

# GHANA

## Rapid Results Initiative

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



**The Olinga Foundation**  
For Human Development



# Executive Summary

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.

<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

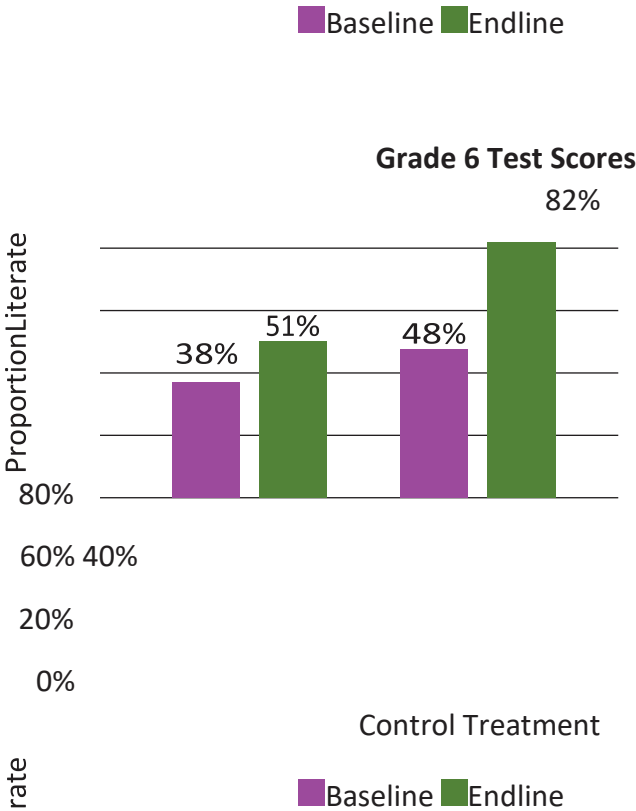
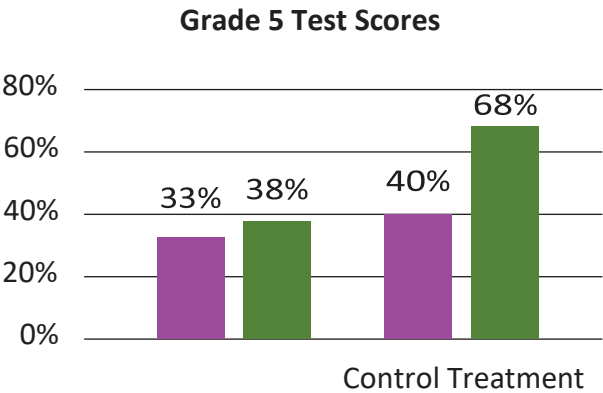
	40 (P5) + 47 (P6) control
Intervention	Teacher training + regular coaching & mentoring + provision of ALfA English literacy toolkit, used ~1 hour/day
Assessment	ASER-style one-on-one reading tool

# 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.



## 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.

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>

### 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

# Assessment Tool

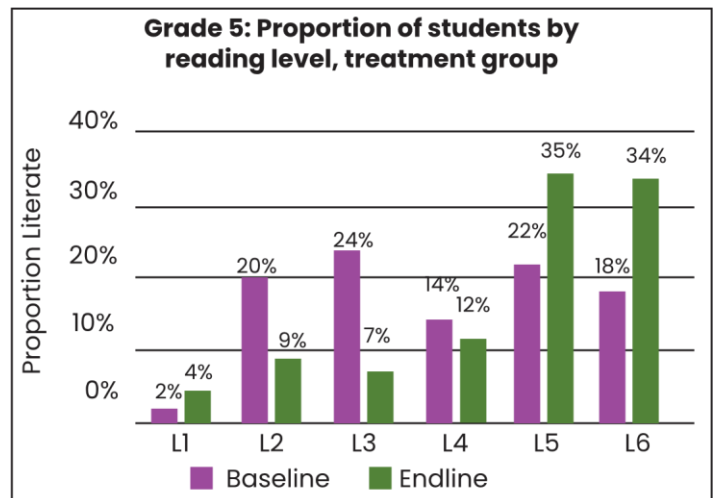
The one-on-one ASER tool classifies students' reading abilities into 6 levels.

