

FLN WHAT WORKS



GHANA
ALFA IMPACT REPORT



The Olinga Foundation
For Human Development



GHANA
EDUCATION
SERVICE



SWIFT



SCALABLE



SUSTAINABLE

Executive Summary

Region	Ayensuano District, Eastern Ghana
Intervention	Teacher training + regular coaching & mentoring + provision of ALFA English literacy toolkit, used ~1 hour/day
Assessment	ASER-style one-on-one reading tool Competency-based visual maths assessment

	Phase 1	Phase 2
Duration	May to Nov 2024 (55 working days)	Feb to July 2025 (55 working days)
Grades	P4 & P5, transitioned* to P5 & P6	P3-P5, transitioned to P4-P6
Schools	6 intervention & 3 non-intervention	6 intervention & 6 non-intervention
Students	244 intervention + 87 non-int.	360 intervention & 290 non-int.
Literacy gains	28pp (P4) and 34pp (P5)	34pp (P3), 22pp (P4) and 33pp (P5)
Effect sizes	0.30 (P4) & 0.31 (P5)	0.65 (P3), 0.9 (P4) and 0.25 (P5)

	Phase 1	Phase 2
May 2024	Online teacher training + baseline testing	Feb 2025 Baseline testing for next batch of 6 intervention + 6 non-intervention schools.
July 2024	35 implementation days complete, schools go on summer break	
Sep 2024	Schools resume, 20 more implementation days	Apr 2025 Implementation starts.
Oct 2024	Endline testing & analysis.	July 2025 Endline testing & analysis.

Research Methodology

Random Selection of Schools

Schools were randomly selected from a region, then further randomly divided between 6 intervention and 3 non-intervention schools.

Baseline Testing

A baseline test was conducted at both intervention and non-intervention schools. All children from

these schools' upper primary grades were tested using the ASER test tools.

Mid and Endline Testing

Midline testing was conducted after some 35 days. Endline testing was taken after another 20 days of implementation (after the start of a new academic year). Teacher and student surveys were also conducted.

*Unless otherwise specified, 'Grade 4' will mean 'children who began the program in Grade 4'.

Introduction & Context

Shockingly, **89% of 10-year-olds** in sub-Saharan Africa are unable to read with understanding (World Bank). According to UNESCO, nearly **80% of children** in Ghana do not acquire basic literacy and numeracy skills by the end of primary school. This indicates a substantial learning gap despite increased access to education. This learning gap hinders progress toward the **Sustainable Development Goals**, particularly in ensuring quality education for all.

The **Accelerating Learning for All (ALfA)** program, developed by **Dignity Education Vision International (DEVI)**, is an innovative initiative addressing this crisis. The **Olinga Foundation for Human Development**, in partnership with DEVI, piloted the ALfA program in Anum Apapam, Ghana, to evaluate its effectiveness in enhancing foundational literacy and numeracy skills among primary students.

ALfA focuses on fostering students' **reading, writing, and numeracy** abilities. The program provides specialized teacher training, comprehensive guides, and

tailored student materials. The research implementation sought to assess its feasibility for broader deployment.

The program was integrated into daily school schedules, with dedicated instructional time. A comparative endline survey assessed literacy outcomes, including intervention vs non-intervention schools. The impressive results will guide future scaling efforts, **improving literacy education in Ghana and beyond.**



**Ayensuano District,
Eastern Ghana**

Assessment Design

The one-on-one ASER tool classifies students' reading abilities into 6 levels.

Level 1: Initial Level

Reads fewer than 4 out of 5 letters, e.g. *a, d, b, f, h*

Level 2: Letter Recognition

Recognizes at least 4 out of 5 letters, e.g. *c, m, n, t, w*

Level 3: Word Recognition

Reads at least 4 out of 5 words: e.g. *cat, dog, hat, sit, run*

Level 4: Paragraph Recognition

Reads a paragraph fluently – Maximum 1 mistake: e.g. *The boy plays with his ball. He runs to the tree.*

Level 5: Story Recognition

Reads a story – Maximum 2 mistakes, e.g. *Rita has a dog. The dog's name is Max. Max likes to play.*

Level 6: Reading Comprehension

Answers 4 out of 5 comprehension questions accurately about the story

Implementation Process

Training

This was followed by a one-day online teacher training. Master trainers were also trained, who then conducted follow up sessions with teachers.

Implementation

Teachers used the ALfA English books for about 1 hour per day. Children worked in pairs, taking turns to read and ask each other questions.

Monitoring & Coaching

The Olinga Foundation team and Ghana Education Service Officers monitored & coached the teachers regularly.



