

An Initiative Of



Global Learning Lab 2026

Fast-Forward FLN: From Global Research to Systemic Transformation

12-14 February 2026 | Lucknow, India

Concept Note

The global learning crisis is a critical 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.¹ Foundational learning gaps stall progress toward Sustainable Development Goals, especially Quality Education for All. Literacy and numeracy are essential for academic success, equity, inclusion, and poverty reduction, highlighting the urgent need for effective approaches like ALfA (Accelerating Learning for All).

The Global Learning Lab 2026, a three-day conference, brings together education leaders, policymakers, NGOs, researchers, and funders to share insights, scale and embed proven solutions to the learning crisis. The event features pre-conference global research and Rapid Results Initiatives (RRIs), that deliver measurable FLN improvements in weeks.² This actionable evidence will guide system-wide adoption of innovative FLN strategies to accelerate quality education for all.

Hosted by The World's
Largest School



1. World Bank, 2022. State of Global Learning Poverty, 2022 Update. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/education/publication/state-of-global-learning-poverty>
2. DEVI, 2024. Research Report: Making India Literate <https://dignityeducation.org/links/images/making-india-literate-report-2024.pdf>

Conference Objectives

Spotlight Robust Global Research

Gain insights into future-ready, scalable, and sustainable FLN solutions, based on research and results from RRI's worldwide.

Actionable Strategies

Take home tools and frameworks to implement high-impact, low-cost FLN programs; and access materials for immediate use.

Global Collaborations

Build networks and find partners to support scaling and impact efforts and establish collaborations to sustain impact.

Scalable Frameworks

Develop actionable strategies for integrating proven solutions like ALfA into national education systems.

Bringing Together



Education Ministers & Policymakers
Sharing insights on scaling foundational learning at national levels.



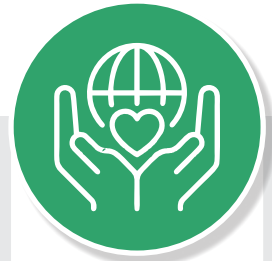
International Organizations
Bringing global insights and shaping global educational priorities.



Researchers & Practitioners
Presenting evidence-based approaches and innovations.



NGO & Community Leaders
Highlighting grassroots success stories & collaborative strategies.



Corporate and Philanthropic Partners
Commitments to global contributions and partnerships to boost FLN.



Conference Themes

THEME 1 Next Strategies for Literacy Mastery

- a) Charting a Future Roadmap for Education
- b) School-Based Rapid Results Initiatives
- c) Community-Driven Rapid Results Innovations
- d) Government-Led Rapid Results Initiatives
- e) Best Practices Grounded in Research and Evidence
- f) Embedding 21st Century Skills, Climate Education and Social-Emotional Learning
- g) Leveraging Education Technology and AI
- h) Gamification and Interactive Learning
- i) Culturally Responsive Pedagogies

THEME 2 Global & Local Perspectives on Literacy

- a) Literacy and Numeracy in the Global South
- b) Literacy and Numeracy in the Global North
- c) Promoting Mother Tongue Literacy
- d) Indigenous Knowledge Systems
- e) Advancing Equity and Inclusion in Education

THEME 3 Policy Leadership for Driving Systemic Change

- a) From Research to Impact: Scaling Proven Educational Innovations
- b) Embedding Accelerated Learning Approaches in Education Systems
- c) Transforming Teacher Education and Professional Development
- d) Leadership for Educational Change: Global Success Stories
- e) Shifting from Gatekeeping to Enabling Policy Frameworks
- f) Rethinking the Role of International Development Organizations
- g) Reforming Accountability Systems
- h) Cross-Border Policy Collaborations
- i) Public-Private Partnerships

THEME 4 Adversity to Opportunity: Challenges & Solutions

- a) Education for Refugees and Conflict-Affected Regions
- b) Adult Literacy Innovations: Building Foundational Skills Across Generations
- c) Literacy: Challenges and Solutions
- d) Numeracy: Challenges and Solutions
- e) Supporting Learners with Disabilities
- f) Non-Traditional Learning Spaces

