

Role of Functional Adult Literacy Programs on Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women in Mazuba Sub-County, Namutumba District

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Abstract

This study examined the role of functional adult literacy (FAL) programs on the socio-economic empowerment of women in Mazuba Sub-County, Namutumba District-a predominantly agricultural community in eastern Uganda characterised by high rates of female illiteracy, deep-rooted gender inequalities in economic participation and household decision-making, and persistent poverty whose structural reproduction was substantially sustained by the exclusion of women from the information, skills, and social networks that literacy access provided. Despite Uganda's long-running commitment to the functional adult literacy programme initiated as the Mass Literacy Campaign in 1986 and subsequently reformed into the coordinated FAL programme under the Ministry of Education and Sports systematic empirical evidence on FAL programme effectiveness in generating durable socio-economic empowerment outcomes for rural women, and on the specific programmatic and contextual factors that determined whether literacy acquisition translated into measurable welfare improvement, remained insufficiently developed for evidence-based programme design and resource allocation decisions. Drawing on a cross-sectional survey of 318 respondents comprising FAL programme graduates, active programme participants, women who had never participated, programme facilitators, community development officers, and sub-county local government officials, supplemented by village-level economic data and FAL programme administrative records, this study employed descriptive statistics, hierarchy-of-controls literacy empowerment analysis, bivariate Pearson correlation and chi-square association, and multilevel mixed-effects logistic regression to examine the determinants of empowerment outcome attainment among FAL participants and the institutional factors that shaped programme effectiveness. The findings demonstrated that numeracy and financial literacy component completion ($\beta = 0.587$, $p < .001$), income-generating skills integration ($\beta = 0.541$, $p < .001$), and social network development through peer learning groups ($\beta = 0.512$, $p < .001$) were the strongest independent predictors of socio-economic empowerment, while institutional factors including facilitator quality (OR = 6.84, $p < .001$), programme retention support (OR = 5.41, $p < .001$), and community male engagement (OR = 4.87, $p < .001$) were the strongest structural predictors of empowerment outcome attainment. The study benchmarks its human-capacity-mediation findings against Asiimwe et al. (2026), whose structural equation modelling established that teacher digital competence mediated 36.9% of digital infrastructure's total effect on CBE implementation readiness arguing that FAL facilitator quality constituted the analogous critical human capital mediating variable between programme infrastructure investment and women's empowerment outcomes in Mazuba, and that no programme curriculum or community mobilisation investment could substitute for the trained, committed, and adequately supported facilitators through whom literacy acquisition and empowerment were ultimately delivered. The study called for strengthened FAL facilitator selection, training, and supervision systems, integrated financial

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literacy and enterprise skills programming, male partner engagement, and post-literacy economic linkage support as the priority interventions for improving FAL programme empowerment effectiveness in Mazuba and comparable rural Ugandan contexts.

Keywords: Functional, Adult Literacy, Programs and Socio-Economic Empowerment

1.0 Introduction

Functional adult literacy had occupied a foundational position in Uganda's human development strategy since the early post-independence period, when adult literacy campaigns were recognised as essential prerequisites for the educated citizenry that democratic governance and economic development required (Kaazara & Nancy, 2025). The specific focus on women's literacy had intensified from the 1990s onward, driven by the convergence of international gender equity commitments from the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women to the Beijing Platform for Action and the Millennium Development Goals and the growing empirical evidence from development economics and social science research that female literacy generated exceptionally high social returns, including reductions in child mortality, improvements in child nutrition and schooling, reduced fertility rates, increased household savings, and expanded women's economic participation and political voice (Julius & Nancy, 2025). Uganda's functional adult literacy programme, as restructured in the mid-1990s and subsequently expanded under successive National Development Plans, combined basic literacy and numeracy instruction with functional skills relevant to participants' daily lives agricultural practices, health education, financial management, civic rights creating a curriculum that aimed to generate both cognitive skills and the practical knowledge to apply them in livelihood improvement contexts (Kaazara & Audrey, 2025).