Participating Schools Phase 1

School	Total Teachers	Total Students	Students participating		
			Male	Female	Total
Sowatey D/A KG & Primary	8	290	26	41	67
Anum Apapam Presby A	5	268	16	20	36
Kuano Islamic Primary/KG	18	138	14	16	30
Anum Apapam Presby B	15	401	25	20	45
Kofi Pare Presby Primary/KG	9	204	21	21	42
Anum Apapam R/C Primary	13	217	10	14	24
Total Intervention	68	1,518	112	132	244
Mfranor Presby Primary	8	161	20	14	34
Abobiri D/A	5	113	12	10	22
Kuano D/A Basic	13	247	16	15	31
Total Non-Intervention	26	521	48	39	87

Participating Schools Phase 2

School	Female	Male	Total
Amanase Presby Primary 'A'	33	28	61
Amanase Presby Primary 'B'	33	29	62
Asuboi Methodist Primary	30	30	60
Kyekyewere Presby Primary	32	28	60
Teacher Mante Presby Primary 'A'	33	28	61
Teacher Mante Presby Primary 'B'	33	23	56
Total intervention	194	166	360
Budu D/A Basic School	27	24	51
Govinakrom D/A Basic School	30	30	60
Kwadwo Fosu D/A	13	10	23
Mankrong D/A Basic school	22	31	53
Paulkrom A.M.E Zion	33	28	61
Yakoko Presby Basic School	27	24	51
Total Non-intervention	152	147	299

Phase 1 Results

Grade 4

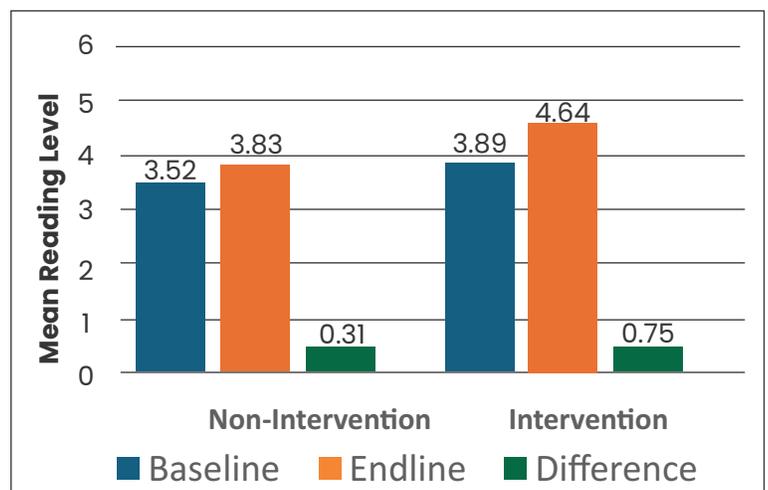
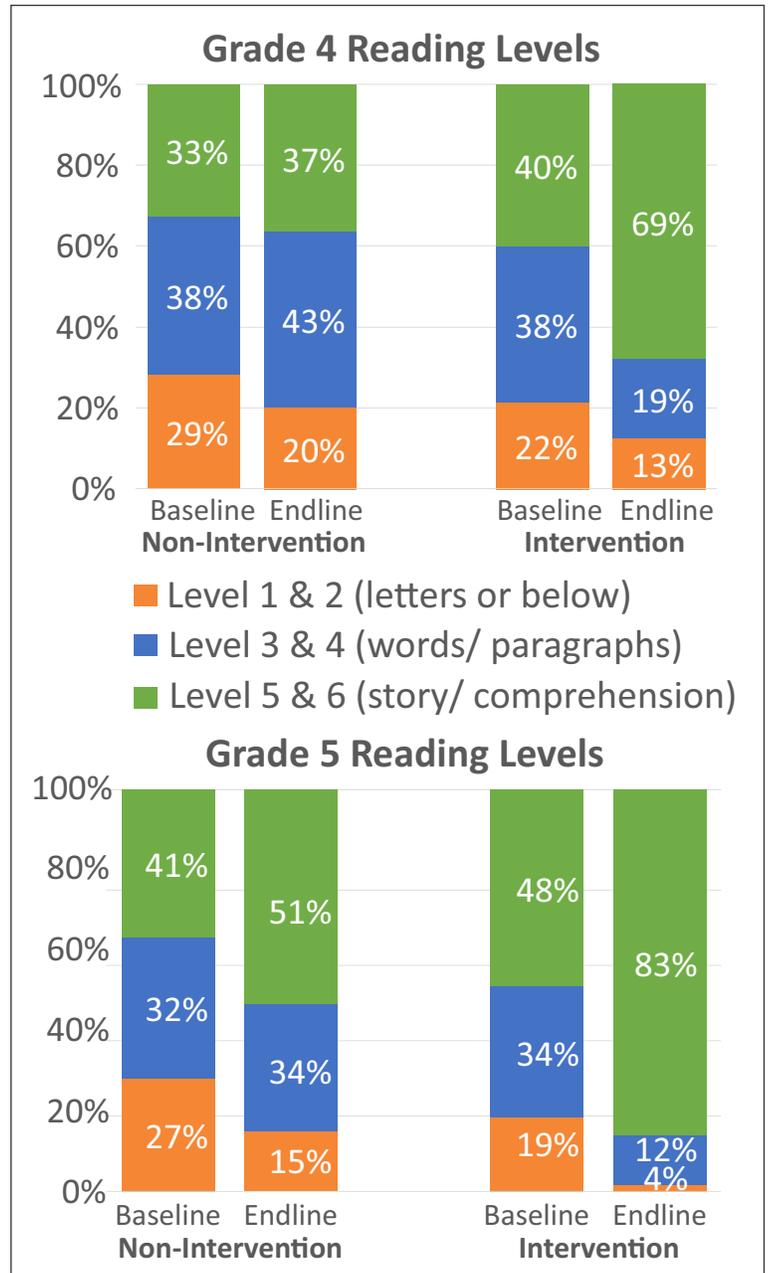
- Stark reduction in Lower Reading Levels (L1 - L4) from 60% to 32%. In contrast, in the non-intervention group, this reduced only from 67% to 63%.
- Effect size of 0.30**