THEME 5 Fast-Tracking SDG4: Alliances for Global Impact

- a) Bringing the World Together in a Time-Bound Mission
- b) Foundational Skills: A Lift-All for the Sustainable Development Goals
- c) Meeting SDG4 Ahead of Time
- d) Funding and Supporting FLN Research, Scaling and Embedding
- e) Monitoring and Evaluation for SDG4
- f) Regional Education Coalitions
- g) Cross-Sector Advocacy & Partnerships

Why Lucknow? Why DEVI? Why CMS?



Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh (India's most populous state) is the birthplace of ALfA—Accelerating Learning for All—developed through two decades of research and extensive fieldwork in slums, villages, government and private schools. Lucknow's unique confluence of innovation, inclusion, and grassroots engagement makes it the ideal host for a global conversation on transforming foundational literacy and numeracy.



Dignity Education Vision International (DEVI Sansthan) is an educational not-for-profit registered in India and the US. It has been pioneering research-based innovative solutions for quality education. DEVI has partnered with governments, organisations, and NGOs around the world, to showcase the power of a disruptive pedagogy.



City Montessori School (CMS): City Montessori School, Lucknow, is the world's largest schools by number of pupils, a Guinness Record holder, and the world's sole school recipient of the UNESCO Prize for Peace Education. CMS has served as a giant laboratory for innovative educational practices like ALfA.

Research & Implementation Partners



SBI Foundation
Service Beyond Banking
CSR partner



All Africa Students Union
Knowledge & training
partnership



Teachers Without Borders
Toolkit Replication Initiatives



Forum for African Women Educationists
Knowledge & training partnership



PATH Youth, Kenya
School literacy intensives



World Climate School, Norway
Knowledge & Training



Quizizz, International
Partners for Massive
Open Online Trainings



Dubai Cares
Media promotion
partnership

We look forward to collaborating with you!

Pre-Conference Rapid Results Initiatives (RRIs)

Engage. Expand. Embed.

The Global Learning Lab 2026 hinges on practical, evidence-based approaches to pedagogy. Prior to the conference, participants are invited to engage in a 45-day Rapid Results Initiative (RRI) in their own contexts to implement the RRI that facilitates policy integration through three phases:



Engage: Conduct small, rigorous RCTs in select schools using ALfA.



Expand: Broaden ALfA's implementation across a region.



Embed: Integrate ALfA's resources and methodologies into education systems.

Who: Ministries of Education, NGOs, and partner organizations working in collaboration with governments at local, regional and national levels.

Click or Scan QR
dignityeducation/rri



Some RRIs Worldwide



GHANA
Olinga Foundation / Associates for Change




PERU
Arca Beta NGO



USA
Literacy Chicago

Boost FLN in 45 Days



MALDIVES
Ministry of Education, UNICEF



INDIA
Various State Governments
17,000 Schools



PHILIPPINES
Dawnbreakers Foundation

Accelerating Learning for All (ALfA)

FAST

HOLISTIC

TRANSFORMATIVE

ALfA literacy and numeracy program has scaled rapidly from 20 schools to 17,000 government schools in India within two years, along with research implementations in 12 countries. Impressive early results indicate that the program is among the most cost-effective

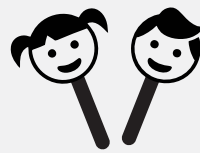
in the world, with significant learning gains (average: 0.48 SD) and costing just \$4 per child. Toolkits are now available in 33 languages including Arabic, Chishona, Dari, English, French, Mandarin, Portuguese, Spanish, Swahili, Tagalog, Twi and Yoruba.

Key Features of ALfA Pedagogy



Concrete to Abstract

Draws upon children's prior knowledge and hands-on experiences to discover new learning.



Paired Learning

Interactive 1:1 paired learning without differentiation helps children learn faster and retain more.



