

## **An Assessment of Ethiopia's Progress towards Attaining Integrated Functional Adult Literacy**

Genet Gelana

Email: genetgelana@yahoo.com

Department of Adult Education & Community Development  
Faculty of Educational & Behavioral Sciences  
Bahir Dar University

**Abstract:** The intent of this review was to see the progress Ethiopia is making in achieving 4th EFA goal, reducing adult illiteracy by 50% by 2015. In so doing, an attempt was made to review international and national reports regarding the progress of the country towards the goal taking four indicators: budget allotment, facilitators' training and recruitment, stakeholders' collaboration and adult literacy rate. From the reviewed documents, it was found out that although the budget allotment for adult literacy is irregular and minimal compared to other types of education, it has been increasing from time to time. On the other hand, available data shows that facilitators are grade 10 (even below) complete volunteers or part-time teachers, development agents or health extension workers who work without proper training and payment in a certain community. With regard to collaboration among stakeholders in implementing Functional Adult Literacy, despite the signing of MoU among ministries and willingness and encouragement made by the Ministry of Education to work collaboratively with stakeholders, the role of implementing FAL has almost been left to the Ministry of Education and its regional, zonal and wereda offices. As to the literacy rate, although the progresses in enrolment in FAL are encouraging, Ethiopia inevitably seems far from achieving the adult literacy rate by 2015 as intended. In the end, achievements gained and gaps identified are summarized and possible ways are forwarded on issues that need attention for post-EFA.

**Keywords:** Adult, Integrated, Functional Literacy, Ethiopia

### **Introduction**

Education, though differently defined, can be conceived as a means of gaining knowledge, skills and attitudinal changes. It is an instrument used to obtain information, develop skill and awareness regarding different issues which in turn change the attitude and bring about the overall improvement of the individual. On the other hand, low level of literacy negatively affects the person individually and then the community at large. Subban (2007) also asserted that lack of literacy may make a person poor financially and psychologically in such a way that she/he may not have the necessary skills for getting money and may have lower self concept which may affect the development of the country at large. The Ethiopian government also recognizes the potential of education in bringing about citizens who can be actively involved in the overall development of a nation (MoE, 1994; MoE, 2011b).

Seen specifically, the education of adults is believed to bring about the desired development of a country in a short period of time. Scholars in the area of adult education and community development argue that if development should be secured, education of adults should be given priority (Subban, 2007; Mohanty, 2007). In explaining the importance of educating

adults, Mohanty (2007, p.119) also affirmed that it “helps a person to improve his standard of living through participation in various development programs”. In this case, adult education is taken as basic for participation in community affairs. Similarly, Subban (2007) noted that if acquired, adult literacy is a guarantee for the participation of people in the community affairs and in the process of community development endeavours.

It is with this notion that different bodies, national and international, government and non government strive to expand its provision. Up until now, different agreements and commitments have been made to realize its provision. Among these, the Dakar Framework for Action is the major one. Although the idea of universalizing basic education was initiated in Jomtien in 1990, it was reaffirmed by 164 countries in 2000 in conference held in Dakar where the six EFA Goals were adopted. In this forum, governments, development agencies and civil society affirmed their commitment in achieving six EFA goals by 2015 (Samlowski, 2011). The six EFA goals are comprehensive and wide-ranging as they concern the young and the old, poor and rich, formal and informal, and encompass the contribution of all-government, private and community organizations. One of the six EFA goals focuses on the education of adults and strives to reduce illiteracy of adults by 50% at the end of 2015.

Ethiopia, known for its own alphabet which dates back to the last millennium, the development and educational attainment is not to a desired level. Except in the primary level where the country is progressing well, enrolment rate is relatively low at others, particularly in adult education. Although many policy documents state the importance of adult education for the attainment of other development agendas including the education of children, its provision and quality remained low. After the reaffirmation of EFA Goals, the country issued several policies and reforms in order to achieve them. Though some scholars argue that the policies focused on education of children and youth at the cost of adult and non-formal education (Ambissa, 2009), the progress made even with limited effort of the government are encouraging. For instance, the development of National Adult Education Strategy (2008) that opened the way for different sectors to rethink their role in adult education is a good example.

In fact, before the strategy was developed, the Education and Training Policy had given recognition to non-formal education (MoE, 1994); however, subsequent implementation program of the policy has failed to give it adequate attention (Eg., ESDP I 1997/8-2001/2 and ESDP II (201/2-2004/5).