Grade 5

- Dramatic reduction in Lower Reading Levels among intervention group, only modest reduction in non-intervention
- The proportion of learners reading at the highest level (L6) more than doubled from 21% to 47%.
- Effect size of 0.31**

Overall comparison

- Mean reading levels rose 0.75 levels in the schools implementing ALfA, about 2.5x greater than the rise in the non-intervention group (0.31 levels).
 - The gain was similar for both boys and girls.
- * Figures in graphs may not sum to 100% due to rounding



Phase 1 Results

In **Grade 4**, the proportion of children literate increased:

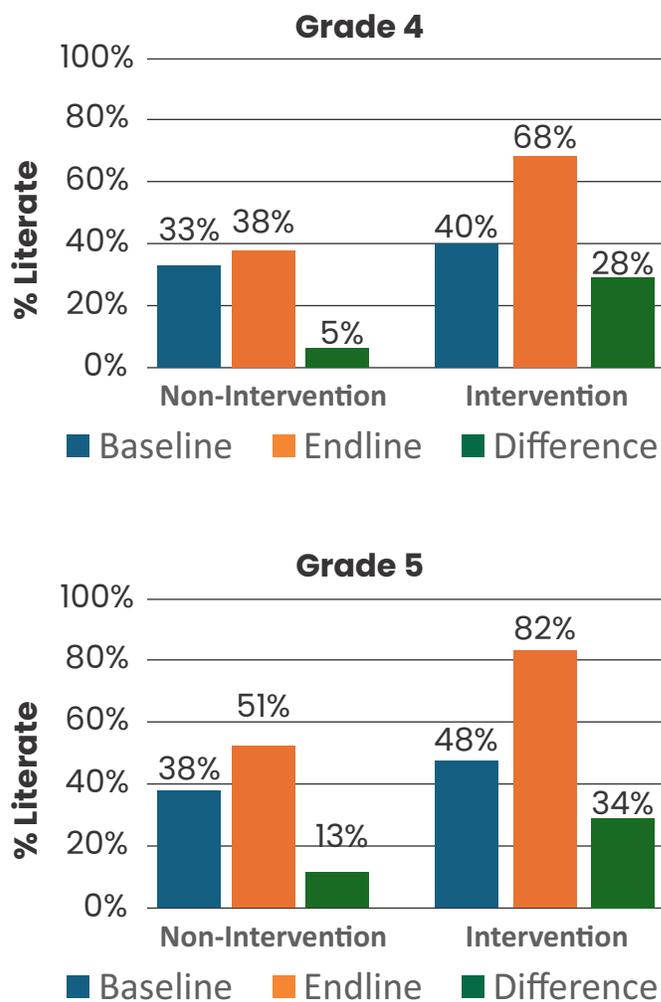
- 5 percentage points in non-intervention group (33% to 38%)
- **28 percentage points** in intervention group (40% to 68%)
- This represents **5x greater** improvement in ALfA schools.

In **Grade 5**, the proportion of children literate increased:

- 13 percentage points in non-intervention group (38% to 51%)
- **34 percentage points** in intervention group (48% to 82%)
- This represents **3x greater** improvement in ALfA schools.

* 'Literate' is defined as level 5 (paragraph) or 6 paragraph (story comprehension) of ASER scale.