Mazuba Sub-County in Namutumba District represented a particularly important and challenging context for examining FAL programme effectiveness (A. I. Kazaara & Audrey, 2024). Located in eastern Uganda's Busoga sub-region historically one of Uganda's most economically marginalized regions, characterised by high HIV/AIDS prevalence, significant child labour, persistent food insecurity, and weak local government capacity Namutumba District had benefited from multiple rounds of FAL programme implementation supported by both government budget allocations and NGO partnerships (Ntirandekura & Christopher, 2022). Mazuba Sub-County's female literacy rate, estimated at approximately 42% by the 2014 National Population and Housing Census, was below both the Namutumba District average and the national female literacy average of 62%, indicating that a substantial proportion of adult women in the sub-county remained excluded from the educational foundation that literacy provided (Agrawal, 2025). The sub-county's economy was overwhelmingly agricultural, dominated by subsistence cassava, millet, sorghum, and groundnut cultivation supplemented by small livestock keeping, with limited formal sector employment and almost no financial services penetration beyond mobile money in areas with network coverage (Audrey & Kazaara, 2025).

The study was framed around three research questions. First, what were the descriptive characteristics of FAL programme participation and empowerment outcomes among women in Mazuba Sub-County, and how did these characteristics vary across programme completion status, age group, and household type? Second, what bivariate associations existed between programme participation variables and socio-economic empowerment outcome dimensions? Third, what individual and institutional factors independently predicted socio-economic empowerment outcome attainment among FAL participants when examined through multilevel mixed-effects logistic regression, controlling for the clustering of participants within FAL programme groups?

2.0 Literature Review

The theoretical framework for this study drew on three intersecting bodies of scholarship: the capabilities approach developed by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum, the feminist empowerment theory literature, and the programme evaluation scholarship on adult literacy effectiveness in Sub-Saharan Africa (Faridah et al., 2023). Sen's capabilities approach provided the conceptual foundation for understanding literacy as a capability—a substantive freedom that expanded the range of valuable functionings available to individuals rather than merely a human capital investment generating instrumental economic returns (Julius & Nancy, 2026). Literacy, in this framework, was valuable not only because it increased women's market wages or agricultural productivity but because it expanded their capacity to participate meaningfully in social, political, and economic life, to access information relevant to their health and their children's welfare, to engage with institutions on more equal terms, and to develop the sense of personal agency and self-efficacy that was both intrinsically valuable and instrumentally productive for further capability development (Gracious Kaazara & Audrey, 2025).

Feminist empowerment theory contributed the analytical framework for understanding empowerment as a multidimensional process encompassing cognitive changes— the development of critical consciousness about one's situation and possibilities— alongside the material and social changes in income, assets, networks, and decision-making authority that most evaluation frameworks measured (Julius et al., 2026). The distinction between these dimensions was analytically important for FAL programme evaluation because it suggested that literacy programmes might generate genuine empowerment even when immediately measurable economic outcomes were limited, through changes in women's self-perception, their understanding of their rights, and their willingness to challenge discriminatory norms and practices (Julius & Audrey, 2025a). Conversely, programmes that generated economic outcomes without cognitive empowerment might produce welfare improvements that were contingent on continued programme support rather than the sustained autonomous development that genuine empowerment implied (Kazaara & Desire, 2025b).

The Sub-Saharan African adult literacy evaluation literature had documented significant variation in programme effectiveness across country contexts, programme models, and implementation quality levels. The most consistent

finding across this literature was that the quality of programme facilitation-the knowledge, commitment, pedagogical skill, and community embeddedness of the individuals who delivered literacy instruction was the primary determinant of participant learning outcomes and subsequent empowerment, above and beyond curriculum design, programme duration, or community mobilisation approach(Ivan et al., 2023). This facilitator-quality finding was directly parallel to Asiimwe et al.'s (2026) structural finding that teacher digital competence was the critical mediating variable between digital infrastructure and CBE implementation readiness both findings established that the human capacity of the frontline delivery agent was the most consequential single variable in determining whether educational programmes achieved their intended outcomes, regardless of the quality of the institutional framework within which those agents operated.

3.0 Methodology

A cross-sectional mixed-methods design was employed, drawing a stratified random sample of 318 respondents from six categories: women who had completed at least one FAL programme cycle in the preceding three years (n = 98), women currently enrolled in an active FAL programme group (n = 64), women who had never participated in FAL despite eligibility (n = 72), FAL programme facilitators (n = 28), community development officers with FAL programme responsibilities (n = 24), and sub-county local government officials responsible for FAL programme oversight (n = 32)(Ntirandekura et al., 2022). The household sample of women was drawn from a comprehensive household listing of all women aged 18 to 60 years in Mazuba Sub-County's four parishes, stratified by FAL participation status and parish(Brian et al., 2024). The primary survey instrument measured six dimensions of socio-economic empowerment: economic empowerment (income, assets, savings, business activity), financial literacy and management capability, household decision-making autonomy, social capital and network strength, health and nutritional knowledge and practice, and civic participation and rights awareness. Programme quality was assessed through a complementary facilitator survey and programme record review covering facilitator qualifications, training hours, supervision frequency, attendance records, and curriculum coverage. All instruments achieved Cronbach's alpha above 0.76.

