aware. This may be because they enrolled late, as the goals were explained to those who started on the onset of the programme.

On the question of timing, 48.2% agreed that it was properly timed while 30.2% indicated that the timing was not adequate; 21.6% were not sure of the timing. The relative advantages of the programme were made known to the participants, as indicated by 44.8%. However, the impact on the social relations was not made known to the participants, as 51.7% indicated that they were not aware of the impact as they were not informed.

The participants were informed of the accomplishment of those who have taken part in the programme before. This was indicated by 61.2% of the participants, and this encouraged them to attend classes regularly. Much as they were not informed of the social implications, they were also not informed about the compatibility of the programme with existing psychological, social and cultural conditions for achieving progress.

The local language was used to explain issues and this made it very simple and easy to understand. Furthermore, the facilitators used role play to explain the importance of the programme to the community and this encouraged the participants in their work.

The facilitators, according to 68.1% of the participants, have time for the participants and help them to understand any issue which comes up.

### ***The influence of community on respondents' participation***

Table 5 shows the responses given on the influence of the community on the programme. On the location of the centre, 64.7% indicated that the centres are located in their community, while 26.7% said the centres are not

**Table 4.** Agency's communication, design and delivery of programme.

Variables	Question	Yes		No		Not sure	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
Goal	Was goal of functional literacy programme you attend stated?	60	51.7	30	25.9	26	22.4
Timing (urgency of the programme)	Did facilitators state that literacy programme was urgent and timely for adults in achieving UN and Government goal of lifelong education and irradiation of illiteracy by year 2015?	56	48.2	35	30.2	25	21.6
Relative Advantages	Did facilitators or agency state relative advantages of being literate and undergoing the literacy programme?	52	45.7	42	36.2	22	19.0
Impact on Social Relations	Did agency state impact of literacy programme on our social relationship -- institutions in family and community?	53	45.7	60	51.7	3	2.6
Divisibility	Did facilitator state how often communities or individuals succeeded in accomplishing literacy programme?	71	61.2	34	29.3	11	9.5
Complexity (less complex)	Did you understand how simple it is to understand and use literacy for improving self-image and community life?	52	44.8	26	19.0	42	36.2
Compatibility	Did facilitator state that literacy programme was consistent with existing psychological, social and cultural conditions for achieving progress?	40	34.5	44	37.9	32	27.6
Explanation/Verbal in local language	Did facilitators use the local language to explain issues?	56	48.3	29	25.0	31	26.7
Timing of the Communication	Were goals and objectives communicated to you before you enrolled?	59	50.9	34	29.3	23	19.8
Animation	Did facilitators use animation to explain the importance of literacy programme for your community?	20	17.3	91	78.4	5	4.3
Role Play	Did facilitators use role-play to explain the importance of literacy programme for your community?	52	44.8	22	19.0	42	36.2
Catalyst role of the facilitator in facilitating personalized programme	When you do not understand a lesson does your facilitator take interest in helping you to understand?	79	68.1	11	9.5	26	22.4

located in their community. On the philosophy for literacy based on human as well as community development, 62.1% indicated that the programme is based on human and community development while 28.4% said it was not based on human and community development.

Considering participation of people, that is, the larger population of the community, 37.9% were of the view that there is participation at all levels of the community, 31.9% were not sure of the level of participation while 30.2%

were of the view that there is low participation. The low participation level may be due to the fact that some view the programme as traditional education and therefore do not see the need to participate. Regarding management of the classes at the local level, 29.3% said it is the responsibility of the community to organize the classes, while 70.7% were of the view that it is not the responsibility of the community to see to the management of the classes at the local level.