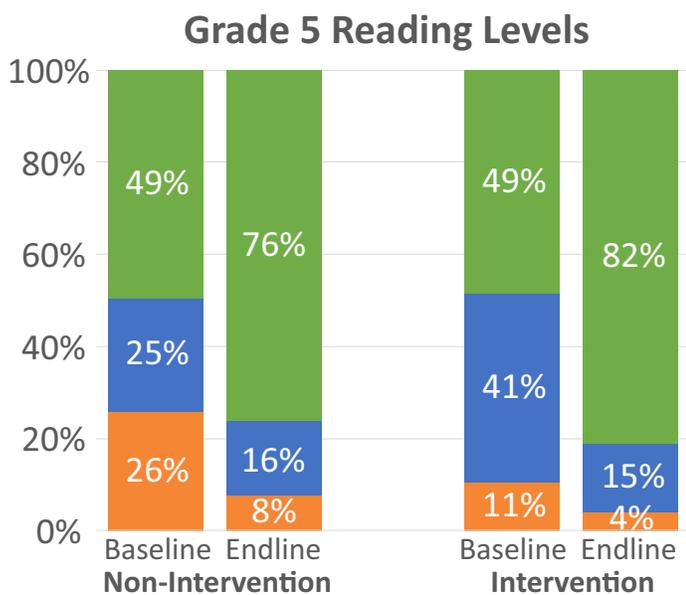
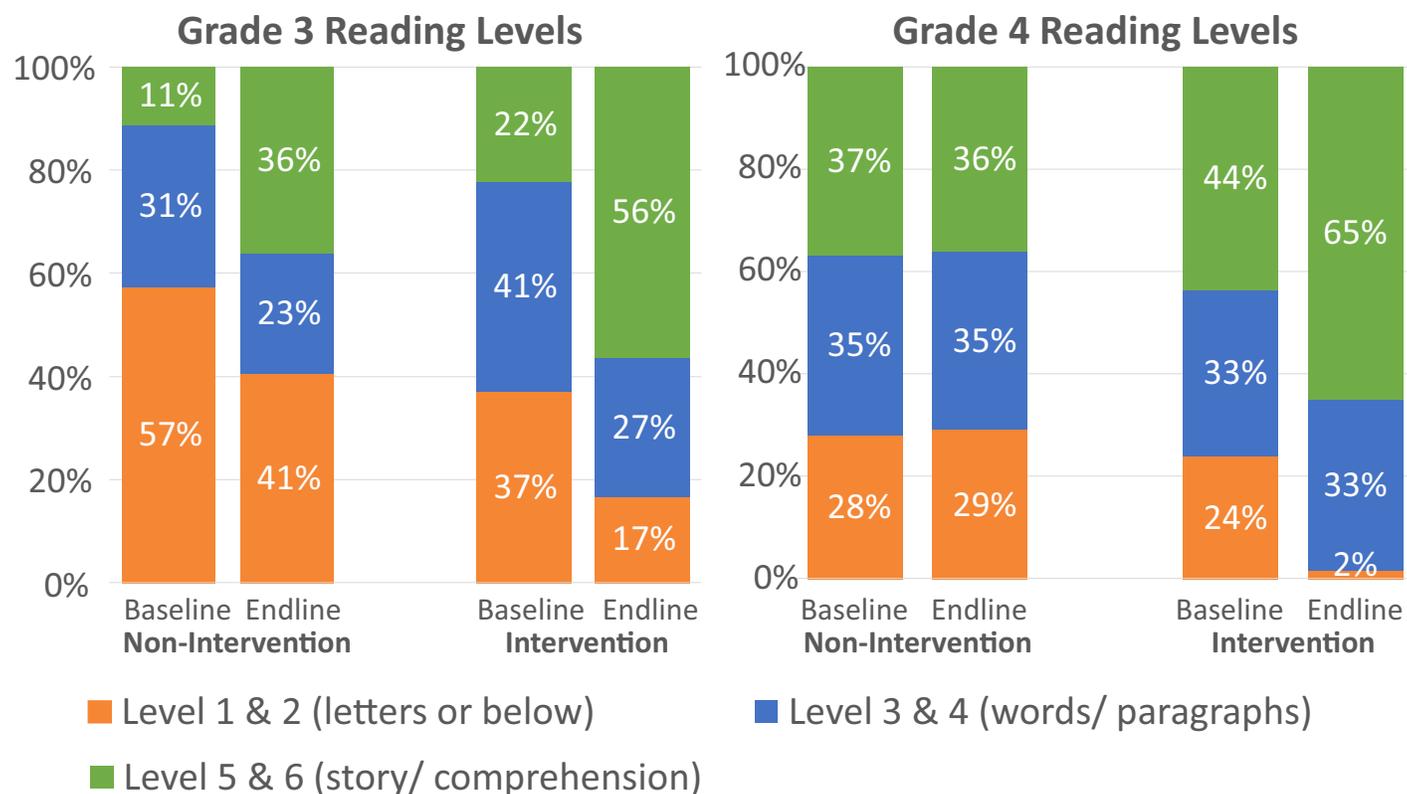
Proportion of Students Literate



Phase 2 Results: Literacy

In February to June 2025, the program was expanded to 6 more schools (+ 6 as non-intervention) in the same region of Ayensuano District, Eastern Ghana. The program was similar to Phase 1, except this time numeracy was also included. Further, the program covered P3 as well as P4 & P5 (during the program, these children progressed up one year to P4, 5 & 6 respectively).

As with Phase 1, strong improvements in reading were observed.



