



**DEVI SANSTHAN**  
Dignity Education  
Vision International  
*Leave no one behind*

**ALfa** ACCELERATING  
LEARNING FOR ALL

# RAPID RESULTS INITIATIVE

## Boost FLN in 45 Days

### FOUNDATIONAL LITERACY & NUMERACY

**SWIFT**

**SCALABLE**

**SUSTAINABLE**



# Universal FLN is Possible Before 2030

We all agree that the lack of Foundational Literacy & Numeracy (FLN) is a long-standing problem even before the Covid crisis. The question that looms large is: Why? Is the problem of literacy and numeracy 'nearly insurmountable'?

Despite governments focusing more directly on FLN, new policies, increased funding, greater training and supervision, many countries have not been able to reach pre-Covid levels even three years after the pandemic. Teachers are more focused on FLN, and better trained. They are showing up to school more often. Children are coming to school more regularly. Yet the majority are still not learning. While the reading wars rage on - whether it is phonics, whole language or the science of reading - reading levels are edging downwards.

Is there any way to change this situation? What else can be done?

## The Missing Piece: Pedagogy

There's one aspect that we have rarely dwelt upon, the question of pedagogy.



We keep tinkering with already established methods and tighten the bolts to implement them. Governments mandate curricula based on assumptions of what works - but if it were working, we would not be in such a situation now. We are still using outdated methods and governments have become gatekeepers to them, with little room for innovative approaches.

## AlfA: Accelerating Learning for All, Pedagogy of the Future

In this document, we want to share a brand new way to build FLN skills in children and adults in a mere few weeks, not years. There is a body of evidence to support our assertions.

## A Call to Action

We hereby invite governments around the world to conduct a 45-day pilot of AlfA in their own country contexts, and scale-up to the national levels once research results showcase its enormous potential.

The world can achieve universal FLN well before 2030, if we act now.



**Sunita Gandhi**

Former Economist, The World Bank, USA  
PhD (Physics), Cambridge University, UK  
Founder & CEO, DEVI Sansthan  
Dignity Education Vision International

# Half-Time to SDGs

We are **not on track** to meet the Sustainable Development Goals, including the crucial goal of quality education for all (**SDG 4**).



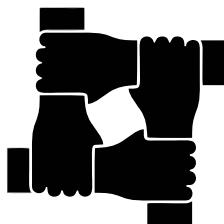
One of the biggest factors holding us back is **outdated pedagogy**: teacher-centred, rote-based, narrow education. We wouldn't use a telephone made in our grandfather's generation – so why an education system that's long past its use-by-date?

**Accelerating Learning for All (ALfA)** is a scalable, swift, effective and low-cost pedagogy, that enables children to learn foundational literacy and numeracy in **weeks, not years**.



Beyond literacy, ALfA is a **holistic education** system that embeds communication, collaboration, creativity, climate action and global **citizenship skills**.

Our work began in the **slums of Lucknow**, experimenting with innovative approaches to literacy. It has since grown dramatically to thousands of schools across the nation, and internationally to 12 countries.



We invite **governments, NGOs and schools** around the world to adopt this groundbreaking pedagogy. An **easy first step** is to attend an online training or networking event.

ALfA is based on **years of research**, culminating in several books and journal articles. It has garnered endorsements from numerous leaders and experts.



**FAST**

# Start with Research Implementation for 45 Days

It normally takes three years – or more – to acquire the skill to read. But with the ALfA pedagogy, it is possible in as little as 45 days. How? Try it out in a small or bigger geography, then scale system-wide to gain FLN benefits for all children year on year.



Children work in random pairs; one asks questions, the other answers, then swap roles as equal partners.

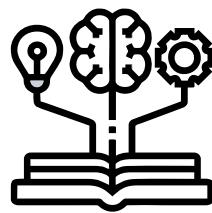
# Why is it faster & more effective?

There are at least 3 reasons why ALFA greatly speeds up learning and makes it more effective:

**'Known to unknown'**  
**pedagogy.** Drawing upon children's prior knowledge, using cognitive connections to discover new learning.



**Designed for paired work** Children learn and retain more when they interact with each other.



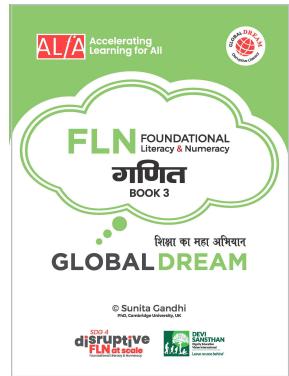
**Child-led learning process.** Teachers empower children to learn by themselves.