Holistic Development

Embeds 21st century skills and traits like collaboration, critical thinking, citizenship, climate-consciousness.



New Teacher Roles

Teachers are galvanizers. They demonstrate how to work in pairs, ask questions, and guide students in paired hands-on activities.



India



USA



Kenya



Malaysia



Peru



Maldives

Comprehensive FLN Booster Package

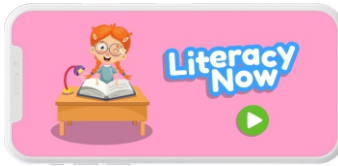
ALFA provides a process-led structure to reach FLN goals swiftly, at scale. This includes online and in-person training options, unique learning materials, universal standardized FLN assessments, and ed-tech tools that include learning, data & report generation apps.

Thin Booklets



Low cost, low carbon
low psychological burden

Free EdTech Tools & App



Supplements & provides
learning on devices
at home & school

Learning Materials



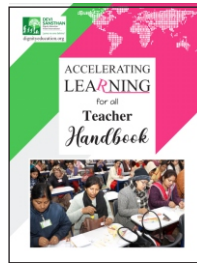
Locally available,
sustainable, reusable

Teacher Training



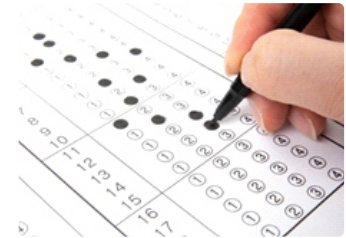
Highly participatory
Online/Offline

Teacher Handbook



Simple, visual instructions
& video repository

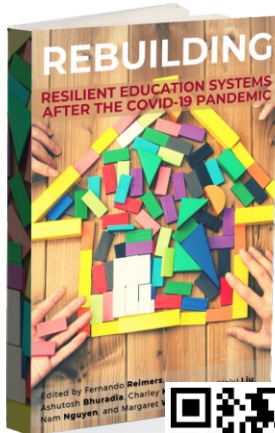
Assessments



Scanning app enables
instant analysis and reports

Prof. Reimers & Team at Harvard GSE, USA, 2023

ALFA RCT Results Published In "*Rebuilding Education Systems After the Covid-19 Pandemic*"



Chapter 8 of the book discusses the RCT of ALFA in Shamli, Uttar Pradesh, India, which led to results as shown on the right after just 40 days of implementation as cited in the book.

These encouraging results led to the program's expansion to 41% of Shamli's schools. Shamli rose from being a Low-Performing District of India to Rank 18 of 75 in Uttar Pradesh in the governments own FLN test.

“ The effect size of the project was **0.23 for Grade 3** students and **0.89 for Grade 5**... the results suggest there is significant value in pursuing the ALFA model in other schools if implemented in a coherent, structured, and coordinated manner. ”

Harvard Graduate School of Education

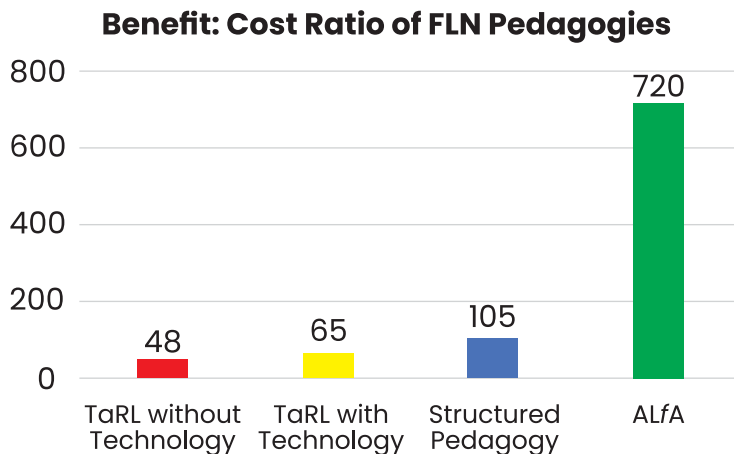
ALfA: Comparison with Structured Pedagogy & TaRL

"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, and may become socially divisive .	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 Sizes: 0.08–0.7 (50 days, combination of studies 2005–2014)	Effect Sizes: 0.23–0.89 (India, Maldives: 45 days, 2022–23)
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.