Unlike ESDP I and ESDP II, ESDP III (2004/5-2010/11) gave relatively adequate attention for adult education. For instance, during this period, the National Adult Education Strategy was developed and the Ministry of Education has introduced the concept of Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) for implementation in collaboration with international agencies like DVV International. Emergence of the strategy in this period also paved the way for the expansion of adult education programs and increase in the number of adult education professionals in the country. Although some programs existed before the adoption of the strategy, the strategy set the momentum for the expansion of adult education programs in various higher education institutions.

Different from the previous education sector development programs ESDP IV (2010/11-2014/15) on the other hand gave more emphasis to Integrated Functional Adult Literacy (IFAL). Moreover, in the Growth and Transformation Plan (Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), 2010), the government of Ethiopia has planned to reach 95% of adult literacy in 2015 from only 36% in 2010. Most importantly, the government has recognized the role of education in general (MoE, 2011a) and educated adults in particular (MoE, 2010b) in achieving the goal of making Ethiopia among middle income level countries by 2025.

Regardless of what is on the policy, strategy, and programs, the practice seems however weak and blurred at the same time. The practical observations of the writer of this paper show that the education of adults continued to be seen as a secondary issue and hence, is far from being achieved. The same notion has been reflected by researchers in the area. For instance, Samuel (2012, p. 331), appreciating the progress Ethiopia's government is making in other types of education, expresses the condition of adult education as "a forlorn child". Similarly, the master plan for adult education, affirmed that Ethiopia is progressing well in primary, secondary, technical and higher education sectors underlining the need for more work to be done in adult education (MoE, 2011a).

This review is then intended to see the extent of Ethiopia's progress to achieve the education of adults in IFAL thereby attain the 4<sup>th</sup> EFA Goal (increasing adult literacy by half by 2015). To this end, it tries to examine the issues of budget allotted for IFAL, the recruitment and training of facilitators, stakeholders' participation in the provisioning of IFAL and adult enrolment, and literacy rate in Ethiopia.

This paper is concerned with reviewing the state of Ethiopia's progress in achieving 4th EFA goal. This will in fact help responsible individuals, institutions and organizations know the achievements, challenges and the possible ways that can be enacted to improve the current efforts. The intention of this paper specifically is to indicate the state of 4th EFA goal and pinpoint issues that need further attention from concerned bodies to improve adult literacy rate in Ethiopia.

## **Methodology**

Although there are other EFA goals which are related with adults (youth and adult skill, and gender equality and parity), the focus of this study is on the 4<sup>th</sup> EFA goal. This paper is specifically concerned with FAL or IFAL in ESDP III and ESDP IV respectively though three components were introduced under adult and non formal education (ANFE) in the ESDP III (MoE, 2005). To this end, an attempt was made to review pertinent international and national policy and implementation documents, and research reports showing the progress of the country in education of adults in FAL/IFAL program.

In so doing, relevant documents such as National Adult Education Strategy, Education and Training Policy, all ESDPs, FAL Curriculum Framework, FAL Implementation Guidelines, Learning for Life: Master Plan for Adult Education, Education Statistics Annual Abstracts

and Global Monitoring Reports were reviewed. In the course of reviewing these documents so as to see Ethiopia's progress towards achieving the 4th EFA goal, four indicators of achievement namely program funding, role of facilitators, collaboration of stakeholders and literacy rate against which achievements were examined were taken as threads of analysis.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Trends of Development of Integrated Functional Adult Literacy**

Similar to other terms, literacy has been conceived differently by different individuals and institutions globally. The concept of literacy has moved from acquiring autonomous skills to an emphasis on literacy as functional in daily lives, then incorporating Freirean principles, and, more recently, embracing the notions of multiple literacies- literacy as a continuum, and literate environments and societies- so as to cope effectively with the dynamic changes in technology and lifestyle thereof (UNESCO, 2006).

As is the case all over the world, different conception of literacy can be seen across times in Ethiopia. Still now, there is confusion among phrases expressing adult learning. Some of the phrases used are adult education, adult literacy, and functional adult literacy. Samuel (2012) believes that adult education in Ethiopia lacks definition and conceptual framework. Because most people conceive that adult education means adult basic literacy which is limited to reading, writing and arithmetic (3R's). Hence, before proceeding to see the extent of progress made towards achieving the 4<sup>th</sup> EFA Goal, it is pertinent to see how the concept of adult literacy evolved and conceptualized in Ethiopian government policy documents focusing on the four education sector development programs.

In ESDP I (1998) adult education or adult literacy was not mentioned as a topic or subtopic; however, functional literacy was mentioned under "Distance education" (MoE, 1998, p. 9). In the financial breakdown, adult education/literacy has been combined with non-formal education (ANFE), yet it was unclear what was meant by functional literacy or ANFE. In ESDP II, though the name was not directly spelt out, mention was made about which kind of ANFE would be emphasized. It reads, "...basically focused on literacy, numeracy and environment to enable learners to develop problem-solving abilities and change their mode of life" (MoE, 2002, p. 31).