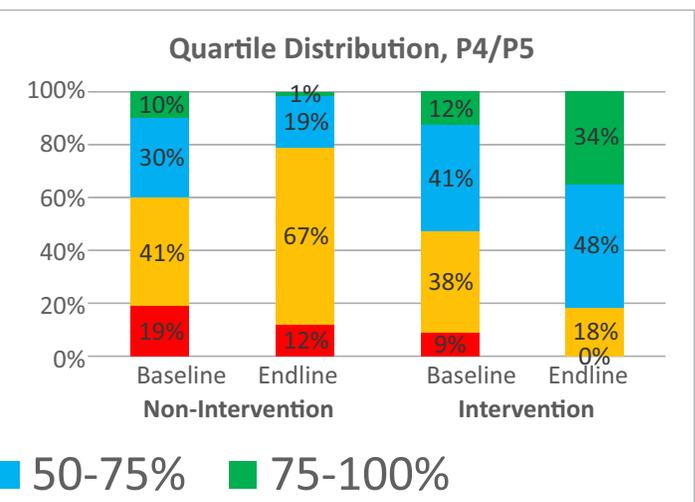
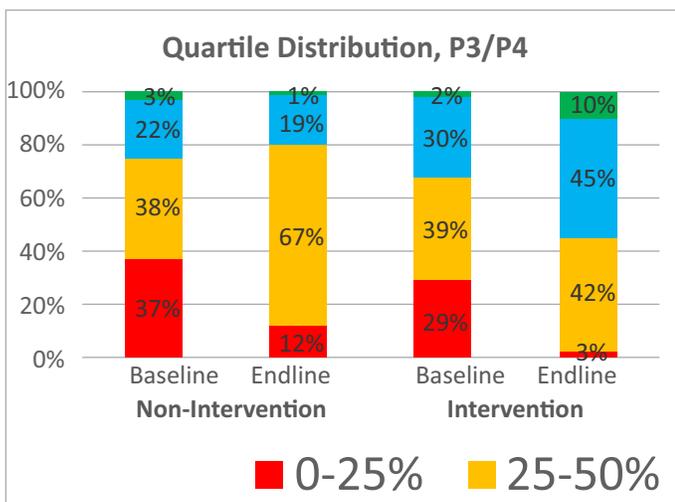
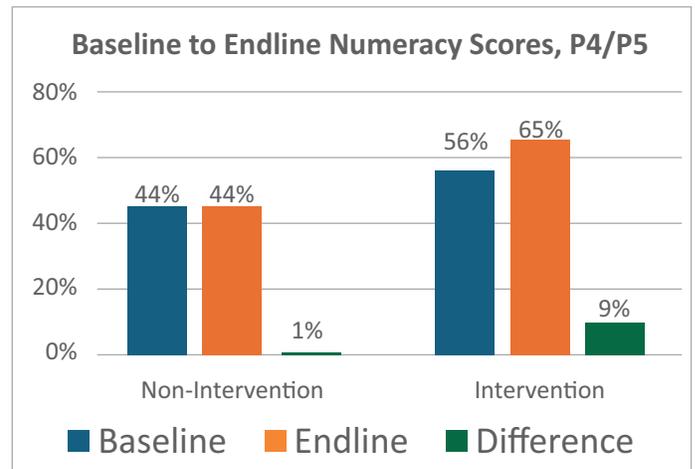
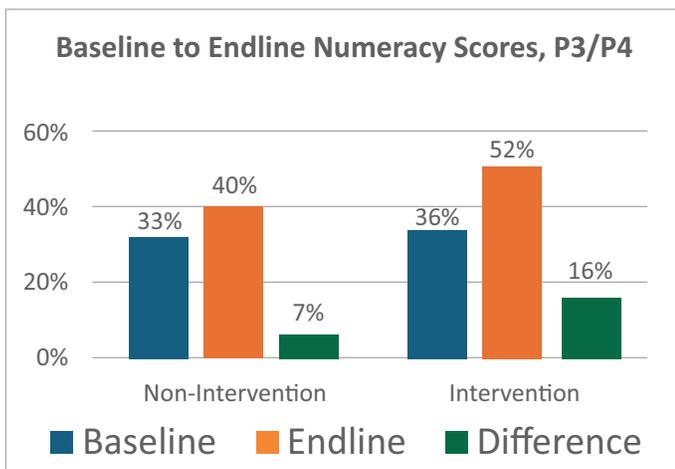
Highlights

- **Effect sizes were impressive, at 0.65 (Grade 3), 0.90 (Grade 4), and 0.25 (Grade 5).**
- Mean reading levels rose 0.99 levels in the schools implementing ALfA: about 2.5x greater than the rise in the non-intervention group (0.41 levels).
- The proportion of students reading at Level 1 & 2 dropped drastically in the schools implementing ALfA, indicating big learning gains for those most at risk of falling behind.

Phase 2 Results: Numeracy

Highlights

- The intervention had an effect size of **0.46** for Primary 3/4 and **0.4** for Primary 4/5.
- The intervention group's learning gains were on average **3x greater** than the schools not using ALfA
- The gains were seen across all parts of the distribution in schools using ALfA. For instance, proportion of students scoring less than 25% on the test plummeted from 29% to 3% in P3/4, and 9% to 0% in P4/5.
- At the other end of the distribution, proportion of students scoring greater than 75% grew from 2% to 10% in P3/4 and 12% to 34% in P4/5.



District Director Statement

“ With the introduction of the ALFA programme in selected schools, marked improvements have been recorded in learners' performance, especially in reading ability. I wish therefore to recommend that the ALfA intervention which runs for about fifty-five (55) days **should be expanded to cover all schools in the district and if possible, other districts and municipals in the Eastern region.** I hope by so doing, more learners especially at the Primary school level will improve in literacy and numeracy. ”

Alexander N. Amany (Rev), Director of Education, Ayensuano District, Ghana Education Services



Click/Scan QR
to read the
Director's full letter



Click/Scan QR
for a teacher
testimony video

Teacher Testimonies

“ The joy on my students' faces when they solve problems, they once thought were impossible is priceless. Over 70% of students have responded positively to the ALFA program. They are always regular in class and well enthused to study the program. Enthusiasm for learning has improved. ALfA has brought joy back into the classroom. ”

Madam Levina Martey, Teacher

“ I used to think teaching was about giving information... Now, I see it's about building understanding in learning as a group and seeking help from their colleagues when they face difficulty. My students learn in peer sharing, so they feel conformable asking each other for help. They are learning faster and with more enthusiasm than ever before. ”

Madam Yvonne Addai, Teacher

“ I've watched students who couldn't write their names become leaders in group work. Lively participation in lessons and eagerness to attend ALFA lessons and the use of the pictures to demonstrate has made teaching livelier and more interactive amongst the teachers. These skills of teaching the ALfA methodology have given me the understanding to make this make this possible. ”

Mr. Akumlise Francis, Teacher

“ ALfA is reshaping how we see education in rural settings. Teachers are more effective, and students are thriving academically and socially. During my monitoring at Sowatey Primary School, there has been a great change in the slow learners' behaviour. They are able to approach their colleagues and seek help. ”

**Mr. Gideon Adu Adjei,
SISO, GES Ayensuano
(District Education Officer)**

Student Testimonies



I feel more confidence in my studies now because now when my friends need help in reading I can assist them. The program has also helped me to improve on my writing skills. I can now write very well. The Olinga program has helped me think about my future in a different way and as result I want to become a doctor.