# Numeracy

AlfA numeracy draws on concrete to abstract experiences. Children learn with each other and discover numbers and operations doing paired learning with concrete objects that are easily available. Children ask questions of each other.

Just 28 pages of AlfA booklets help build a much deeper level of understanding than typical 300 page textbooks and workbooks combined. Just 45 Days is sufficient to complete the foundational skills, and often take learning to beyond Grade level mathematics.



Scan/Click this  
QR CODE  
for a video on how to  
teach AlfA Numeracy.

Modules progress logically from simple to complex

As children vary in skill levels, AlfA is not designed for a specific grade, but can be used across different primary grades. Levels inside indicate the grade level which a particular module is appropriate for. This below is relevant for Grades 2 & 3.

Level A = KG & Grade 1 Level B = Grade 2 & 3 Level C = Grade 4 & 5

Word problems connect math with real life

Simple-to-understand pictorial representation

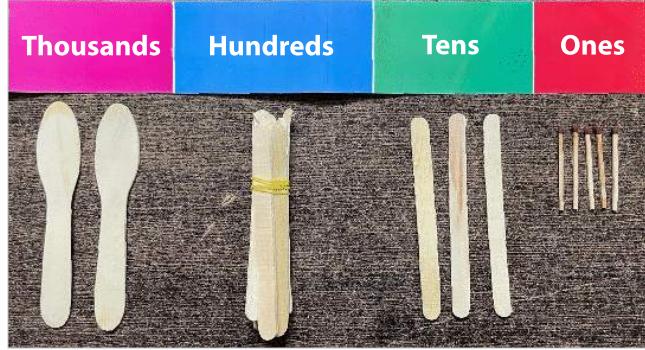
Prompts describing the activity & encouraging each pair to make their own questions.

## Module 6: We know 3 and 4 digit numbers

Level B

### Triggers: Pair up and take turns

- Let a child take out some ice cream sticks and matchsticks and make a number and arrange them in the correct order. The second child can tell what number is formed.
- Make new numbers by interchanging some sticks.



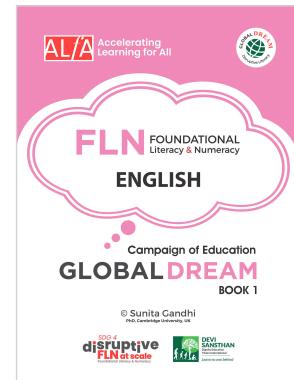
Also show each other by clapping the number.

<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>5</b>
2000	+ 100	+ 30	+ 5
$= 2135$			

# Literacy

AlfA Literacy draws upon children's natural ability to derive first sounds of pictures they know, as versus first sounds of letters they do not know. Children are able to derive these first sounds and add them on their own to form words from the first day. They read by taking turns and ask each other questions.

A 40-page AlfA booklet and 45 school days are enough to swiftly build reading and early writing skills. Based on this foundation, children develop deeper understanding, richer vocabulary and greater fluency in reading and writing with time.



Scan/Click this QR CODE  
for a video on how to  
teach AlfA Literacy.

**'A' WORDS**

**MODULE 1**

C	a	t
b	g	m

**Nudges: Pair Up and Take Turns**

Make your own picture and sound cards to play games, such as:

- Sound game:** Put all picture cards in a basket, then pick out one at a time and share its name and first sound.
- Memory game:** Turn all picture and sound cards upside down. Pick two at a time. If they match, you can keep them, otherwise put them back and it's your partner's turn to pick. Play till you've found all the matches.

**MODULE 2**

What is this?

What is the first sound? **c** **a** **t**

What word do you get when you join these sounds? **cat**

**Nudges: Pair Up and Take Turns**

- Ask your partner the three questions as given on the left. Let your partner answer, then reverse roles for the next word.
- Don't use names of the letters, just say their phonic sound: car's first sound is "k" not "see (c)". The sounds can be easily derived from the picture.

**MODULE 3**

am	at	bam	bat
gag	mac	mag	mam
cab	cam	tab	tag

**Nudges: Pair Up and Take Turns**

- Take turns to sound out and read each word. If you can't remember a sound, check above in Module 2.
- Can you find which words rhyme? For example, 'at', 'cat' & 'bat'. What rhymes with man?