From the definition above in the program, it can be understood that the program is not limited to the 3Rs rather goes beyond to connect literacy with development. In this document, it has also been stated with what purpose in mind the Ethiopian government intended to provide such program. It reads,

...the adult and non-formal education will serve as alternative approach/complementing educational program to increase access to basic primary education, as a basis to enhance the rural agricultural led

industrialization strategy and will contribute to poverty reduction, making adults more productive and self-reliant” (MoE, 2002, p.31).

Hence, it can be said from the above extract that functionality has been one of the concerns of ESDP II.

In ESDP III, the government intended to expand functional adult literacy. The program focused on literacy, numeracy and include life skills such as primary health care, prevention of diseases such as malaria, HIV/AIDS, etc, family planning, environment, agriculture, marketing, banking, gender issues etc (MoE, 2005). The program was believed to increase involvement of community members to actively take part in the national development and poverty reduction strategy by helping them develop problem-solving abilities and become self-reliant, more productive and change their mode of life (MoE, 2005).

Similar to ESDP II, in ESDP III it seems that adults who participate in such program would have the opportunity to learn not only reading and writing but also issues that concern them in their day-to-day lives so as to actively involve in the life of the community at large. Looking into what is mentioned in the three education sector development programs, it can be said that more issues were included and more focus has been given to adult literacy as one goes from ESDP I to ESDP III.

In ESDP IV, the issue of Integrated Functional Adult literacy (IFAL) has become one of the priorities. It was indicated that IFAL “... seeks to link writing, reading and numeracy skills to livelihoods and skills training in areas such as agriculture, health, civic, cultural education, etc. (MoE, 2010b, p.37). It has also been indicated in ESDP III that life skills of learners would be developed along with literacy and numeracy; however, unlike ESDP III, in ESDP IV these issues were intended to be presented to the learners in an integrated manner in line with the MoU signed between Ministry of Education and five concerned ministries<sup>1</sup>. Similarly, in the master plan for adult education, adult education is understood “as part of lifelong learning continuum” with various stakeholders responsible for its provision (MoE, 2011b). In this document, the indigenous knowledge in the society has also been recognized as an important component of adult education.

## **Ethiopia’s progress towards achieving the 4th EFA Goal**

### **Funding**

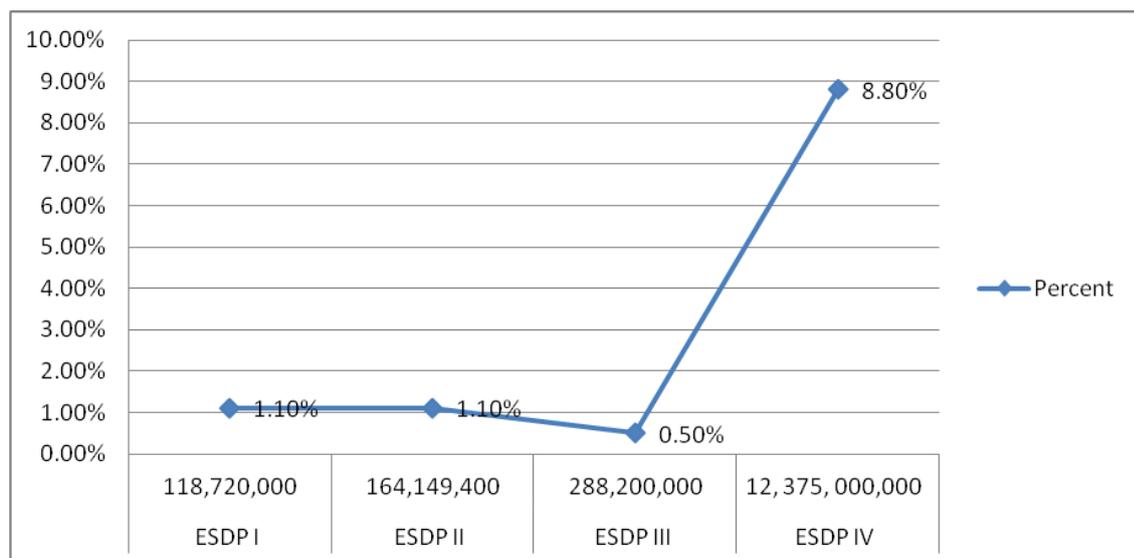
In 1994, Ethiopia developed Education and Training Policy (ETP) to solve its chronic relevance, equity and access problems (MoE, 1994). In the policy, though no mention of adult education was made, it was indicated that “non-formal education will be provided