References

Dweck, Carol. 2007. Mindset: The New Psychology of Success.
 Kalra, Aparna. 2024. How Rich Donors have Caused More Harm than Good to India's Education. The Wire.
<https://thewire.in/education/how-rich-donors-have-caused-more-harm-than-good-to-indias-education>
 Copenhagen Consensus. 2023. Halftime to SDGs. Best Investment Paper: Education.
<https://copenhagenconsensus.com/publication/halftime-sdgs-education>

Teaching at the Right Level: Summary of Interventions.
https://assets-global.website-files.com/61366d43ebd6df56d9b67a11/6174939ed355d9ec8ce755e2_Teaching%20at%20the%20Right%20Level%20Summary%20of%20Interventions.pdf

Click/Scan QR
for more details & further references



Accelerating Learning for All A Groundbreaking Pedagogy to Transform Education

Sunita Gandhi, Jonathan Hakim, Tom Delaney
Published by Bloomsbury, January 2024



"All students should be able to learn to read quickly so that they can maximize their academic potential and ALFA does that."
Jon Corippo
Founder of EduProtocols, USA

"This book provide some insightful and unique ideas about creating a pedagogy of possibility. It will undoubtedly create the conditions for a better world."
Sigamoney Naicker
Professor, University of the Western Cape



Disruptive Literacy A Roadmap for Urgent Global Action

Sunita Gandhi, Tom Delaney,
Jonathan Hakim, Mashhood Bhat
Published by Bloomsbury, July 2022



"A much-needed manifesto for achieving large scale transformation of the global literacy crisis."
Ernesto Schiefelbein
Former Minister of Education, Chile

"A must read for policymakers and all those associated with the campaign against illiteracy."
Anil Swarup
Former Secretary of Education, India



Global Council of Sages

Asia

- **Dr Phalthy Hap**
Vice Rector, Royal University of Law, Cambodia
- **Justice Karybek Astanbekovich Duisheev**
Vice-Chairman Constitutional Court, Krygyz Republic
- **Rana Dajani**
President, We Love Reading, Jordan
- **Ravi Sreedharan**
Founder & President, Indian School of Development Management, India
- **Robert Thorn**
Director, Developing Real Learners, Turkey

Europe

- **Inger-Mette Stenseth**
Founder, World Climate School, Norway
- **Sigbjorn Dugal**
Founder, Pickatale, Norway
- **Nicolas Gravel**
Professor of Economics, Aix-Marseille University, France
- **Richard Nilsson**
President, Adventure of Humanity, Sweden/France
- **David Bovill**
Partnerships Manager, DEIP, UK
- **Girish Menon**
CEO, STIR Education, UK
- **Pakalitha Bethwel Mosisilil**
Director (Honoris Causa), Hungary
- **Jutice Dr Francesco Buffa**
Judge Supreme Court, Italy
- **Ms Novak Katalin**
Former President, Hungary



