

# Innovative Leadership in Gambian Adult Literacy/Numeracy: Mid-1970s to Early 1980s

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## Purposes, Audiences, and Contents

This article is written for educators and others interested in creating high-quality adult basic skills development systems in both developing countries and other nations. It presents case studies of two Indigenous-language adult literacy/numeracy projects in rural villages in The Gambia between 1976 and 1983.

The first project was based at the Gambia Cultural Archives and used written versions of traditional stories as reading materials; the second initiative was run by the Gambian Department of Co-operation (Co-operatives) and focused on basic numeracy and literacy skills villagers needed for crop sales and other farming functions.

The studies draw from a review of reports, curricula, and staff member notes from the two projects, stored in the Peace Corps Community Archive at American University in Washington, D.C. The strengths and limitations of the two projects are analyzed with reference to recent international adult literacy guidelines.

This article might be of particular interest to U.S.-based adult educators interested in learning from community-oriented models of adult foundational education. Such programs build on community strengths, focus on helping learners and communities manage relevant opportunities and challenges, integrate adult foundational education with other services, emphasize collaborative leadership willing to try something new and learn from experience, and focus on both short-term demonstration projects and longer-term systems-building.

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