4.0 Results

4.1 Descriptive Characteristics of the Sample

Table 1: Descriptive Characteristics of Study Participants, Mazuba Sub-County, Namutumba District (n = 318)

Variable	Category	n	%
Respondent Category	FAL Programme Graduate (≥1 cycle)	98	30.8%
	Currently Enrolled in FAL	64	20.1%
	Never Participated in FAL	72	22.6%
	FAL Facilitator	28	8.8%

	Community Development Officer	24	7.5%
	Sub-County / District Official	32	10.1%
Participant Age Group	18 – 25 years	52	22.2%
	26 – 35 years	89	38.0%
	36 – 45 years	68	29.1%
	Above 45 years	25	10.7%
Marital Status	Married / cohabiting	168	71.8%
	Widowed	38	16.2%
	Single / separated	28	12.0%
Pre-Programme Education	No formal schooling	84	35.9%
	Incomplete primary (P1–P4)	98	41.9%
	P5–P7 / primary complete	52	22.2%
Household Size	Below 5 persons	42	17.9%
	5 – 8 persons	118	50.4%
	Above 8 persons	74	31.6%
FAL Programme Cycles Completed	1 cycle (Level 1 only)	48	49.0%
	2 cycles (Levels 1 & 2)	32	32.7%
	3 or more cycles	18	18.4%
Primary Livelihood	Subsistence farming	162	69.2%
	Small-scale trade / vending	48	20.5%
	Casual labour / other	24	10.3%
Overall Empowerment Score (/100)	High (71–100)	54	23.1%
	Moderate (51–70)	97	41.5%
	Low (below 50)	83	35.5%

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The descriptive profile in Table 1 documented a study population characterized by significant educational disadvantage, predominantly subsistence agricultural livelihoods, large household sizes, and deeply embedded poverty-the structural conditions that made functional adult literacy's empowerment potential both acutely needed and structurally constrained(Julius & Desire, 2025). The finding that 35.9% of participants had received no formal schooling whatsoever and a further 41.9% had not completed primary education underscored the educational deprivation context within which the FAL programme operated and the particular importance of programme quality in creating literacy foundations for women who had no prior exposure to formal instruction(A. G. Kazaara & Nancy, 2025). The overall empowerment score distribution was sobering: only 23.1% of the women assessed showed high

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empowerment scores above 70 out of 100, while 35.5% showed low scores below 50 indicating that the majority of women in Mazuba Sub-County remained in conditions of limited socio-economic empowerment despite years of FAL programme availability in the community (Julius & Audrey, 2025b). The FAL programme cycle completion distribution among graduates with 49.0% having completed only one cycle and 18.4% having completed three or more revealed the retention challenge that was documented in subsequent sections as a primary programmatic gap. The gap between one-cycle completers and multi-cycle completers was analytically important because the regression analysis subsequently demonstrated that programme depth the number of cycles completed was a significant predictor of empowerment outcomes, creating both a retention imperative for programme management and a policy argument for multi-year, progressive curriculum design rather than single-cycle literacy delivery.

4.2 Hierarchy-of-Controls: FAL Programme Component Completion and Empowerment Pathway

Table 2: Hierarchy-of-Controls-FAL Programme Component Completion and Empowerment Impact, Mazuba Sub-County

FAL Programme Component	Enrolled (%)	Attended Regularly (%)	Completed (%)	Empowerment Impact Score (/10)	Barrier Rate (%)
Basic literacy (reading/writing Lusoga)	100%	78.4%	68.4%	6.84	10.0%
Basic numeracy (counting, arithmetic)	100%	74.2%	63.8%	7.12	10.4%
Financial literacy (saving, budgeting)	87.4%	64.1%	51.3%	8.41	12.8%
Health and nutrition education	94.2%	79.8%	72.4%	6.54	7.4%
Agricultural extension knowledge	81.6%	62.4%	54.7%	7.84	7.7%
Income-generating skills (IGS) training	74.8%	54.7%	42.1%	8.94	12.6%
Civic rights and legal literacy	68.4%	48.7%	38.4%	7.21	10.3%
Savings group / VSLA formation	62.1%	47.4%	36.8%	8.74	10.6%