AL/A Accelerating Learning for All | LITERACY BOOK

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Each lesson introduces 4-6 letters. If the students aren't familiar with the pictures associated with each letter, then you may need to do some activities to introduce them

Prompts explain the process and also provide links to more resources.

Children take turns to ask each other questions:

- What is this picture?
- What is its first sound?
- What do these sounds join together to make?

The box at the bottom enables children to practice the same letters with new words.

# Beyond Academics

ALfA provides a truly 21st century education. Beyond literacy and numeracy, the paired learning environment helps children develop crucial skills and traits, including collaboration, critical thinking, citizenship and climate consciousness.



Children in the Maldives develop their communication and collaboration skills by solving math questions together.

# 21st CENTURY SKILLS THROUGH ALfA

ALfA seamlessly integrates the skills and traits of a twenty-first century learner. These 8Cs cannot be taught from a textbook, but rather acquired while working with each other in the everyday context of a classroom. The paired setting creates a safe environment for learning socio-emotional competencies.



# Four Skills



**Critical Thinking:** Being able to analyse & solve problems, and ask insightful questions is crucial. ALfA builds critical thinking as pairs create new questions for each other, challenging each other to think deeply.



**Creativity:** The world needs people who can think outside the box and imagine new solutions. ALfA fosters creativity, encouraging students to choose their own learning materials, questions, and projects.



**Communication:** It is incredibly valuable to both be able to speak confidently and also listen carefully and sensitively. The process of paired learning in ALfA inculcates good communication skills.



**Collaboration:** A brilliant team is built by people who are in the habit of cooperation and collaboration. Again, paired learning in ALfA builds students' ability and desire to collaborate.

# Four Traits



**Citizenship:** Seeking the common good for all is vital to being a responsible citizen. Random pairing mixes students from diverse backgrounds, giving them the opportunity to develop their citizenship.



**Connectedness:** Feeling in touch with others is key to fostering resiliency and socio-emotional wellbeing. ALfA fosters students' connectedness with each other, with their teacher, and with the world around them.



**Climate consciousness:** The next generation must have a deep awareness of environmental issues, and act on this knowledge. ALfA is building this consciousness through short stories on key environmental issues.



**Character:** A person's inner virtues shine out from within and illuminate others' lives. ALfA develops these virtues through the practical experience of working together; along with customized role-plays that prompt reflection on virtues.



# CLIMATE EDUCATION THROUGH ALfA

Education needs to address the climate crises in new and creative ways, for example, reduce carbon footprint by saving millions of tons of paper and ink wasted each year in printing textbooks and workbooks. Learners also need to become climate actors.

## Climate Footprint

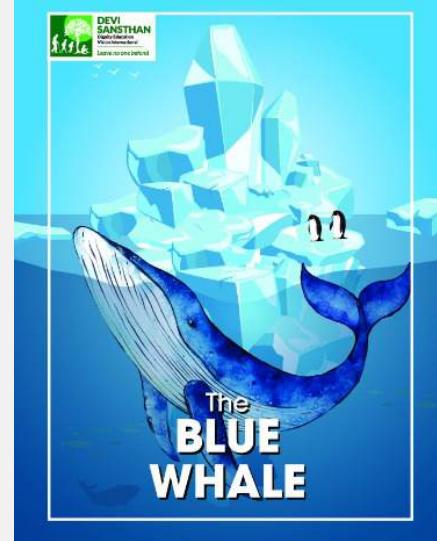
Imagine if we could use 1/10<sup>th</sup> or 1/20<sup>th</sup> of the paper currently used in textbooks and workbooks! ALfA booklets are thin, and paper use is further halved when two learners work as a pair. ALfA digital resources are also freely available.

## Climate Consciousness

Children avoid plastic and learn to select and use sustainable materials like pebbles, shells and leaves for hands-on activities.

## Climate Action

Climate action is integrated in the activities. Further, the learners enact roleplays and read stories that inspire climate action.



*Click or scan QR  
to explore our collection  
of climate-themed  
short stories & role plays*



# Research & Reports

ALfA was developed based on years of research, and has been covered in a recent book by Harvard Graduate School of Education Professor Fernando Reimers.



