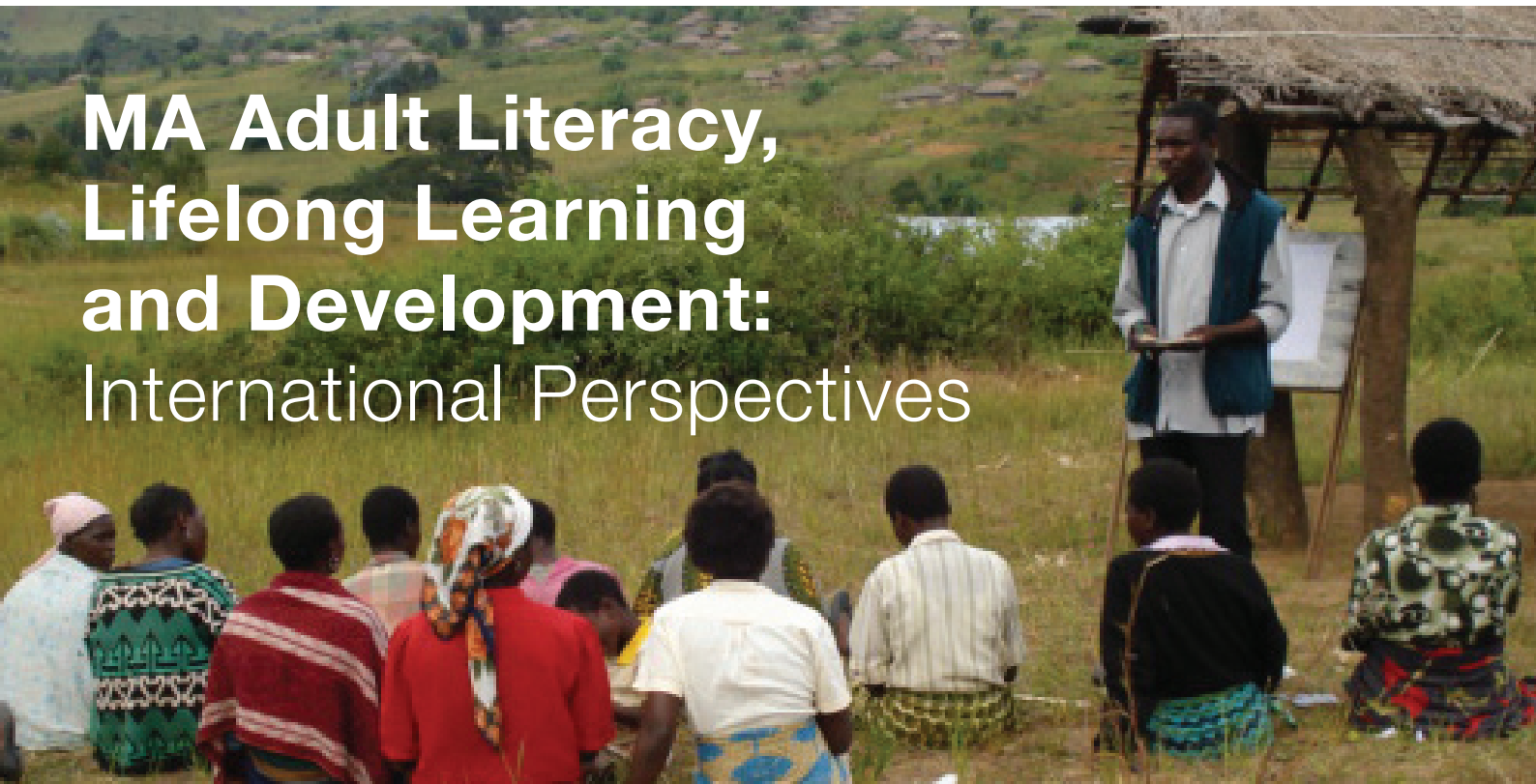


# MA Adult Literacy, Lifelong Learning and Development: International Perspectives



The MA Adult Literacy, Lifelong Learning and Development: **International Perspectives** has been designed for those working in adult education and basic literacy, particularly in international and community development programmes. It consists of: a specialist module on adult literacy, lifelong learning and international development; a module on educational research methods; and a dissertation, focused on the student's individual area of interest.

We welcome people working in policy, planning and evaluation roles, as well as teachers, NGO activists and literacy facilitators. Whilst many of our students will be working in countries of the global South, in Asia, Africa and South America, the course is also appropriate for those in the UK, US or Europe who are interested in developing a new perspective on their work. All applicants should have a real interest in the field of adult literacy and lifelong learning. Although approaches to adult literacy teaching and learning and curriculum development will be explored – including functional literacy, REFLECT and Freire – this is not a hands-on ‘teacher training’ course. This course will however provide you with critical insights and research skills for taking forward and developing innovative adult literacy and lifelong learning programmes, or for doing doctoral level research in this area.

- This course provides an excellent base for a career in adult literacy and development, with non governmental organisations, international development agencies or national Governments
- This course offers a unique introduction to researching adult literacy, and development, combining in-depth understanding of literacy theory and research methodology with practical experience of conducting literacy research
- You will be supported by internationally recognised researchers in this field, with access to a wide range of materials and literacy networks in developing countries

## Overview of the programme

Students follow a core programme introducing the changing theoretical understanding and policy approaches in the areas of adult literacy, international development and lifelong learning. In parallel, students will choose specialist topics relevant to their own needs and interests which they are encouraged to explore through designing their own individual research project. Students will receive one-to-one supervision for this element of the course. Those coming from professional roles in adult literacy, lifelong learning and development programmes will have the opportunity to work on a dissertation which contributes to their organisation's work and enhances their professional development.

