

# GHANA

## Rapid Results Initiative

**Triple the learning gain** compared to control  
Significant literacy improvement in **just 55 days**



GHANA  
EDUCATION  
SERVICE



The Olinga Foundation  
For Human Development



**DIGNITY**  
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VISION INTERNATIONAL

**DEVI Sansthan**

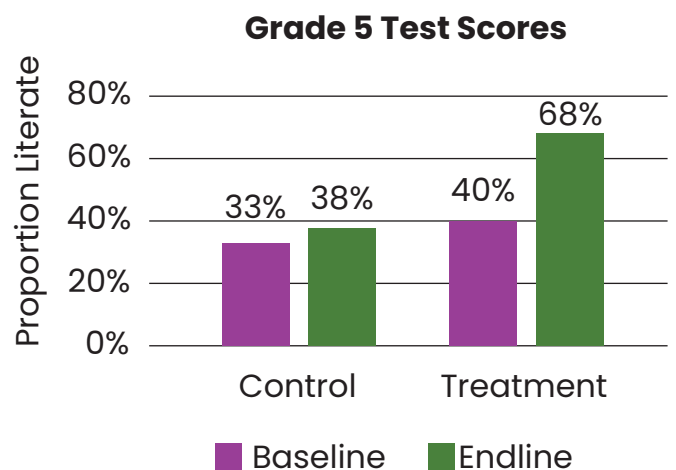
# Executive Summary

<b>Region</b>	Ayensuano District, Eastern Ghana
<b>Grades</b>	(P4 & P5, transitioned to P5 & P6 due to timing)
<b>Duration</b>	May to November 2024 (55 working days)
<b>Schools</b>	6 treatment & 3 control
<b>Students</b>	113 (P5) + 131 (P6) treatment 40 (P5) + 47 (P6) control
<b>Intervention</b>	Teacher training + regular coaching & mentoring + provision of ALfA English literacy toolkit, used ~1 hour/day
<b>Assessment</b>	ASER-style one-on-one reading tool

## Summary of Results

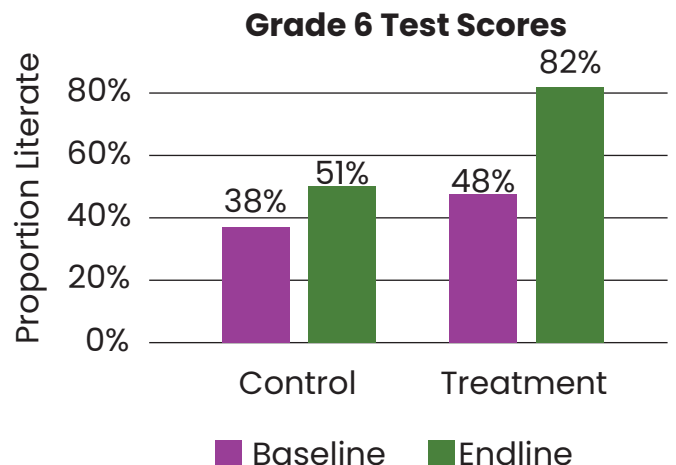
In **Primary 5**, the proportion of children reading at advanced level (paragraph & story comprehension) increased:

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



In **Primary 6**, the proportion of children reading at advanced level (paragraph & story comprehension) increased:

- 11 percentage points in control group (38% to 51%)
- **34 percentage points** in treatment group (40% to 68%)
- This represents **3x greater** improvement in ALfA schools.



# Introduction & Context

The global learning crisis remains a significant challenge, with over **70% of 10-year-olds** in low- and middle-income countries unable to read or understand a simple text, rising to 89% in sub-Saharan Africa. 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. It involved 12 teachers, six headteachers, and 450 students across six schools. A **one-day training** helped teachers learn the ALfA pedagogy. Ongoing support, mentoring, and classroom observations ensured effective implementation. A comparative endline survey assessed literacy outcomes, including control groups from non-program schools. The impressive results will guide future scaling efforts, **improving literacy education in Ghana and beyond.**



**Ayensuano District,  
Eastern Ghana**

# Implementation Process

## Random Selection of Schools

Schools were randomly selected from a region, then further randomly divided between 6 treatment and 3 control schools.

## Baseline Testing

A baseline test was conducted at both treatment and control schools. As the size was small, all children from these schools' upper primary grades were tested using the ASER test tools.

## 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.

## 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.

# Participating Schools

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
<b>Total Treatment</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>1,518</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>244</b>
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
<b>Total Control</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>521</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>87</b>

# ALfA Pedagogy

Accelerating Learning for All (ALfA) is a groundbreaking structured pedagogy, designed to enable children to gain 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.

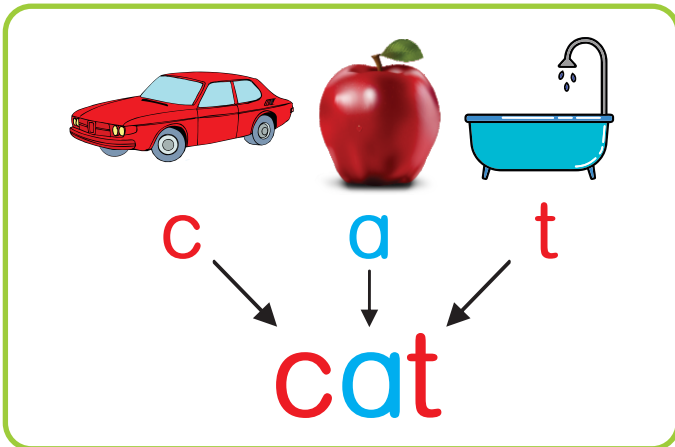
## PAIRED LEARNING

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.