Children focus closely on the Hindi ALfA book, reading in pairs

# RESEARCH ADULT LITERACY

Our groundbreaking research directly testing the reading ability of 1.06 million adults in Lucknow district to throw light on the literacy crisis.

## Key Findings

- Literacy rates are substantially lower than Census estimates (65% vs 77%)
- There are major caste, gender, age and geographical inequalities in literacy rates.
- Sociodemographic factors interact with each other powerfully, to create compounding effects. For instance, our survey found that just 10% of rural SC/ST 51-60 year old women could read.



**Published in two journal articles and an in-depth report:**

AUGUST 21, 2021 Vol. LVI No. 34 www.epw.in

**Economic & Political WEEKLY**  
A SHREEKRISHNA PUBLICATION

**EDITORIAL**  
■ Right to Represent vs Right to Representation  
**COMMENT**  
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**SPECIAL ARTICLES**  
■ Did Employment Rise or Fall in India between 2011 and 2017?  
■ Constitutional Asymmetry in Indian Federalism: The Union Territory Model  
■ The Inconvenient Truth of Illiteracy Inequality  
**CURRENT STATISTICS**

**Policy-induced Invisibility**  
An account of the course of labour policy highlights its role in aggravating the precarity of living conditions for those in informal employment, which culminated in the migrant workers crisis. [page 37](#)

**Federalism and Union Territories**  
The status of union territories is analysed through the principle of weighted and differentiated equality in India, in the context of asymmetrical federalism. [page 53](#)

**Cryptocurrency in India**  
A model legislation regulating all aspects of cryptocurrency is required to recognise it as a legal tender with appropriate safeguards and monitoring mechanisms. [page 18](#)

**Socio-demographics of Literacy**  
A study on adult illiteracy in Lucknow examines the intersectional impacts of gender, geography, caste and age on literacy rates and analyses the factors compounding educational disadvantage. [page 61](#)

**Income Support Schemes**  
The progress of the PM KISAN scheme is critically assessed along with an evaluation of the income support schemes of different state governments. [page 13](#)

JNE

**Journal of New Economics**  
Ideas Really Do Matter in Economics  
Special Issue  
Matching The Core Focus Of COP26  
Volume 1, No. 2, November 2021

**ACCELERATING ADULT LITERACY**

3.44 LAKH CHILDREN BETWEEN 6 & 14  
3.96 LAKH HOUSEHOLDS  
15.44 LAKH INDIVIDUALS BETWEEN 6-60  
3957 TEACHERS AS SURVEYORS  
3 URBAN WARDS  
8 RURAL BLOCKS

**GLOBAL DREAM SURVEY REPORT**



**CLICK HERE**

The Inconvenient Truth of Illiteracy Inequality:  
Compounding Effects of Sociodemographic Disadvantage. **Economic & Political Weekly**



**CLICK HERE**

The Inconvenient Truth of Indian Illiteracy Inequality.  
**Journal of New Economics, Glasgow University**



**CLICK HERE**

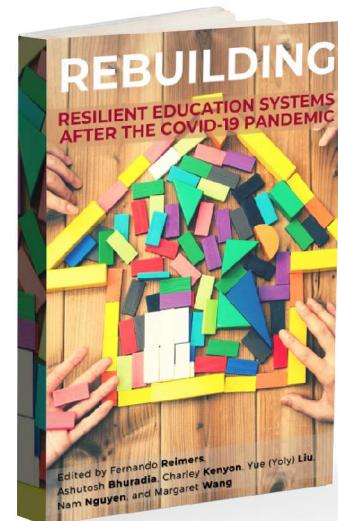
Accelerating Adult Literacy.  
**DEVI Sansthan Report**

# GLOBAL ENDORSEMENT FROM HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Chapter 8 of 'Rebuilding Resilient Education Systems After the Covid-19 Pandemic', published in March 2023, documents the ALfA program in Shamli, and recommends its widespread adoption.