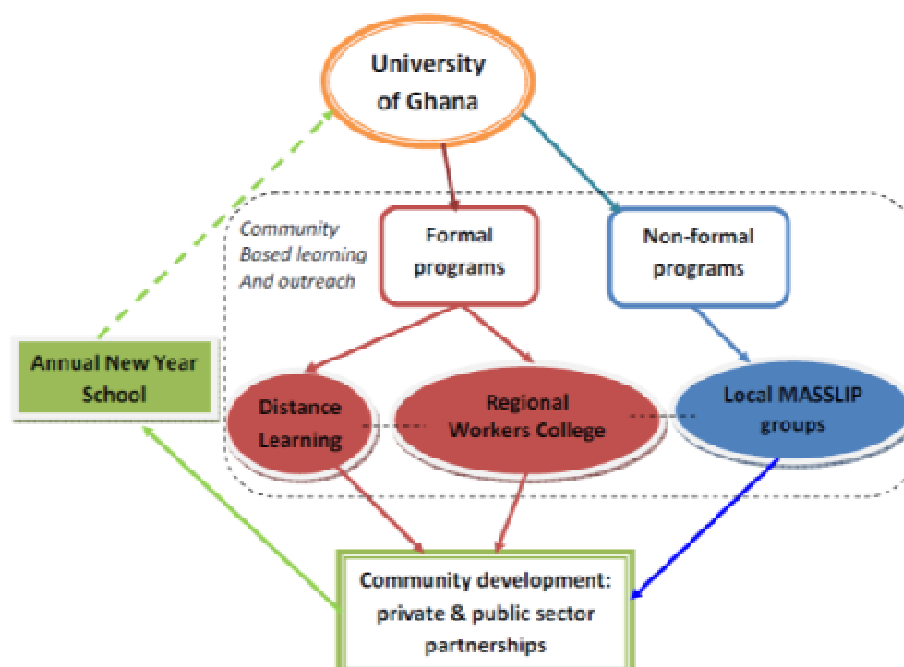
**Table 5.** Influence of the community.

Variable	Question	Yes		No		Not sure	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
Location of the centre	Is the centre located in your community?	75	64.7	31	26.7	10	8.6
Philosophy for literacy based on principles of social transformation	Is the programme using the philosophical foundation based on human as well as community development?	72	62.1	33	28.4	11	9.5
Participation of the People that is, the larger Population	Is participation at all levels of your community?	44	37.9	35	30.2	37	31.9
Massive community empowering, organization, mobilization,	Is there a massive empowering, organization and mobilization resources and recruiting of your community?	53	45.7	34	29.3	29	25.0
Management of literacy classes at local level	Is the literacy class seen as a community responsibility?	34	29.3	82	70.7	0	0.0

**Table 6.** Chi-square analysis of participation and the factors.

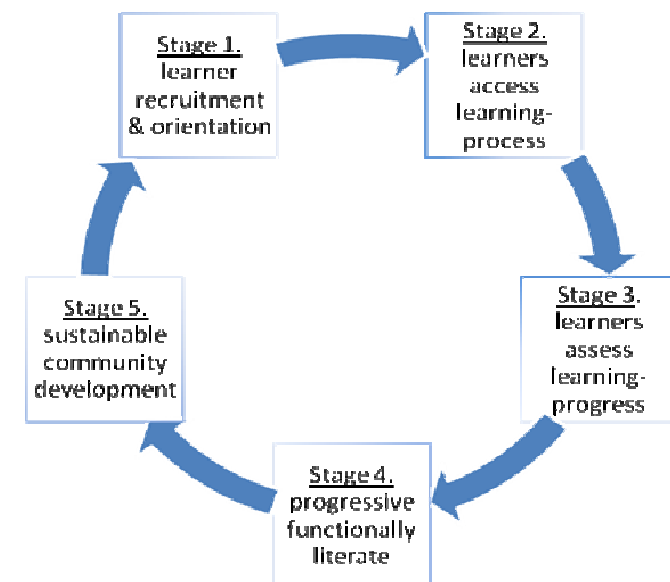
Variable	Value	df	Assym. Sig.	Conclusion
Internal factors (Socio-demographic characteristics) of learners	21.33	3	7.81	Significant
External factors (Design and delivery of the programme)	8.866	11	19.68	Not Significant
External factors (Community's influence)	7.33	3	7.81	Not Significant

\*p = 0.05.

**Figure 1.** The LeGON strategy model.

On the question relating to community capacity building through empowering, organisation, mobilization, evaluation and training, the following responses were recorded:

45.7% responded that there is massive empowering, organization and mobilization of resources and recruiting of members of the community; 29.3% were of the view



**Figure 2.** The 5-stage community-based learning access and Success (CbLAS) model.

that no such thing is done while 25% were not sure whether the community does something like that.

### Testing the influence of factors on learners' participation

#### Test of hypothesis

Table 6 shows the chi-square analysis of the influence of socio-demographic characteristics of learners, learners' perception of the functional literacy programme, the design and delivery of the programme and the influence of the community on the learners' participation in literacy programmes.

From Table 6, influence of internal factors of learners was significant. And external factors showed no significance.