In particular, the specialist module aims to:

- introduce the changing concepts and approaches within the fields of adult literacy and lifelong learning
- provide an understanding of how adult education policy and programmes relate to international development policy objectives
- explore the relationship between adult literacy/numeracy, lifelong learning and social change (including gender relations)

The educational research methodology module provides an introduction to the tools and theoretical frameworks for conducting your own literacy research study. Specialist sessions and tailor-made support with academic writing are also offered to all students.

The specialist module is led by Prof. Anna Robinson-Pant and Prof. Alan Rogers, both leading researchers in the field of adult literacy and development.

Anna Robinson-Pant worked as a literacy trainer, planner and researcher in Nepal over many years. She was awarded the UNESCO International Award for Literacy Research in 2001 for her book, *Why eat green cucumber at the time of dying? Exploring the link between women's literacy and development*. She has since published widely in this area, including an edited book, *Women, literacy and development: alternative perspectives*. She has conducted research and policy work for a range of organisations, including NGOs, DFID and UNESCO.

Alan Rogers has written widely on adult learning and teaching, especially in developing countries, including: *Teaching Adults*, *Learning for Development and Non-formal Education: flexible schooling or participatory education?* He has worked in many countries in Asia and Africa as a consultant and trainer, especially in adult literacy. His current projects include an ethnographic approach to literacy training called LETTER in India, Ethiopia and Uganda, and a project in Afghanistan on skills training and literacy.

Where possible, colleagues from the UEA Literacy and Development Group (LDG) also contribute to the MA sessions. Students are encouraged to attend the public seminar series on Education and Development and the LDG informal reading group sessions. For information on recent LDG activities see: [www.uea.ac.uk/ssf/literacy](http://www.uea.ac.uk/ssf/literacy).

## Programme Structure

Teaching will be through 15 lecture/seminar sessions and tutorial support for assessed work, totalling 60 hours contact time for each student. The specialist module on literacy, lifelong learning and international development is divided into three key areas:

### 1. Literacy, development and adult learning: an introduction to the concepts

Starting with the concept of literacy as a social practice, we draw on ethnographic research to unpack the relationship between literacy and international development. We will discuss current theories in adult learning and their relevance for policy, planning and practice in lifelong learning, as well as including an introduction to key debates and approaches in development theory.

Assessment: 1000 word review of three key articles introduced during the module, and a ten minute oral presentation analysing the student's own educational and professional experiences from the perspective of literacy as a social practice (using the student's own country as a case study).

### 2. Adult literacy and lifelong learning: policy perspectives

We introduce international educational policy agendas that have influenced national policy and practice in countries in the South. We look particularly at policy designed to address language and gender inequalities and explore the research on the 'benefits' of literacy, which has influenced much international policy in this area.

Assessment: 3500 word assignment consisting of a critical account based on the research literature of the links between adult literacy and one aspect of socio-economic change (eg health behaviour, legal rights, gender relations, poverty alleviation). The assignment should also examine educational policy in the chosen area.

### 3. Basic Adult Education and Literacy: looking at learning and teaching approaches

We explore some of the main approaches to adult literacy and lifelong learning, including Freire, REFLECT, functional literacy, family literacy and language experience approaches. Through in-depth study of adult learning programmes in a range of countries, we examine questions around the selection, training and support of facilitators, monitoring and evaluation, learning-teaching approaches, materials and resources.

Assessment: an assignment of 3500 words which is a case study discussing the main approaches and current theories in adult literacy and lifelong learning in relation to a country of the student's choice.



## Student Experiences



**Saffiatou Savage-Sidibeh** has now returned to the Gambia, where she works as the Principal Education Officer and Head of the Government's Non-formal Education Unit, of the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education:

"On my return home to the Gambia, I was almost immediately engaged as a member of a taskforce for the development of the African Gender Development Index (AGDI) 2011, Gambian version. My attainment of the Master's degree has greatly boosted my morale and built my confidence to face challenges and perform assignments effectively. The course indeed built my capacity in asking questions, in critically analysing statements based on evidence/facts and in making concrete judgments."



**Elena Tsangaridi** writes from Cyprus:

"I feel that the MA course helped me to see the world differently! Before that I didn't know much about the developing world and their educational systems but now I feel more confident to start searching more and more things about these educational programmes. It helped me also to understand in some points the educational system here in Cyprus, especially for adults and why all these programmes such as night schools or teaching adult foreigners the Greek language is important. It helped me to see another part of my country, like immigrants for example, from a different glance!"



**Ahmmardouh Mjaya**, researcher at the Centre for Language Studies, Chancellor College, University of Malawi, reflects on what he learned:

"This course has helped me re-examine my own perceptions and assumptions about literacy and development such that if I were given another chance to oversee an adult literacy initiative I would be more cautious when dealing with the adult learners than I was some two years ago. These studies have made me realise that literacy is very complex. Professionally, this course has helped me become recognised as someone who has some expertise in this field, such that colleagues in the faculty now come to me to ask about any issues concerning adult literacy."



**Eleni Konidari** came to the MA course with experience of teaching adults in Greece:

"One of my best choices was the decision to come to the University of East Anglia and do this MA. It opened a whole new world to me and changed what I had been thinking before about adult literacy! I gained a brand new understanding of literacy and a new way of thinking in general. What makes the adult literacy Master's in UEA really worth doing is the passion and the commitment of the course directors. However, personally not only have I learnt much from my professors but also from my classmates, some of whom had long-established working experience in the literacy field. Today I am happy to be still at UEA as the stimulus and the skills I gained during my Master's led me to a PhD funded by the University."

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