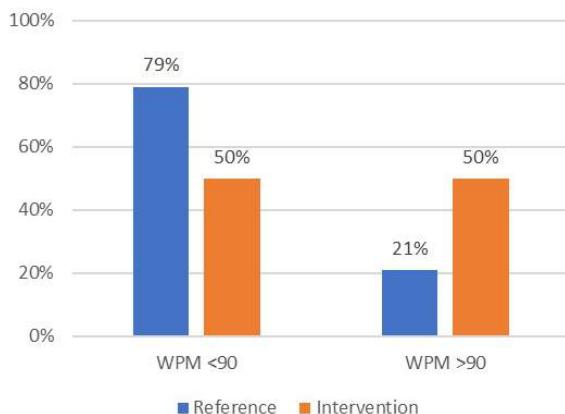


Click or scan QR  
to check out the  
book



By Prof. Fernando Reimers et al,  
Harvard Graduate School of Education

## Grade 4&5, after just 40 days



“ Students in the intervention groups had **much higher oral reading fluency** than those in the reference group. For Grades 4–5, 50% of the intervention group students were able to read the passage at >90 words per minute compared to 20% of reference group students. ”

“ 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. ”

\***Effect size** is a statistical measure of an intervention's impact. A business-as-usual school year in developing countries typically raises literacy levels by **0.15 to 0.21** standard deviations. This means that the ALfA 45-day intervention raised learning levels by the equivalent of **2-4 years worth of school**.

Reference: Evans, David K.; Yuan, Fei. 2019. *Equivalent Years of Schooling: A Metric to Communicate Learning Gains in Concrete Terms*. Policy Research Working Paper; No. 8752. World Bank, Washington, DC.



“

*Accelerated Learning for All (ALfA), helps children quickly gain FLN competencies... students start with known words in the form of pictures, identify the sounds, and work backward to the letters.*

”

“

*We recommend the UP government incorporate the promising ALfA pedagogy developed by DEVI for the first 6 weeks to quickly establish a strong FLN foundation.*

”



# ALfA around the globe

ALfA is changing lives far beyond India, in contexts as diverse as the remote Peruvian Amazon and the suburbs of Chicago, USA.

Available in 30+ languages, this low-cost, high-efficacy program is ready to scale up further in the effort to bring literacy for all.