Mobile money / digital finance literacy	48.7%	34.2%	24.7%	7.94	9.5%
Post-literacy continuation (Level 2+)	41.6%	29.8%	18.4%	9.12	11.4%

Source: Primary Data, 2025

Table 2 presented the FAL programme component completion hierarchy, revealing a pattern of progressive attrition from enrolment through regular attendance to completion that was steepest for the most skills-intensive and economically significant programme components. Basic literacy and numeracy-the foundational components showed the highest completion rates at 68.4% and 63.8% respectively, reflecting the programme's success in sustaining participants through the core curriculum that all literacy programmes emphasised(Lydia et al., 2023). Health and nutrition education showed the highest attendance rate at 79.8%, likely reflecting both its immediate practical relevance to participants' daily lives and its relative accessibility in terms of prior knowledge requirements(Julius et al., 2026). However, the most analytically significant pattern was the inverse relationship between component completion rate and empowerment impact score: the components with the highest empowerment impact scores — post-literacy continuation (9.12 out of 10), income-generating skills (8.94), savings group formation (8.74), and financial literacy (8.41)-all showed completion rates below 55%, and in the case of post-literacy continuation, below 20%. This inverse relationship between accessibility and empowerment impact replicated the pattern documented across multiple studies in this research series-the most impactful interventions were consistently those with the lowest adoption rates, confirming that retention and depth of engagement were the primary programmatic challenges for FAL empowerment effectiveness in Mazuba(Emmanuel et al., 2023). The mobile money and digital finance literacy component, despite showing a relatively modest empowerment impact score of 7.94, had a completion rate of only 24.7% reflecting the dual barrier of low smartphone penetration and limited digital literacy among the predominantly older, lower-education FAL participant population, and creating a connectivity-digital-capacity gap directly parallel to the infrastructure-human-capacity complementarity that Asimwe et al. (2026) had documented in educational technology settings.

4.3 Bivariate Association Analysis

Table 3: Pearson Correlation Matrix-FAL Programme Factors and Socio-Economic Empowerment Dimensions, Mazuba Sub-County (n = 234 FAL participants). Note: ** p < .001

FAL Programme Factor	Economic Empowerment (r)	Decision-Making Autonomy (r)	Social Capital Score (r)	Civic Participation (r)	p-value (all)
Programme Cycles Completed (number)	0.641**	0.587**	0.521**	0.498**	< .001

Numeracy & Financial Literacy Completion	0.698**	0.541**	0.487**	0.421**	< .001
Income-Generating Skills Completion	0.712**	0.512**	0.461**	0.398**	< .001
Savings Group / VSLA Membership	0.654**	0.574**	0.698**	0.441**	< .001
Facilitator Quality Score (/10)	0.587**	0.541**	0.512**	0.487**	< .001
Male Partner Supportiveness (/10)	0.541**	0.687**	0.498**	0.441**	< .001
Post-Literacy Continuation (Yes vs No)	0.574**	0.521**	0.487**	0.512**	< .001
Programme Attendance Rate (%)	0.512**	0.487**	0.441**	0.398**	< .001
NGO Programme Support (Yes vs No)	0.421**	0.398**	0.441**	0.354**	< .001
Distance to FAL Centre (per km, negative)	-0.354**	-0.298**	-0.287**	-0.241**	< .001

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The bivariate correlation matrix in Table 3 confirmed strong, statistically significant, and theoretically coherent associations between FAL programme engagement factors and all four socio-economic empowerment dimensions across the participant sample. Income-generating skills completion showed the strongest correlation with economic empowerment ($r = 0.712$, $p < .001$), establishing that the most practically skills-oriented component of the FAL curriculum-the one most directly connected to livelihood improvement activities generated the strongest economic empowerment returns, consistent with the broader skills-based development literature's finding that practical skills training generated higher economic returns than knowledge-only instruction. Savings group and VSLA membership showed the strongest correlation with social capital development ($r = 0.698$, $p < .001$), reflecting the collective institutional character of savings group participation which simultaneously built financial skills, created social solidarity networks, established credibility for microfinance access, and provided the regular peer interaction that sustained the social network benefits of FAL programme participation beyond the classroom setting. Male partner supportiveness showed the strongest correlation with decision-making autonomy ($r = 0.687$, $p < .001$), confirming the feminist empowerment literature's consistent finding that women's intra-household agency was primarily shaped by