---

<sup>1</sup> Memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the MoE and five other ministries (Health, Agriculture, Women, Youth and Children, Labour & Social Affairs and Sport) was signed to work together on IFAL

beginning and integrated with basic education and at all levels of formal education” (MoE, 1994, p.15). According to Mamo (2005), the Education and Training Policy indicates that basic education will focus on literacy, numeracy, environment, etc. though the responsible body for the accomplishment of the program was not clearly indicated. Besides, both the Education and Training Policy and the ESDP I didn't explicitly mention the government's position on adult literacy and education. However, as can be seen in the table below, the subsequent ESDP's gave better, if not adequate, attention to the program. Here below is presented the allotment of budget for adult literacy in each of the ESDP's.

Figure1: Summary of budget allocation for ANFE across ESDPs



Source: MoE (1998, 2002, 2005 & 2010b)

As can be seen from the table, there are irregularities in the budget allocation for adult literacy. In ESDP I, where no adequate information was provided about the nature of the program, 1.1% of the education budget was allocated for the program. In ESDP II, though the amount of money was increased, its share remained the same with ESDP I. During ESDP III, as the share of education has increased, it was expected the share of adult literacy would also increase, however, it fell by more than half of what was allotted during ESDP II. However, the decrease in the budget allocation may have resulted from the share of responsibility given by the Ministry of Education to communities, NGOs and civil societies. As it was clearly put in ESDP III, “the Government alone cannot carryout[sic] such programs without the active involvement, ownership and commitment of communities, NGOs and civil societies” (MoE, 2005, p.34). In the fourth ESDP, a high amount of money was allotted on IFAL where the program shared 8.8% of the total education budget which could be attributed to the government exerting effort towards meeting the 4<sup>th</sup> EFA goal of reducing adult literacy by half by 2015. In fact, it was made clear in the National Adult Education Strategy that in addition to support sought from other sources; budget allocated for adult education will increase at the federal, regional, zone and woreda levels (MoE, 2008).

In this strategy, it was indicated that money and other supports would be provided to training institutions including universities to carry out appropriate adult education programmes. However, practically seen, this seems far from true as there is no system or body which can even secure employment of graduates in the field.

### **Facilitators' Training and Recruitment**

There is consensus that the availability of competent teachers plays a vital role in securing quality education (MoE, 2008). Like any level, even more, adult literacy facilitators need to be skilful and knowledgeable. The reason behind is adults have special characteristics. This was also mentioned in the National Adult Education Strategy as,

... Adults have their status in the society and are owners of rich experiences, teaching them require special methodology. Competence of facilitators has also great importance for the delivery and effectiveness of adult education (MoE, 2008, p. 16).

Besides, in the Master Plan for Adult Education it was clearly stated that the provision of Integrated Functional Adult Education (IFAE) would be learner-centred and targeted that it will be linked to the livelihood issues of the particular communities and take into consideration the different economic activities, age groups, special needs and language and cultural diversities of each community which consequently require competent facilitators (MoE, 2011b).

However, when compared to other types of education in our context, the attention given to the quality of facilitators seems minimal. Though the National adult Education Strategy attest “the recruitment of facilitators for adult education remained inconsistent in the past years, and no system was established for institutionally organized training” (MoE, 2008, p.7) and call for action on the issue, there are still no clear training and recruitment mechanisms.

In the FAL implementation guideline (MoE, 2011a), it is mentioned that the facilitators of this program would be teachers, development agents and health extension workers, ABE facilitators and other volunteer individuals from the society who would work as part time on a voluntary basis. In addition, hiring facilitators for the program has been put as the last resort, i.e. “if the work cannot be accomplished by the above individuals, facilitators for the programs would be hired” (MoE, 2011a). This notion clearly shows that anyone can teach or provide adult literacy that in turn implies the low level of focus given to the program. It was indicated in the FAL implementation guideline that involvement of other professionals such as health extension workers and development agents helps “integrate literacy teaching-learning with development packages” and is cost effective (MoE, 2011a, p. 9). However, research shows that there is lack of skill and motivation on the part of the facilitators (Samuel, 2012). Hence, if the program needs to be effective, facilitators should be equipped with appropriate skills for facilitating adult learning. It is because, as mentioned above, helping adults to learn is more difficult than others as the facilitator should know and make

use of the experiences of learners to immediately apply what they got from every session in their day-to-day lives.