Aïcha Bah Diallo
Former Education Minister,
Guinea



Dr Abdullah Rashid Ahmed
Former Minister of State
for Education, Maldives

Africa

- **Aïcha Bah Diallo**
Former Education Minister, Guinea
Founder, Forum of African Women Educationists
- **Peter Kwasi Kodjie**
Secretary-General All Africa Student's Union,
Ghana
- **Samuel Sasu Adonteng**
Programme Officer, All Africa Students Union,
Ghana
- **Rebecca Doreen**
Founding Director, Vadiwa Trust Organization,
Zimbabwe
- **Sigamoney Naicker**
Professor, University of the Western Cape, South
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- **Justice Luke Malaba**
Chief Justice of Zimbabwe
- **Diallo Mumadou Bathia**
President, Council Mauritania
- **Justice Andre Safela Leno**
President, Third Civil Commercial and Social
Chamber, Supreme Court, Guinea
- **Justice Joseph Aseh Malegho**
Secretary General, Constitutional Council,
Cameroon
- **Zahiri Ziki Sebastien**
Magistrate, Cote D'Ivoire
- **Justice Khamis Ramadhani**
Chief Justice, High Court of Zanzibar, Tanzania
- **Justice Afiavi Solange Mehou**
Judge, High Court of Justice, Benin
- **Hassane Diallo**
Secretary, General Court, Guinea
- **Mohammed Suleiman Omar**
Chief Justice of Zanzibar, Tanzania
- **Justice Hortense Ubisse**
Presiding Judge, Namaacha, Mozambique
- **Justice Prof Aaron Logmo Mbelek**
Judge, Constitutional Council, Cameroon
- **Felix Sabi-kanni N Pocha**
Chief of Staff, High Court, Benin

North America

- **Alesha Anderson**
Senior Program Officer, Pro-Literacy Worldwide, USA
- **Alexandre Romanovsky**
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- **Bill Graham**
Vice Chair, NGO Committee for Education, Learning & Literacy at the United Nations in New York, USA
- **Cindy Charles**
Founder & CEO, Kupanda Sisters Inc., Guyana
- **David J. Rosen**
Director, Adult Literacy Resource Institute, UMass, USA
- **Fred Mednick**
Founder, Teachers Without Borders, USA
- **Gail Davis-Carter**
UN ECOSOC Representative, UN Partner, USA
- **Joanne Telser-Frere**
Director, Program Director, Literacy Chicago, USA
- **Jon M Corippo**
Author, Eduprotocols, USA
- **Kyle Zimmer**
President, CEO and Co-founder of First Book, USA
- **Mary McCool Berry**
Founder, Read Keys, USA
- **Michael Matos**
Education Technology Director, ScaleLIT, USA
- **Peter Campling**
Global Programmes Director, USA
- **Richard Allen**
Director of Partnerships, VOYCE, USA
- **Stephen Peters**
President, The Peters Group, USA

- **Rodney Williams**
Governor General, Antigua & Barbuda
- **Justice Beatriz Paniague Castro**
National Chief Prosecutor, Costa Rica
- **Justice Christain Corrales Lugo**
Judge Posocis Criminal Court of Justice, Costa Rica

South America

- **Ernesto Schiefelbein**
Chilean Pedagogue, Professor, Economist & Politician, Chile
- **Sylvia Guimarães**
Co-founder & President, Vaga Lume, Brazil
- **Vicky Colbert**
Founder & Director, Fundación Escuela Nueva and Former Minister of Education, Colombia
- **Justice Maria Fennanda Gallardo Munoz**
Jueze De Garantias Penales, Ecuador
- **Ana Maria Teofila Cubas Longe**
Former Senior Persecutor, San Juan De Lurigancho, Peru
- **Mirtha Chenguayen Guevera**
Provincial Prosecutor, Criminal 3rd Office, Peru
- **Carmen Luz Cruz Galvez**
Systems Analyst National Tax Superintendence, Peru
- **Justice Priscilla Chandra Hanif**
Judge Supreme Court, Guyana

Along with international educationists, the Global Council of Sages includes many Justices who have witnessed ALfA during their stays at CMS, Lucknow, for the Conferences of Chief Justices of the World.



Global Learning Lab 2026 Fast-Forward FLN

From Global Research to Systemic Transformation

This conference is more than a dialogue; it is a global call to action for swift, replicable, impactful, equitable, inclusive, cost-effective and scalable solutions that empower learners and transform education systems.

Education leaders, policymakers, researchers, and practitioners are invited to join this transformative initiative. Together, we can create a global movement to accelerate foundational learning, achieve SDG 4, and fast-forward a quality education for all.

12-14 February, 2026
Lucknow, India



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