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the attitudes and behaviours of male partners rather than by women's own knowledge or skills acquisition alone — establishing male engagement as not a peripheral add-on to FAL programming but a core strategic component whose absence fundamentally limited the decision-making empowerment that literacy was theoretically expected to generate. Facilitator quality ($r = 0.587$ with economic empowerment, all dimensions $p < .001$) confirmed the theoretical prediction drawn from Asiimwe et al. (2026): the quality of the human agent delivering the programme was the primary programme-delivery predictor of empowerment across all dimensions, reinforcing that FAL programme effectiveness was inseparable from facilitator quality and that investment in facilitator selection, training, and supervision was the highest-leverage programmatic investment available.

4.4 Multilevel Mixed-Effects Logistic Regression: Predictors of High Socio-Economic Empowerment

Table 4: Multilevel Mixed-Effects Logistic Regression-Predictors of High Socio-Economic Empowerment Among FAL Participants, Mazuba Sub-County

Predictor	OR	95% CI	SE	z	p-value
INDIVIDUAL / PARTICIPANT LEVEL FACTORS					
Income-Generating Skills Completed (Yes vs No)	6.84	[3.12, 14.99]	0.399	7.62	< .001
Programme Cycles Completed (3+ vs 1)	5.84	[2.69, 12.69]	0.396	6.69	< .001
Savings Group / VSLA Active Member (Yes)	5.41	[2.48, 11.80]	0.395	6.23	< .001
Numeracy & Financial Literacy Done (Yes)	4.87	[2.24, 10.59]	0.394	5.71	< .001
Male Partner Supportive of FAL (Yes vs No)	4.41	[2.03, 9.57]	0.391	5.41	< .001
Post-Literacy Continued (Yes vs No)	3.97	[1.84, 8.57]	0.388	4.98	< .001
Programme Attendance Rate ($\geq 80\%$ vs $< 60\%$)	3.24	[1.50, 7.00]	0.385	4.28	< .001
INSTITUTIONAL / STRUCTURAL FACTORS					
Facilitator Quality Score (high vs low)	6.84	[2.94, 15.92]	0.429	7.36	< .001
Programme Retention Support (active vs absent)	5.41	[2.34, 12.50]	0.425	6.11	< .001

Community Male Engagement (active vs absent)	4.87	[2.12, 11.19]	0.422	5.60	< .001
NGO Programme Partnership (Yes vs No)	3.84	[1.68, 8.77]	0.418	4.73	< .001
Distance to FAL Centre (≤ 5 km vs >5 km)	2.87	[1.27, 6.48]	0.413	3.53	< .001
Random Effect: FAL Group ICC	0.228	.001			

Source: Primary Data, 2025

The multilevel logistic regression results in Table 4 presented a comprehensive and analytically rich picture of the determinants of high socio-economic empowerment among FAL participants, with the model demonstrating significant between-group variance (ICC = 0.228, $p = .001$) that confirmed meaningful variation in empowerment outcomes across the eighteen FAL programme groups reflecting differences in facilitator quality, community context, programme fidelity, and retention support that created unequal empowerment environments across groups delivering nominally the same programme curriculum. Income-generating skills completion was the dominant individual-level predictor of high empowerment (OR = 6.84, 95% CI: 3.12–14.99, $p < .001$), establishing that the practical, livelihood-relevant skills component of the FAL curriculum was the most powerful empowerment mechanism participants who completed this component were nearly seven times more likely to achieve high empowerment scores than those who did not, even when programme cycle depth, financial literacy completion, and other factors were held constant. This finding provided unambiguous evidence for the priority that the FAL curriculum review should give to income-generating skills content not as a peripheral add-on to the literacy and numeracy core but as an equally central component whose empowerment returns substantially exceeded those of the more traditional literacy-focused curriculum elements. Facilitator quality tied with income-generating skills completion as the joint dominant predictor at the institutional level (OR = 6.84, $p < .001$), directly confirming the Asiimwe et al. (2026) human-capacity-mediation principle in the adult literacy programme context: the quality of the human agent delivering the programme was as powerful a determinant of empowerment outcomes as the most impactful curriculum component, establishing facilitator quality as the pivotal institutional investment whose improvement would generate the largest system-wide empowerment gains across the entire FAL programme network. Programme retention support-the formal mechanisms through which programmes actively sustained participant attendance through childcare provision, meeting time flexibility, peer support structures, and facilitator follow-up of dropouts showed the second strongest institutional effect (OR = 5.41, $p < .001$), confirming the critical importance of addressing the retention challenge that the hierarchy-of-controls analysis had identified as the primary operational barrier to empowerment outcome attainment. Community male engagement (OR = 4.87, $p < .001$) provided the most important structural gender dynamics finding: programmes operating in communities with active male engagement through men's awareness meetings, community mobilisation activities that addressed male resistance to female programme participation, and husband/partner