Regarding payment, the FAL implementation guideline indicates some additional payment would be provided for part-time facilitators to encourage them (teachers, development agents and health extension workers, ABE facilitators). It also indicates that adult facilitators would be provided with monthly remuneration taking their contributions and the current condition of life into consideration (MoE, 2011a, p. 7). On the other hand, the fourth adult literacy benchmark attests that paying facilitators a salary of “at least the equivalent of the minimum wage of primary school” would secure their stay in the job for longer period of time. However, observations show that let alone the additional payment for the part-time facilitators, even for the full time facilitators, there is hardly any payment. Informal discussions with wereda experts and facilitators and observations also show that the available payments depend highly on commitment of zones or wereda officials and it differs across zones and weredas in the same or different regions. In contradiction to this practice, of 288.2 Million birr allocated for FAL in the third ESDP, 103.8 million was allotted for salary (MoE, 2005, p. 88). One would worry, if such amount of money is allocated for salary, why most facilitators are working on a voluntary basis that led into ineffective implementation of the program.

Regarding educational background, new facilitators should be at least grade 10 complete (even below) who know the culture and language of the community (MoE, 2011a; MoE, 2008). In the implementation guideline, it was also made clear that adult facilitators could get pre-service and in-service training which can help them continuously develop their professions which is in line with one of the 12 benchmarks for adult literacy. Hence, teachers, development agents and health extension workers, ABE facilitators, other volunteer individuals who are willing to work as adult facilitators can get a 15 days pre-service training on basic facilitation skills by regional education bureaus and wereda education offices (MoE, 2011a). FAL implementation guideline states that one month initial training on andragogy and 7 days continuous on job training shall be provided. In addition, in line with what was stated in the National Adult Education Strategy (MoE, 2008), it was also mentioned that newly recruited adult facilitators would be provided with training every 6 months by teacher education colleges and universities (MoE, 2011a). Unlike such plans, however, the practical experience apparently shows that most facilitators, whether full or part-time, enter into facilitation without knowing the basics of adult learning. This again is highly dependent on the commitment of regions, zones and weredas. Even those who managed to give training could not do it as planned as the training would not be conducted for over three days. Particularly, as far as the experience of the writer is concerned, the responsible bodies in regions are not working in collaboration with colleges and universities which are supposed to provide these training programmes. However, many documents show that among the factors which made adult literacy programs ineffective are related to facilitators’ limited knowledge and skills. For instance, in ESDP II (MoE, 2002), it was explained that low quality of facilitators and lack of incentives for the facilitators were among the factors responsible for high dropout rate in adult literacy. During the lifetime of ESDP III, among the reasons for

underachieving intended number of adults to be trained the unavailability of trained personnel in the area at the grass roots level was one (MoE, 2010b). Though the fourth ESDP puts lack of skill and knowledge on the part of facilitators as a reason for underachievement in adult literacy during the third ESDP period and indicates the need for training to develop capacity, it does not clearly set out the number of facilitators to be trained.

### **Collaboration of Stakeholders for IFAL**

It is believed that the issue of adult education is broad and hence, involves a number of sectors. However, it was only in 2005 that the Ministry called for active involvement, ownership and commitment of communities, NGOs and civil societies. In ESDP III, in addition to the regions which play active role in organizing the program and preparing materials in the mother tongue, NGOs which work on adult literacy have also been welcomed for the better expansion, local responsiveness and relevance of the program (MoE, 2005).

The National Adult Education Strategy (MoE, 2008) also reemphasized the active involvement and coordination among those sectors working on education and others for strengthening the program. Similarly, in ESDP IV, the Ministry of Education again showed interest towards strengthening its partnership with government, private sector and NGO for better provision of IFAL (MoE, 2010b). Prompted by this, as indicated above, the Ministry of Education together with five other ministries signed the MoU to make FAL program more integrated (MoE, 2010b, p. 38). In the same token, in the Master Plan for Adult Education, it was stated that the multidisciplinary nature of adult education necessitated the inclusion of various sectors in its provision. It reads:

...Functional Adult Education builds on indigenous knowledge and seeks to link writing, reading and numeracy skills to livelihoods and skills training in areas such as agriculture (including off-farm activities), health, civic, cultural education, etc. Such an approach requires delivery by various governmental and non-governmental service providers in multiple settings and also ensures that literacy skills development is meaningful to the learners (MoE, 2011b, p. 4).

The Ministry of Education, in addition to government ministries, recognized the active role institutions, universities, TVETs, non-governmental organizations and the private sector play in the effective provisioning of IFAL. However, experiences show that most health extension workers and development agents do not take IFAL as their responsibility as the signing ministries' roles are not cascaded to the grass roots for an integrated implementation of the program.