Asamoah*, age 12, Anum Apapam School

The Olinga program has changed my learning experience because I can now read with confidence and fluency. I also feel more confident in my studies; for example, I can now speak, read, and understand English. The Olinga program has transformed our school and given us the confidence to read. Even the kindergarten pupils can now read confidently. I want to become a nurse.

Serwaa, age 14, Amenhyia M/A Basic



The Olinga method has helped me learn how to read and spell. My favorite storybook is *Journey to the Rivers*. I now have confidence in reading. The Olinga program also helps me at home because when someone sends a letter to my mother, I read it and explain it to her. I want to become a nurse in the future.

Adwoa, age 12, Tsetekasum Basic

At first, I didn't know how to read well, but after joining the Olinga Reading Club, I can now read much better. I can also understand words I didn't understand before. I feel more confident in my studies now, and I don't feel shy when reading in front of a crowd. I am also proud of myself because, as a result of the Olinga Reading Club, I now participate in any reading competition in my school. I want to become a pilot in the future.

Mensah, age 15, Tsetekasum Basic



* All names changed for privacy.



Click/Scan QR for a student testimony video

Implementational Challenges

Teachers faced multiple challenges during the ALfA program implementation, including student behavior issues, resource shortages, and systemic constraints.

Student-Related Challenges

Absenteeism was common, especially on market days, affecting student participation.

Parental support was lacking, leading to low student engagement and attendance.

Resource Constraints

Overcrowding at desks disrupted learning, with three students sharing desks meant for two.

Teaching materials were sometimes insufficient. Workbooks were inadequate, limiting students' ability to practice.

Systemic & Scheduling Issues

Multiple concurrent programs like Differentiated Learning (DL) and Jolly Phonics placed high demands on teachers.

Sporting and cultural events disrupted lesson schedules.

Training & Methodology

Teachers struggled to transition from traditional methods to ALfA's approach. Overcrowded classrooms increased workloads, making implementation difficult.

Recommendations

Teacher Motivation – Use WhatsApp groups and peer support to encourage participation.

Streamline Pedagogy – Avoid simultaneous use of alternative programs.

Workshops & Training – Expand training & involve lower primary classes.

Material Adaptation – Align books with Ghanaian standards.

District Expansion – Scale the program across a broader geography.

Addressing these challenges will enhance ALfA's effectiveness and sustainability in improving foundational literacy and numeracy.

Future Directions

- ALfA methodology proved highly effective, for a minimal cost
- Olinga Foundation and DEVI are now moving to implement ALfA in 20 more schools of Ayensuano District.
- The intervention is being broadened to include students' first language (Twi) and numeracy.
- ALfA may prove a major asset in Ghana's struggle to close foundational learning gaps.
- Ultimately, ALfA's integration with existing government curricula could prove highly cost-effective and scalable.
- ALfA is also available for use in other languages and contexts, through the rapid results initiative.

Conclusion

The Accelerating Learning for All (ALfA) Pedagogy has significantly improved literacy outcomes and transformed teaching methodologies in intervention schools.

Teacher Transformation – ALfA enhanced instruction by shifting from traditional rote learning to dynamic, student-centered methods, increasing teacher effectiveness and confidence.

Improved Literacy – 68% of students in intervention schools reached advanced literacy levels, compared to 38% in non-intervention schools.

Student Engagement – Learners showed greater enthusiasm, self-directed study habits, and increased participation.

Structured Learning Approach – ALfA's progression from letter

recognition to advanced literacy ensured consistent improvement.

Community Involvement – Strong parental and community engagement fostered a supportive learning environment.

With government and Olinga Foundation support, ALfA is ready for **nationwide scale-up**, focusing on underserved rural districts to enhance literacy and education equity in Ghana.

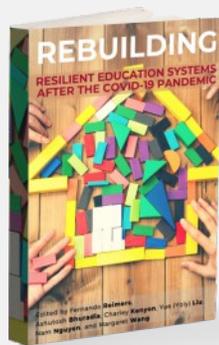
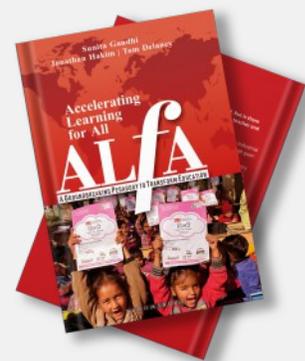
Annex 1 Learn More



Read **Dr Gandhi's first book**, Disruptive Literacy (Bloomsbury, 2022)



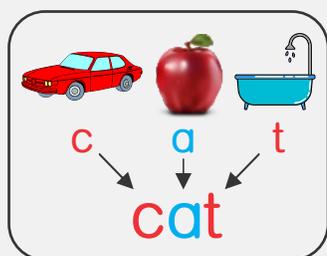
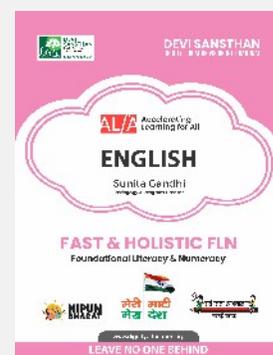
Read **Dr Gandhi's latest book**, Accelerating Learning for All. (Bloomsbury, 2024)



Explore the evidence on ALFA's efficacy presented in Harvard professor's book



Check out the **ALFA materials**, available in 30+ Indian and International languages.