### Applying the significant factors to the creating of effective models of access and success for CBL and outreach programmes

#### Models developed from the study

**The LeGON strategy model:** The study of the UG by the researchers revealed a strategy that currently delivers formal learning (through Distance and e-Learning Pathways, and Workers' College), non-formal learning (MASSLIP literacy programmes) and informal learning (Annual New Year School) for development, a strategy which researchers named LeGON Strategy providing a

*Learn edge* Group Outreach Network by which the university system provided a transformational leadership that is very much felt in the developmental ideas that get translated into national policies for development.

Literature survey found in no uncertain terms the CBL approach of the ICDE. Using interdisciplinary, comparative, gender-sensitive, community-based, interactive learning perspectives, and technology, the institute's highly motivated and committed faculty and staff apply their specializations in all fields of study to illuminate the relevance of higher education for empowering individuals, communities, and nations for development and poverty reduction as well as conferences and residential schools including the New Year and Easter Schools (Oheneba-Sakyi, n.d.). Figure 1 shows the LeGON strategy model as generated by researchers.

**The CbLAS model:** Another model generated by the researchers shown Figure 2 was the 5-stage Community-based Learning Access and Success (CbLAS). It was designed based on the factors of influence in the tables above for the non-formal education. The Learner, Community and the FLA, and the University System are very much involved at each of the stages as partners. Based on some parameters, high perception of functional literacy is shown in Table 2; highest attendance in Table 3; highest in divisibility and catalyst role of facilitators in personalised programme are shown in Table 4; the highest in proximity and philosophy of functional literacy based on principles of social transformation is in Table 5, and the significant influence of learners' characteristics is in Table 6 generated from Figure 2.

This model's first stage constitutes the learners'

recruitment and orientation process, based on their bio psychosocial characteristics. The stage 2 emphasises learner accessing learning process facilitated by the FLA. The third stage involves learners assessing their learning progress. This result in the stage four which sees the learner becomes progressive functionally literate individual in the community. In the final and fifth stage, there emerges sustainable community development with the now urbanite female functional literate getting involved in recruiting potential learners as well as embarking on other developmental activities.

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study make implication for theory and practice in achieving the goal of the community-based literacy programme. And these implications are discussed as follows.

### Socio-demographic characteristics of respondents

Women form the larger percentage of those accessing classroom instruction (Singh, 2003). In a similar study, Saah (2000) indicated 83.3% of the class was women. Further, Anard (1991) and Momsen (1991) observe that female learners always outnumber men in work-oriented and socio-cultural functional literacy programs in developing countries.

In this study, the urbanite female is described by Pellow (1977) in her work on women in Adabraka, Accra that she is distinct from her rural counterpart in having special needs and highly motivated to meeting them by developing certain urban-survival competencies to make her functional in the highly competitive urban community. Internal factors of the urbanite woman learner refer to the bio-psychosocial characteristics of learner, such as age, gender, marital status, occupation, adult experience and perceptions. This non-formal adult functional literacy programme focused on women who eke out a living in urban communities (Hobsbawn, 1984), but who lack capacity to be functionally literate. The task was to create enabling learning environment for harnessing and enhancing learner-related factors that influence the learners' significant participation, with justifiable success (Saah, 2010).

### Perception of the literacy programme

Adult learners' perception is important and differential as opposed to the view that all adulthood is identical, that it progresses at the same pace, in the same direction, on the same plane. To Kidd (1973), what he describes as the *Adult experience* is a contributing factor in adult learning, and it is the comparatively richer experience of

the adults that is made use of in their learning transaction. Adults have more experiences. Adults have different kinds of experiences, and adults' experiences are organized differently even if they were exposed to the same stimulus at the same time and environment. He explains that the personality structure of the learner proposes a concept of perception in learning which when highlighted provides the basis for what role perception plays in the learner for learning.

Perception is personal and psychological, so literacy class facilitators must always try to understand how the individual views the learning situation. When the learner perceives Adult Functional Literacy as social expressions of adulthood making up for the deficiencies in resources of adulthood for coping with new demands in their situation, they want to participate in the programme (Tozer et al, 1993). Therefore, there is a link of learners' perception of Adult Literacy to learning transaction and participation in the literacy programme.

### Participation in class attendance

According to Rogers (1989), adults would usually 'vote with their feet'; hence attendance to classes was used to measure their participation in the programme. This indicates that the adult learners were eager to participate and were taking the classes serious. This may be due to the benefits they are going to derive from the programme. According to Beder and Valentine (1990), adults participate in such programmes due to the following factors: self-improvement, family responsibilities, diversion, literacy development, community involvement, job advancement, launching, economic need, educational advancement and urging of others.