# Assessment Tool

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

## L1: Initial Level

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

## L2: Letter Recognition

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

## L3: Word Recognition

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

## L4: Paragraph Recognition

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

## L5: Story Recognition

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

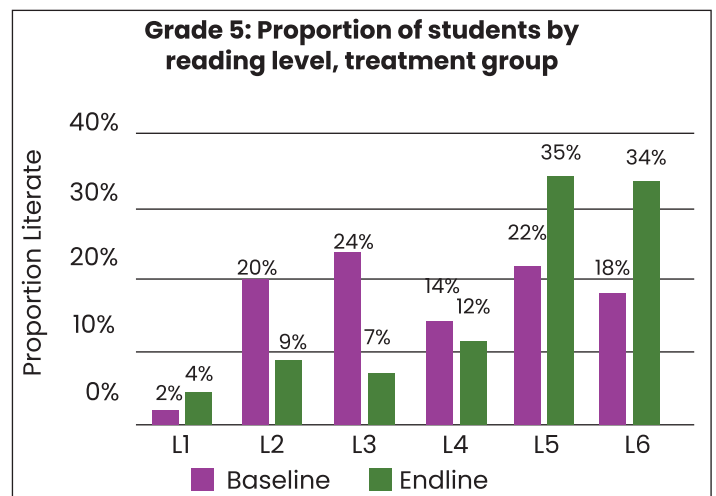
## L6: Reading Comprehension

Answers 4 out of 5 comprehension questions accurately about the story

# Quantitative Results

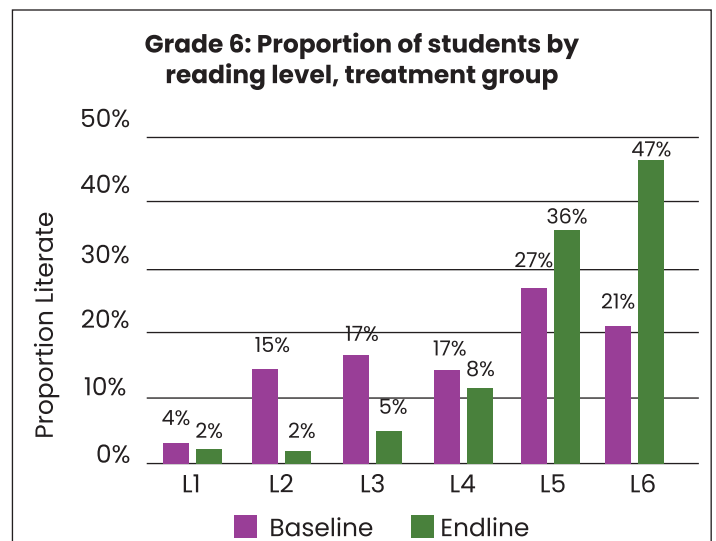
## Grade 5

- Stark reduction in Lower Reading Levels (L1, L2, and L3) from 46% to 20%.
- The proportion of learners reading at the highest level (L6) almost doubled from 18% to 34%.



## Grade 6

- Dramatic reduction in Lower Reading Levels (L1, L2, and L3).
- The proportion of learners reading at the highest level (L6) more than doubled from 21% to 47%.



# Teacher & Official 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)**

“ 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)**

**District Director of Education, Ayensuano**



**Click/Scan QR**  
for a teacher  
testimony video



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

# Student Testimonies

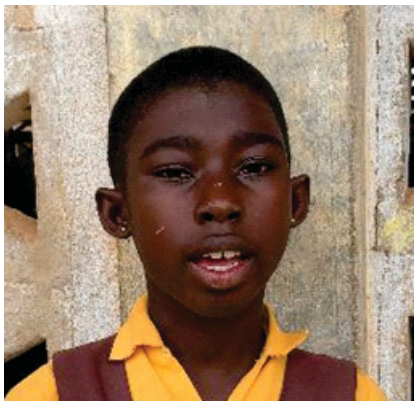


I feel more confidence in my studies now because now when my friends need help in reading I can assist them. The program has also helped me to improve on my writing skills. I can now write very well. The Olinga program has helped me think about my future in a different way and as result I want to become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

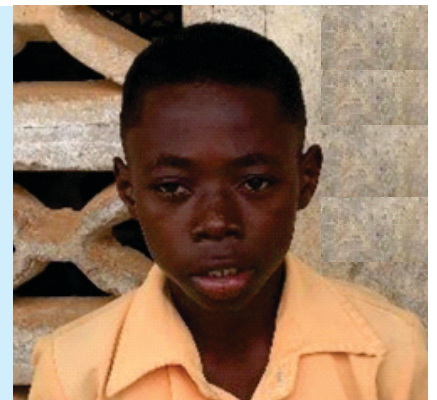


The Olinga method has helped me learn how to read and spell. My favorite storybook is *Journey to the Rivers*. I now have confidence in reading. The Olinga program also helps me at home because when someone sends a letter to my mother, I read it and explain it to her. I want to become a nurse in the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

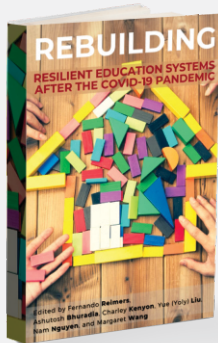
# Learn More



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



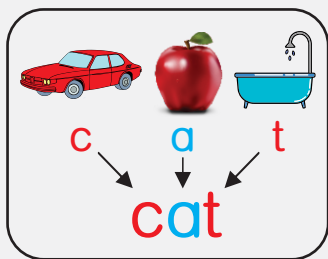
Read **Dr Gandhi's latest book**,  
Accelerating Learning  
for All. (Bloomsbury, 2024)



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



Check out the **AlFA materials**, available in  
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Discover AlFA's  
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to-unknown **paired  
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# 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.



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