### **Adult Enrolment and Literacy Rate in Ethiopia**

The effectiveness of a certain educational program could be seen by the number of enrollees and their rate of completion. In the Ethiopian context, it was hard to find data about adult literacy as the issue had been included in the Education Statistics Annual Abstract recently.

Education Statistics Annual Abstract has started to publish adult education component from 2007/8 onwards (2000 E.C), evidently, after the development of National Adult Education Strategy (MoE, 2011b). It is published under the heading “Adult and Non-formal Education” which is designed to address the primary education needs of adults and others who are substantially older than the traditional primary school going ages of 7-14. In all education abstracts, it has been indicated that the number of enrolled participants reported are irregular, and it lacks accuracy and completeness basically because of the fact that duration of registration and data collection do not match for adult education. In addition, many of such programs are operated by non-government entities and many regions are not yet fully implementing this type of education. For instance, a note for adjusting substantial underreporting was provided in the 2007/8 Education Statistics Annual Abstract that though the reported participants enrolled in ANFE are 152,700, it could actually reach 239,000. In the master plan for adult education, it is pointed out that there is lack of data on enrolment and other FAL activities. However, with all its pitfalls, it is argued that evaluating adult literacy programs would help in identifying and understanding the challenges and assist in planning of the future actions by critically reflecting on the current ones (Padak & Padak, 1991).

Table1: Adult literacy enrolment

Year	Number of Enrolled adults		
	Male	Female	Total
2007/8(2000 E.C)	86,943	65,820	152,763
2008/9 (2001 E.C)	95998	60590	156588
2009/10 (2002 E.C)	120469	77180	197649
2010/11 (2003 E.C)	197843	136567	334410
2011/12 (2004 E.C)	1,281,951	810,283	2,092,234
2012/13 (2005 E.C)	2,116,620	1,299,156	3,415,776

Source: Education Statistics Annual Abstract 2007/8-2012/13

From the number of adult participants enrolled in the program, it can be seen that the number has increased from 152,763 in 2007/8 to 3,415,776 in 2012/13. Though this number could tell one about the adults enrolled in the program, it is difficult to know how many completed the two-year program. The Ministry of Education in its first three years evaluation of GTP with regard to FAL reported that 21,798,683 adults completed their two-year FAL program. It was indicated that from planned 68.0% gross enrolment in FAL in 2005 E.C, 55.4% was achieved (MoE, 2012/13). However, this contradicts with the data of adult learners enrolled in the indicted three years. This might be attributed to the above reasons which result in underreporting of people involved in the program. To alleviate such problems and see the achievements in literacy rate, it would be better to compare Ethiopia’s achievements with those countries that have remarkable reputations in adult literacy. In the following section, an attempt was made to compare Ethiopia’s literacy rate with some other African countries.

Table 2: Adult literacy rate in selected African countries

Country	Year			
	1990 <sup>a</sup>	2000-2004 <sup>a</sup>	2005-2011 <sup>b</sup>	Projected 2015 <sup>b</sup>
Burundi	37	58.9	87	85
Ethiopia	28.6	41.5	39	49
Malawi	51.8	64.1	61	66
Namibia	74.9	85	76	81

Sources: <sup>a</sup> EFA Global Monitoring Report, UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2006)

<sup>b</sup> EFA Global Monitoring Report, UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2013/14)

Table 2 shows the trend of adult literacy rate in some selected African countries taking the year 1990 as a baseline, where countries affirmed their commitment towards achieving EFA goals. Burundi can be a good example in Africa for the highest record in increment of adult literacy in 20 years. Both Malawi and Burundi are cited for their effective policies in adult literacy which, though not significant in Malawi, has made Burundi increase its literacy rate by 50% between 1990 and 2011 (UNESCO, 2011). Moreover, as can be seen from table 2, Namibia has high adult literacy rate in 1990 which increased by 10% in 15 years and went down to 76 after 5 years. However, Namibia was often cited as a country which has inexpensive literacy policies, strong leadership, clear targets supported by financial commitment (UNESCO, 2006). Moreover, Namibia has intended to achieve 90% literacy rate by 2015 by integrating the literacy program with local needs and by decentralizing its process (UNESCO, 2011). As can be seen from table 2, compared to Malawi and Namibia, Ethiopia showed an important increase in its adult literacy rate between 1990 and 2004. In 2011, however, Ethiopia was among eight countries with adult literacy rate at or below 40%. In this regard, Ethiopia as part of Sub-Saharan Africa is unlikely to reach the Education for All literacy target set for 2015 (UNESCO, 2011).