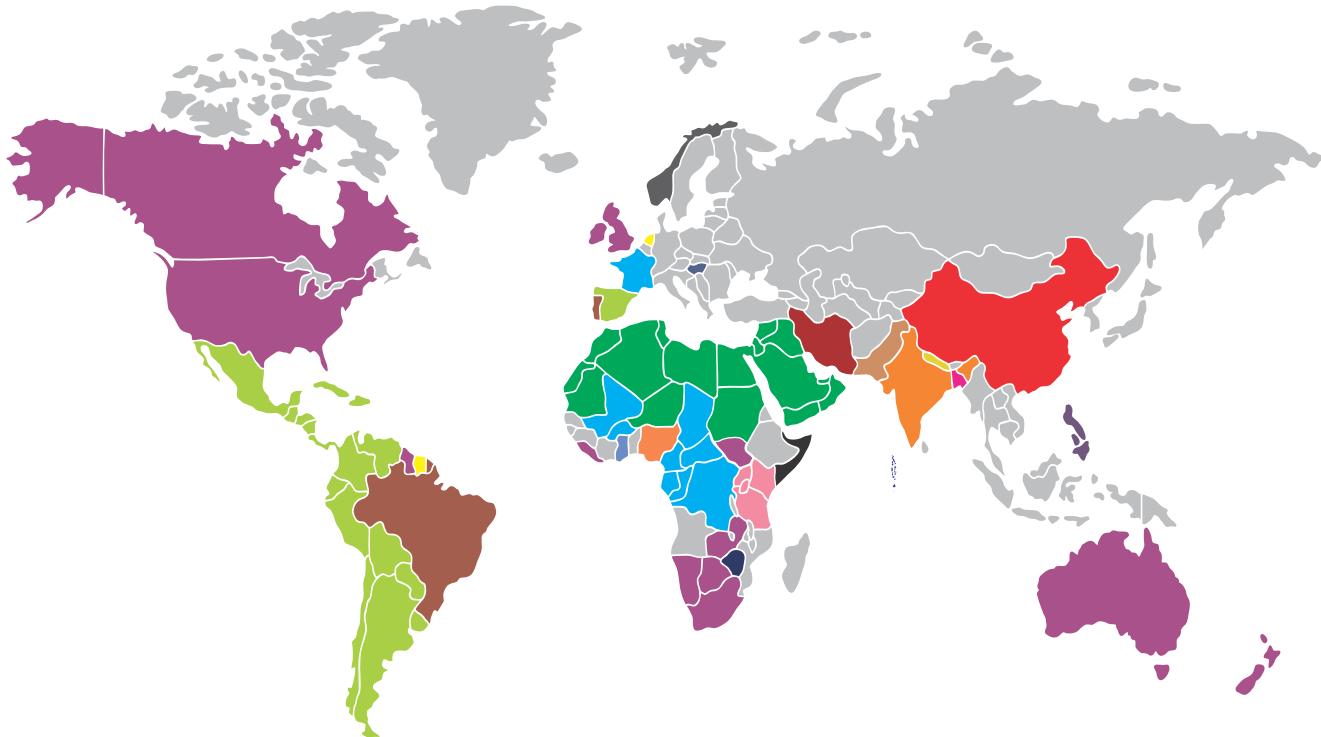


A group of teachers in Malaysia enjoy the ALfA numeracy training

# ALfA TOOLKITS

Accelerating Learning for All is available in 30+ languages, making this quality pedagogy freely accessible to millions around the world.

## INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGES



Arabic	English	Nepali	Shona	Urdu
Bangla	Filipino	Persian	Spanish	Yoruba
Dhivehi	French	Portuguese*	Swahili	Somalian*
Dutch	Mandarin	Serbian	Twi	* in development

## INDIAN LANGUAGES

Assamese	Marathi
Bangla	Mizo
Gujarati	Odia
Hindi	Punjabi
Kannada	Tamil
Konkani*	Telugu
Maithili	* in process

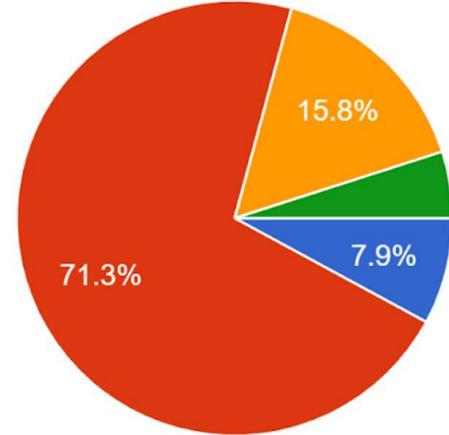


# MALDIVES ALfA IN THE ARCHIPELAGO



The Ministry of Education engaged DEVI Sansthan (with UNICEF support) to undertake an ALfA pilot across the whole country's **200+ schools**.

In the first phase of the implementation, 13 schools are implementing ALfA while 5 are serving as a reference. From September to December 2023, test scores in ALfA schools improved 7 percentage points in English and 11 percentage points in Maths – nearly **double the rate** of improvement compared to reference group schools.



79% of teachers polled felt the **rate of learning** was higher compared to last year.

- Far greater
- Greater
- Same as last year
- Lower



## Teachers' Testimonies

**“**I believe in fostering independent learning and problem-solving, promoting peer collaboration and incorporating reflection opportunities. These strategies empower children to take ownership of their learning journey.

- Aysharth Sumaa

**“**In my opinion, ALfA is a great opportunity for students to learn together in a collaborative, friendly environment. Students work together to complete the tasks and modules, as a result, they are very well connected with each other.

- Hawwa Lamsha

Click or Scan the **QR code** to hear more testimonies from Maldivian teachers.



Click or Scan the **QR code** to hear the views of Dr Abdullah Rasheed Ahmad, Minister of State for Education.

# PERU ALfA IN THE AMAZON



In collaboration with Arca Beta NGO, we are piloting ALfA in a school in the remote Amazon. Results are impressive, and discussions are now underway with government for scaling up.