Discover ALFA's **innovative**, known-to-unknown **paired learning** pedagogy.



Hear endorsements by high-level **policymakers**.



Join us at the **Global Learning Lab**, February 2026 – a conference of pedagogues and policymakers.



Get inspired & empowered by **classroom implementation and training videos**.



Annex 2 ALfA Pedagogy

Accelerating Learning for All (ALfA) is a **groundbreaking structured pedagogy**, designed to make a visible impact on foundational literacy and numeracy skills in **as little as 45 days**. What makes ALfA so effective? It is the combination of learning materials, pedagogy, curriculum and teacher training.



Click/Scan QR
for FAQs on ALfA

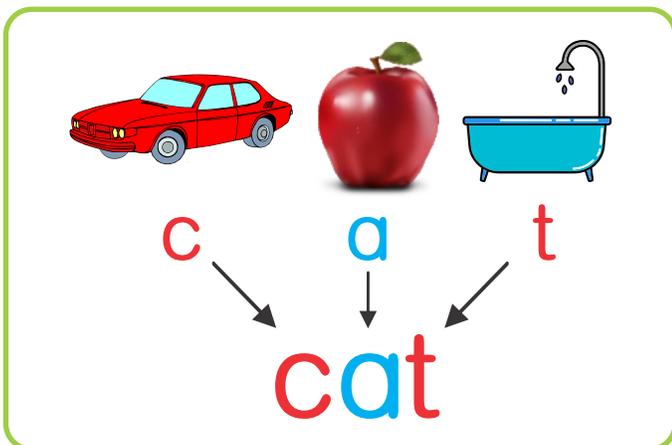
PAIRED LEARNING

The transaction of learning is not from teacher to student, but rather between two children.



CURRICULUM

Books are simple, modular, and highly visual, enabling children to learn independently.



KNOWN TO UNKNOWN

Children work from known to unknown: rather than 'a for apple', they derive the first sound from a picture. In numeracy, they use concrete objects.

HOLISTIC EDUCATION

ALfA doesn't just develop children's academic abilities; it fosters 21st century skills including creativity, critical thinking and collaboration.

Annex 3 Rapid Results Initiative

The Rapid Results Initiative (RRI) strives to showcase swift, visible learning progress in a research design, that leads to scale-up. The RRI progresses through three stages—Explore, Expand, Embed.



Click/Scan QR
for a detailed
roadmap



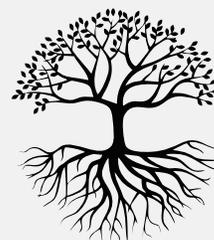
Stage 1 Explore

Research implementation in a few schools, randomly allocated to treatment and control.



Stage 2 Expand

Scale the implementation to more schools covering one or more low-performing districts.



Stage 3 Embed

Integrate system-wide as a supplement or in the government textbooks & teacher training systems.

Stage 1 Explore **Research Implementation**



School Selection

Random selection and assignment of intervention and non-intervention schools.



Implementation

Teacher training, followed by structured daily lessons in foundational literacy and numeracy.



Baseline Assessments

Third-party-validated tests to measure initial skill levels.



Endline Assessments

Measure progress using post-tests and real-time analytics via Pragati app.

Stage 2 Expand **Scale Up**

Objective & Scope Broaden the initiative to multiple clusters or districts (hundreds of schools).

Cost-sharing DEVI Sansthan is offering free online training and soft copies of learning materials and assessments. The implementation partner should arrange bulk printing, and if venue/travel if physical training is required.

Research Design Comparison of block- or district- level data with another geography not implementing ALfA.

Stage 3 Embed **Systemic Integration**

Objective & Scope Embed ALfA pedagogy for systemic integration and long-term transformation across a whole region or state (thousands of schools).

Cost-sharing DEVI Sansthan will continue offering free knowledge partnership, with the implementation partner arranging bulk printing.

Research Design State- or national- level test results.

Annex 4 Dignity Education

Vision & Mission

Dignity Education Vision International (DEVI Sansthan), is a non-profit organization registered in India and the USA but having a global reach. We spearhead educational transformation with a special focus on foundational literacy & numeracy (FLN). Our revolutionary approach embeds global citizenship skills and climate change education. With the vision of universal literacy, we use research-backed, swift, scalable, and replicable techniques and methodologies to effect lasting change.