In the Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2013/14) though Ethiopia is mentioned for its encouraging progress in primary education, among 17 countries Ethiopia was very far from achieving 50% reduction of adult illiteracy by 2015 as the projected achievement remains 49, below 50%. However, Mamo (2005) expressed his confidence that Ethiopia would achieve the 4<sup>th</sup> EA goal as it has literacy growth rate of about 16.2% in six years (1994-2000) and 2.7 per annum, provided that things remain constant, he further wrote,

... the minimum achievement will be 66% in ten years time. But if the above mentioned positive steps come to fruition, one can boldly assert that the total literacy rate of Ethiopia will be much higher and surpass the set goals by 2015 (Mamo, 2005, p.24).

However, as can be seen from table 2, things are not constant, because Ethiopia's adult literacy rate declined rather than increasing between 2004 and 2011 despite the recent reports from the ministry seem optimistic as it implies Ethiopia would achieve the 4th EFA goal. According to the report by the Ministry of Education, up until the end of 2012/13 (2005 E.C) or in three years implementation evaluation of GTP, from the planned number of adults who would be involved in the FAL program 57.4% was achieved (MoE, 2012/13)

Table 3: Six months reports of IFAL enrolment 2013/2014

Level	<i>Planned</i>			<i>Achieved</i>		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Level 1	2,511,783	4,343,420	6,855,203	1,441,220	1,221,212	2,675,566
Level 2	2,180,681	1,490,793	3,671,474	857,633	574,138	1,431,807
		Grand Total	10,649,677		Grand Total	4,107,373

Source: MoE (2014)

As can be seen from table 3, though the number of enrolled adults is below what is expected during half year, 38.5% of what was planned could be achieved if they can complete without dropping out. Though this could decrease adult illiteracy, the prediction made by UNESCO that Ethiopia would be among countries which would find it difficult to reach the EFA adult literacy target of reducing levels of illiteracy by 50% by 2015 (UNESCO, 2010) would be inevitable.

## Conclusion and Ways Forward

### Conclusion

Here below, conclusions are drawn from the results of the study about achievements and challenges.

#### Achievements

- Though not comparable with other education types, budget allotted for the adult literacy is generally increasing from time to time.
- Policies, strategies and programs conducive to guide and support the FAL program implementation have been in place.
- Documents for training and recruiting facilitators are prepared.
- Memorandum of Understanding has been signed among concerned stakeholders so as to make the program more integrated with the day-to-day lives of the participants.
- Relative increase in enrolment has been registered.

#### Challenges

- Though there is political will and there are strategies and programs which are conducive to the provision of adult literacy, they are not being implemented accordingly.
- There is better allocation of budget, the allotted budget and resources are not effectively used to strengthen the program.
- The facilitators working in adult literacy are not equipped enough to facilitate adult learning which makes adults not to be attracted to the programs.
- There is no system for recruiting facilitators and apparently, the practical experience shows that anyone can be a facilitator for adults.

- As there hardly is any payment for facilitating adult learning, there is high turnover rate which forces the programs to interrupt.
- Based on the memorandum of understanding signed among stakeholder ministries where the Ministry of Education is presumed to play a facilitating role, other ministries are not considering adult education as their role. Hence, only the facilitator seems responsible for the education of adults in his/her respective centre.
- Moreover, colleges and universities which are engaged in training professionals are not working in collaboration with education and other concerned bureaus and non-governmental organizations.

### **Ways Forward**

- Allocating budget for the program is not sufficient. Hence, Ministry of Education and its regional, zonal and woreda offices should follow up and ensure the utilization of the budget for the program.
- To overcome high turnover rate of facilitators and sustain the program, as mentioned in the National Adult Education Strategy and FAL implementation guideline, proper and adequate salary, and incentives should be made in place to the facilitators. Moreover, a system should be designed to attract and retain better facilitators.
- Ministry of Education and adult education offices at regional, zone and wereda levels should continue playing a facilitative role to encourage non-governmental organizations to participate in FAL program.
- Ministry of Education and concerned offices at regional, zone and wereda levels should work closely with colleges and universities so that needed human power could be trained for FAL which would make the program more responsive and relevant to the day-to-day lives of the participants.
- Facilitation of adult need expertise and knowledge; hence, in addition to the cultural issues, care should be taken with regard to skills of facilitators while recruiting them to provide quality adult literacy which consequently help adults live a better life.
- To resolve the problem of involvement of other sectors in the IFAL program, Ministry of Education and its offices at regional, zone and wereda levels should work collaboratively with the colleges and universities. Thus, the colleges and universities could design and deliver relevant programs which can help them train full-fledged facilitators who are trained in all the core issues surrounding the lives of the adult learners.
- Based on needs assessment and discussion with concerned bodies, the current strategy which seems to solely emphasize on developing literacy skills and other FAL materials should be updated to entertain the emerging needs of the learners and the labour market in the post EFA period.
- In the post EFA, new mechanisms for maximizing collaboration among stakeholders should be sought by Ministry of Education (For eg. Networking, strategic partnership among institutions, etc.).