These may be true for our group under study because, from Table 1, it would be seen that most of them (61.21%) had no formal education and also were petty traders. Thus they needed the functional literacy programme, which relates directly to community development and to teaching applicable or useful life skills.

David (1962), in his work submitted to UNESCO, reasons that these learners participating in especially work-oriented functional literacy undergo continuing education mitigating deficiencies in their compulsory education as they cope with technological changes in their working life which should bring income generation capacity along with education. The dynamic has been that "one's occupation may bring book into confrontation with oral tradition in which he or she had grown", said Hobsbawn (1984). There is a need driven factor.

### The design and delivery of the programme

The impacts of community-based and personalized programmes or "indigenized curriculum" on learner-partici-

pation do take into consideration very important ingredients of function, such as recipient characteristics, the place and the content. Ballara (1991) suggests that in tackling illiteracy some successful programmes have had political priorities and community support. Integrated approach, literacy and post-literacy training as one educational process were also included. Development projects meet women's needs and concerns; and women themselves participate in not only the learning but also organize, manage, plan and deliver the service.

The philosophy and practice of adult education and functional literacy, and approaches used in the delivery of functional literacy in NFED programmes are very crucial to the way the individual learner will receive the programme. An inappropriate approach will only serve to frustrate the learning process of the individuals and thwart their participation.

Stanton (1982) establishes that elements of internal factor include motivating, persuading and controlling, and elements of external factor are planning, organizing, providing, controlling do contribute to an individual or organization participating in a program. Controlling is common to both factors; hence, it is the element of integrated factor of influence. Further, fundamental to learning is communication. Moreover, perception enhances learning process and one's participation in functional literacy program, Cronback (1963) and Feldman (1987) explain. Perception does enrich adult experience; by this, adults enter their learning-teaching transaction, according to Knowles (1973). This holds serious implications for program designers to make use of this. Adult learners' perception of an innovation that will enhance learner-participation should include clarity of elements of innovation and effective communication, according to French et al. (1960), in their article, "An Experience in Participation in Norwegian Factory". Their view is supported by Knowles (1973), Bown and Olu (1979) and Walters and Manicon (1996). These elements were included in Table 4. In the view of the learners, the design and delivery of the programme did not make much use of these parameters above.

### The strategy and model for CBL and outreach

The model for Learn edge Group Outreach Network (LeGON) Strategy was more of a Community of learning. Wenger (2000) indicates a concept of a social learning system which is made up of a network of communities of practice. And this is closely related to LeGON. Literature indicates that "A community can be described as a group of people whose identities within the group are defined by the form of their participation, interactions and relationships within the activities of the group".

A community of learning is a community whose purpose is to engage and promote activities and interactions that allow for individual socially-constructed learning.

LeGON strategy was more of a community of practice for social-oriented functional literacy and work-oriented functional literacy provided by UG. At the community development level and at the Annual New Year School, they became more community of interest as "a group of people that come together to address a problem of interest to all. They may or may not be from the same community of practice. The pedagogical equivalent is learning network".

The Community-based Learning Access and Success (CbLAS) model allows community based functional literacy learner to have access and success to achieve the goal of the community-based literacy programme from the LeGON strategy.

Further, the implication of results in achieving the goal of the community-based literacy programme is that community-based learners are accessing knowledge, skills and behavioural change for the better from the university system. Further, ICDE and university systems succeeding in their community based learning and outreach for national benefit. succeeding in their community based learning and outreach for national benefit.

### Conclusion

The result of the study showed that the internal factors (Learner characteristics) of the urbanite female did influence their participation in community-based learning. Also community-based learning outreach of the University of Ghana system was not only reaching the formal and informal learners, but also non-formal learners using what Researcher named the LeGON strategy. The access and success of urbanite female learners' participation in MASSLIP depend on the effective 5-stage Community-based Learning Access and Success (CbLAS) model.

The study concluded that adult functional literacy programmes designed, deployed and developed with learner-centred models utilizing internal factors will mostly enhance learner-participation in both work-oriented and socio-cultural functional literacy programmes in Accra. However, this proposition will to a large extent hold for other African countries running similar programmes.

### ABBREVIATIONS

**CBL**, Community based learning; **CbLAS**, community-based learning access and success model; **FLA**, Functional Literacy Agency; **ICDE**, Institute of Continuing and Distance Education; **LeGON**, Learn edge Group Outreach Network strategy; **MASSLIP**, mass literacy programmes; **NFED**, non-formal education division; **SPSS**, statistical package for the social sciences; **UG**, University of Ghana; **UWLP**, Urbanite Woman Learner Participation.



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