Catalytic role

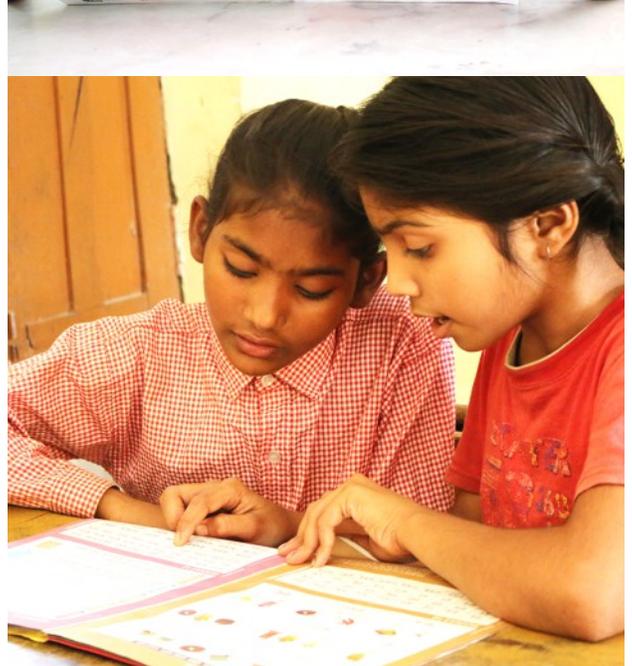
Dignity Education plays the role of a catalyst, partnering with governments and NGOs to empower them to implement evidence-based literacy programs. We train teachers (offline & online) and provide learning materials and Ed-Tech.

Working at scale

Since its 2022 launch, our flagship program Accelerating Learning for All has grown to being implemented in over 10,000 schools in India, with agreements in place for 35,000 across three states.

ALfA around the world

DEVI works with diverse NGO partners around the world, including Olinga Foundation (Ghana), Literacy Chicago (USA), ArcaBeta (Peru), All Africa Students Union, the Forum for African Women Educationists, and more.



Annex 5 Olinga Foundation

The **Olinga Foundation for Human Development** is a nongovernmental organization which has been working to improve the literacy and moral leadership practices among teachers at primary level for the last 25 years in Ghana. The Foundation has actively been engaged in the eradication of illiteracy in eight of the most deprived districts in the Western and Eastern regions of Ghana.

The approach focuses on equipping the teachers both professionally with the attitudes, skills and behaviours to assist primary school children “break through to literacy” in the shortest possible time. The literacy approach targets children at the primary level who have not been able to achieve basic literacy attainment (reading and

writing to competency level); and assists teachers integrate a phonic based programme into the ongoing school curriculum through well tested methods and TLMs.

The Olinga Foundation's books and methodology are approved by the **Ghana Education Services (GES)** headquarters and has been recommended to all districts across the country who are struggling to bring about basic literacy skills to their primary students. The Olinga Foundation has received several awards for its work including the prestigious All Children Reading Award by USAID and the Ghana Philanthropy award for the Promotion of Literacy and Empowerment across rural deprived areas.



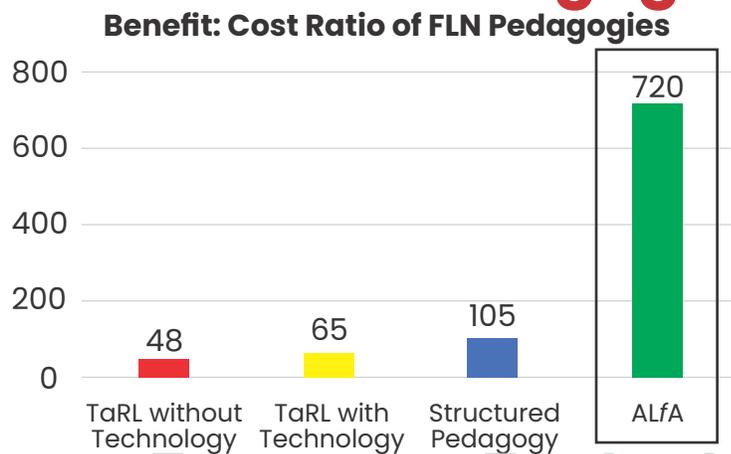
Annex 6 Comparison with Other Pedagogies

“One of the challenges facing many teachers is the extreme diversity of learning levels. Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) solves this problem by grouping students by ability, whereas ALfA transforms the mixed learning levels from a challenge to a strength through paired learning.

While ALfA is newer and still emerging compared to established programs such as TaRL and Structured Pedagogy, its ability to deliver swift learning gains positions it as a promising strategy for achieving universal literacy and numeracy.

- **Aïcha Bah Diallo**

Former Minister of Education, Guinea



Source: Copenhagen Consensus, 2023. Halftime to SDGs Best Investment Paper: Education.

Source: Weighted average from implementations. \$4 per child, effect size of 0.48 (HGSE and others).

Table: Comparison of popular, evidence-based FLN pedagogies

Feature	Structured Pedagogy	TaRL	ALfA
Core Approach	Standardized lesson plans and scripted teaching.	Grouping students by ability level and targeting instruction accordingly.	A process-led structure that scaffolds learning through paired activities.
Holistic & Social Development	Focused primarily on academic content delivery rather than holistic development.	Ability-based grouping can unintentionally lead to a fixed mindset.	Develops 21st-century skills such as collaboration, citizenship, equity & inclusion through random paired learning.
Speed & Efficacy	Effect Size: 0.13 (Generally 3-year implementations)	Effect Size: 0.15 (50 days, combination of studies 2005–2014)	Effect Size: 0.52 (India, Maldives: 45 days, 2022–24)
Cost	\$8 per child Detailed scripting and material requirements.	\$20–\$27 per child Resources vary by implementation. More significant training required.	\$4 per child Leverages local resources and requires minimal training time.

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for more details & further references



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