- Publication and dissemination of research that can influence FAL policies and practices should be encouraged and supported by all concerned ministries and other stakeholders.

## References

- Ambissa Kenea. (2009). Adult Basic Literacy ‘Programs’ in Ethiopia: Conceptions, Strategies and Shortfalls. *Journal of Education for Development*, 4(1), 1-27.
- Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. (FDRE) (2010). *Growth and Transformation Plan*: Ministry of Finance and Economic Development: Addis Ababa.
- Mamo Kebede. (2005). Ethiopia: where and who are the world's illiterates? Background paper prepared for the Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2006 *Literacy for Life*
- Ministry of Education. (2014). *Annual report on functional adult literacy*. Adama
- Ministry of Education. (2012). *Education Statistics Annual Abstract*. Education Management Information System: Addis Ababa.
- Ministry of Education. (2010a). *Education statistics annual abstract*. Education Management Information System: Addis Ababa
- Ministry of Education. (2010b). *Education Sector Development Program IV (2010/2011 – 2014/2015)*. Ministry of Education: Addis Ababa.
- Ministry of Education. (2011a) *FAL Implementation Guide*. Ministry of Education: Addis Ababa
- Ministry of Education. (2011b). *Learning for Life: Master Plan for Adult Education in Ethiopia (2010/11–2019/20)*. Ministry of Education: Addis Ababa..
- Ministry of Education (2008). *National Adult Education Strategy*. Addis Ababa.
- Ministry of Education (2005). *Education Sector Development Program III (2005/2006 – 2010/2011)*. Ministry of Education: Addis Ababa.
- Ministry of Education. (2002). *Education Sector Development Program II (2002/2003 – 2004/2005)*. Ministry of Education: Addis Ababa.
- Ministry of Education. (1997). *Education Sector Development Program I (1997/98 – 2001/2002)*. Ministry of Education: Addis Ababa.
- Ministry of Education. (1994). *Education and Training Policy*: Addis Ababa.
- Mohanty, J. (2007). *Adult and Non- Formal Education (2nd revised and enlarged edition)* New Delhi: Deep and Deep Publications PVT Ltd.
- Padak, N. D. & Padak, G. M. (1991) What Works: Adult Literacy Program Evaluation? *Journal of Reading* (Pp 374-379) Accessed May 04/2014 from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40032078>
- Samuel Asnake. (2012). Linking Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) within Poverty Reduction Interventions: Potentials and Prospects in Ethiopia. *In Proceedings of the Third Annual Research Conference of Jimma University (330-349)*. Paper presented at Role of Research and Extension in Implementation of Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) of Ethiopia. Jimma: Jimma University.

- Samlowski, M. (2011). EFA Goal 3 and the outlook for non-formal education and informal learning. In Samuel Samlowski (ed.), *Adult Education and Development* (PP. 3-14). Germany: Dvv international. Accessed May 2014, from [http://www.dvv-international.de/files/77\\_supplement.pdf#page=5](http://www.dvv-international.de/files/77_supplement.pdf#page=5)
- Subban, J.E. (2007). *Adult Literacy education and community Development*. In Butterfield, A.K & Korazim-Korosy, J (eds.). *Interdisciplinary Community Development: Interdisciplinary. Perspective* (PP. 67-90). 115(2). USA: Haworth Press, Inc.
- UNESCO. (2006). *EFA Global Monitoring Report*. [www.uis.unesco.org](http://www.uis.unesco.org). Accessed 15 August 2011.
- UNESCO. (2008). *EFA Global Monitoring Report*. [www.uis.unesco.org](http://www.uis.unesco.org). Accessed 03 January 2014.
- UNESCO. (2010). *EFA Global Monitoring Report*. [www.uis.unesco.org](http://www.uis.unesco.org). Accessed 01 January 2014.
- UNESCO. (2011). *EFA Global Monitoring Report*. [www.uis.unesco.org](http://www.uis.unesco.org). Accessed 05 January 2014.
- UNESCO.(2013/14). *EFA Global Monitoring Report*. [www.uis.unesco.org](http://www.uis.unesco.org). Accessed 03 January 2014.