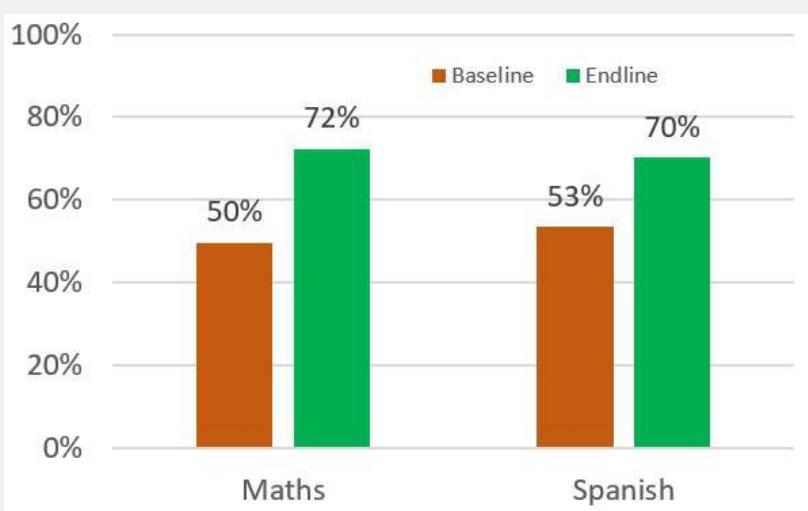


Click or Scan the [QR code](#) to watch classroom footage from **Peru**



“When the students came first, they wrote scribbles; they didn't know how to read. The students began to pronounce the images and words from the communication book. They worked in pairs. They began to form simple words, then more complex words and small sentences. Now, 80% of the students are reading. It is engaging and exciting for the students. Thank you so much.”

**Sheila, Grade 1A Teacher,  
Sachachorro school,  
Iquitos, Peru**



**Test scores in Sachachorro school, before and after 45 day Alfa implementation**

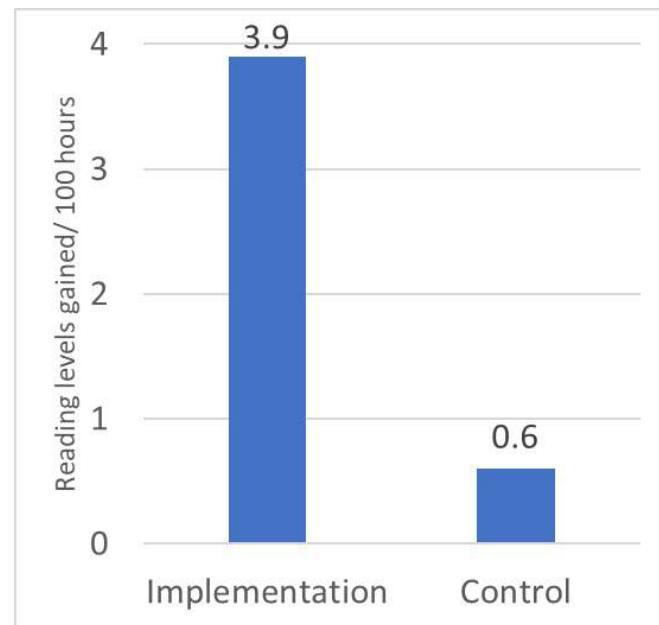
# USA NO AGE LIMIT FOR EDUCATION



We are working together with Literacy Chicago, who are using the ALfA toolkit to teach adults how to read, write and do basic arithmetic.



Click or Scan the [QR code](#)  
to watch a video of the first  
**ALfA learner in  
Literacy Chicago**



**Reading Level improvement in ALfA learners  
was much greater than non-ALfA learners**



Click or Scan the [QR code](#)  
**to see how Literacy  
Chicago is  
implementing ALfA**

“ This program is fun to teach, easy for students to follow, and creates community and quick, efficient learning. The organisation of the lessons and plans is clear and supportive. I recommend it. ”

**Alexandra Murman,  
Volunteer, Literacy Chicago**

“ A positive aspect of the ALfA reading program is that students can work at their own pace. Some students may go through the first five lessons quickly; others may need to work on them slowly, repeating some over and over. Everyone makes progress, and the beauty of the faces on those who achieve even a little success is inspiring. ”

**Marcia Banzuly, Volunteer, Literacy Chicago**

## Learners' Perspectives

“It helps me spell. I can focus better and am learning to recognise the sounds.” – **Osman**

“Now I can pace myself. You learn the sounds and break down the words to sound them out, it is easier to read.” – **Linnea**

“I am making progress learning the sounds of the letters. It is helping me to know the meanings of the words I am reading.” – **Dahla**

# KENYA FLN INTENSIVE

We are collaborating with Path Youth NGO, to run an ALfA literacy & numeracy bootcamp for children from the slums of Mombassa.



“

During the literacy and numeracy initiative, we observed that students exposed to this pedagogy consistently demonstrate increased enthusiasm for learning, and improved academic performance. The positive outcomes reflect not only academic achievements but also the development of life skills that prepare students for future challenges.