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communication about programme benefits generated substantially higher female empowerment outcomes than those operating without such engagement, confirming that the intra-household power dynamics documented in the bivariate analysis required direct programmatic intervention rather than the expectation that women's literacy acquisition alone would spontaneously transform household gender relations.

5.0 Discussion

The findings of this study articulated a clear and evidence-grounded model of FAL programme effectiveness for women's socio-economic empowerment in Mazuba Sub-County. At the centre of this model was the complementarity of curriculum depth and facilitator quality two factors that functioned as joint and mutually reinforcing determinants of empowerment outcomes in ways that made neither sufficient alone. Participants who experienced high-quality facilitation of a deep, multi-cycle curriculum that integrated income-generating skills and financial literacy showed empowerment outcomes dramatically superior to those who received lower-quality facilitation of a more limited curriculum confirming that the FAL programme's empowerment potential was substantially greater than its current implementation was realising, and that the gap between potential and realised impact was primarily attributable to facilitator quality variation and curriculum depth limitations rather than to fundamental programme design failures.

The male partner supportiveness finding deserves particular emphasis because of its implications for programme strategy. The consistently strong association between male partner support and women's decision-making autonomy maintained across bivariate and multivariate analyses established that FAL's empowerment agenda could not be pursued through women-only programming alone without engaging the household gender dynamics that determined how literacy acquisition translated into actual changes in women's agency. FAL programmes that invested in male partner engagement activities community sensitisation, husband-wife joint sessions, men's discussion groups on gender equality were creating the enabling household environment within which women's literacy skills could be deployed in empowering ways, rather than simply adding cognitive capacities to women whose exercise of those capacities remained constrained by unchanged household power relations. This finding aligned with the broader feminist development literature's consistent identification of gender transformative programming which engaged men and household systems alongside women as generating more durable empowerment outcomes than women-only approaches.

6.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

This study had established that functional adult literacy programmes generated meaningful but insufficiently realised socio-economic empowerment outcomes for women in Mazuba Sub-County, and had identified the specific programmatic and structural factors through which this realisation gap could be closed. Five priority recommendations emerged. First, the FAL programme curriculum should be redesigned around a mandatory income-generating skills and financial literacy integration, elevating these components from optional additions to core curriculum requirements delivered in every programme cycle rather than only in enhanced programmes or where NGO partnerships provided

additional resources. Second, a FAL facilitator quality assurance system should be established at the Namutumba District Community Development Office, comprising rigorous facilitator selection criteria, a minimum 120-hour pre-service training requirement, monthly supervision visits with structured observation and feedback, and a performance-linked recognition and incentive system that rewarded retention outcomes and measured participant empowerment gains rather than merely attendance records. Third, active male partner engagement should be institutionalised as a standard component of all FAL programme groups in Mazuba, with dedicated activities to engage husbands, fathers, and community male leaders in understanding and supporting women's FAL participation, and with community dialogue sessions that addressed the specific cultural norms and household power dynamics that obstructed the translation of women's literacy into decision-making autonomy. Fourth, a post-literacy economic linkage programme should be established connecting FAL graduates to VSLA group formation, microfinance institution access, and market-based enterprise development support, creating the economic pathway from literacy acquisition to income generation that the regression identified as the most powerful empowerment mechanism. Fifth, the Ministry of Education and Sports' FAL programme monitoring system should be reformed to track empowerment outcomes such as income change, decision-making autonomy, savings group membership, civic participation alongside the attendance and completion indicators that currently dominated programme performance reporting, aligning measurement frameworks with the empowerment mission that justified FAL programme investment.

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