<p><b>L1: Initial Level</b></p> <p>Reads fewer than 4 out of 5 letters, e.g. <i>a, d, b, f, h</i></p>	<p><b>L2: Letter Recognition</b></p> <p>Recognizes at least 4 out of 5 letters, e.g. <i>c, m, n, t, w</i></p>	<p><b>L3: Word Recognition</b></p> <p>Reads at least 4 out of 5 words: e.g. <i>cat, dog, hat, sit, run</i></p>
<p><b>L4: Paragraph Recognition</b></p> <p>Reads a paragraph fluently – Maximum 1 mistake: e.g. <i>The boy plays with his ball. He runs to the tree.</i></p>	<p><b>L5: Story Recognition</b></p> <p>Reads a story – Maximum 2 mistakes, e.g. <i>Rita has a dog. The dog's name is Max. Max likes to play.</i></p>	<p><b>L6: Reading Comprehension</b></p> <p>Answers 4 out of 5 comprehension questions accurately about the story</p>

## Quantitative Results

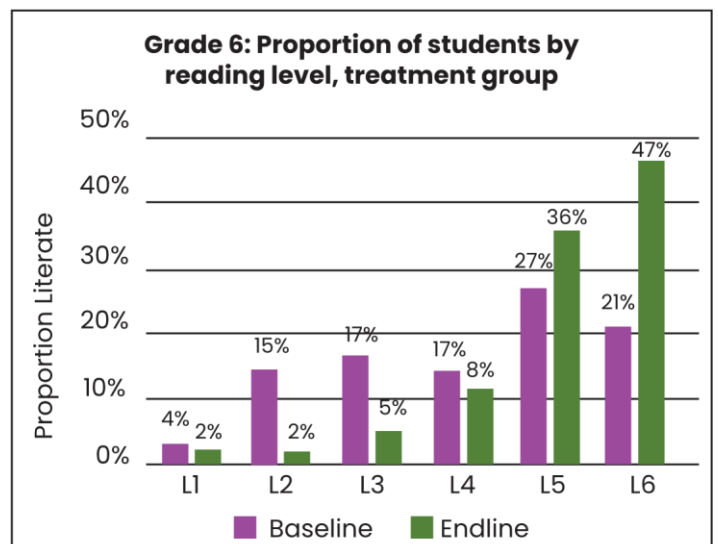
### Grade 5

- 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%.



# Qualitative Results

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'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**

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 now learn in peer sharing one primer so they feel conformable asking each other for help when they go wrong they now are learning faster and with more enthusiasm than ever before.

”

**Madam Yvonne Addai**

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

”

**Gideon Adu Adjei, SISO,**

**GES Ayensuano (District Education Officer)**

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**

## 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**



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**



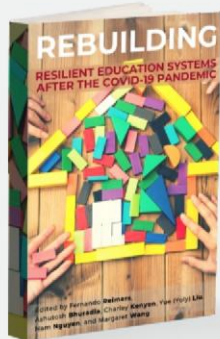
\* All names changed for privacy.

## Future Directions

- ALfA methodology proved highly effective, for a minimal cost



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



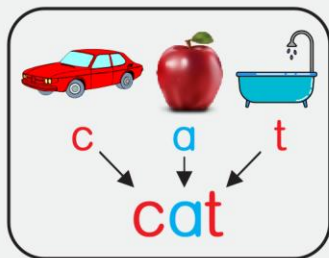
Explore the evidence on ALfA's efficacy presented in Harvard professor's book



- 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.

## Learn More

- 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.



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



# The Olinga Foundation for Human Development

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**for All. (Bloomsbury,**  
**2024)**



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