**Salim Ali Mazang'ang'a**  
Director, Path Youth Organization



Click or Scan  
the **QR code** to  
read the full  
letter

”

## Learners' Testimonies

“

*I am very grateful to be part of this literacy and numeracy bootcamp. I have learned a lot, and now I have more confidence in reading and counting. Thank you for providing this opportunity to improve our education.*

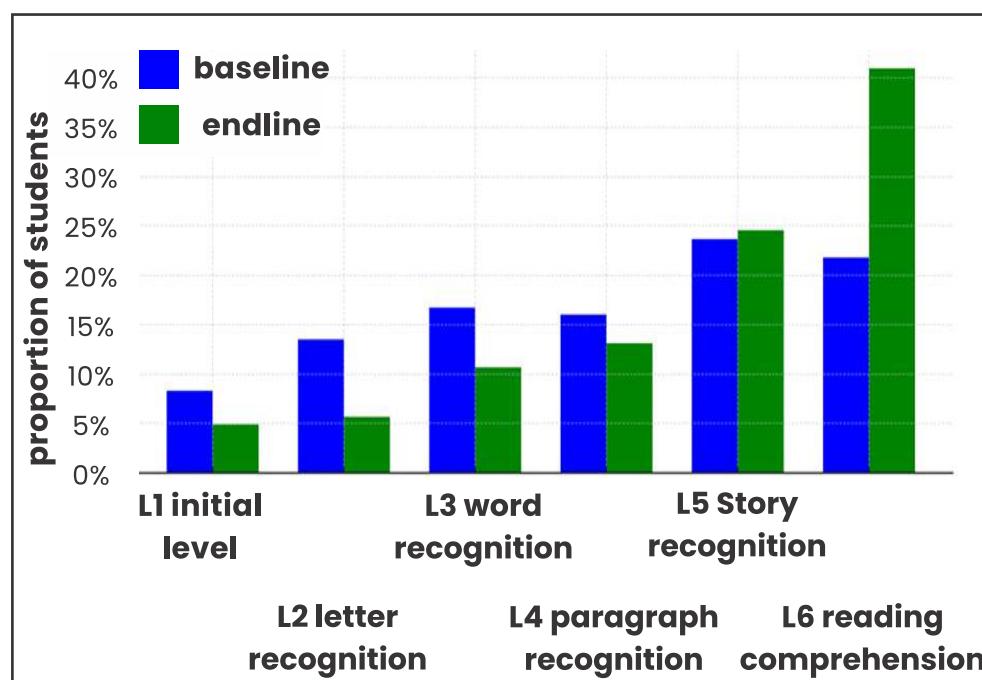
”

“

*This bootcamp has completely changed my life. I had significant difficulties with reading and counting, but now I can say I have gained enough skills to overcome those challenges. I thank all the teachers for their dedication.*

”

# GHANA RESEARCH IMPLEMENTATION



We are collaborating with Olinga Foundation to implement ALfA in six schools of Ghana. After 40 days of implementation, the proportion of students reading at the highest level (Level 6) almost doubled from 22% to 41%.

# MALAYSIA TRAINING REIMAGINED



Teachers, principals & government officials gathered together from eight different countries to join an interactive workshop on the ALfA pedagogy, sowing the seeds for ALfA to bloom in South-East Asia. In Malaysia, we began an ALfA pilot in collaboration with Radiant Gems Preschool.



Click or Scan the [QR code](#) to watch Dr. Gandhi conduct a training in Malaysia.



# PHILIPPINES A NEW DAWN

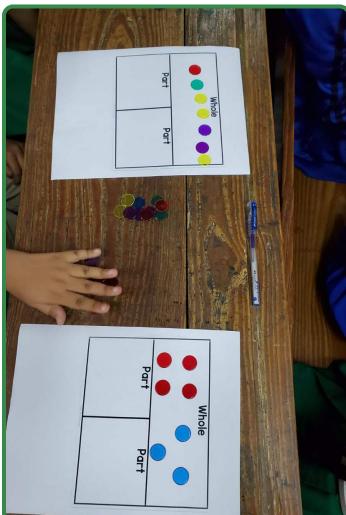


Having partnered with Dawnbreakers Foundation to replicate the material in Filipino, they are now using it to teach in a remote area of Mindoro.



# TRINIDAD & TOBAGO SINGLE SCHOOL PILOT

We are partnering with El Dorado South Hindu School to trial ALfA.



Click or Scan the [QR code](#) to watch a video of classroom implementation in Trinidad & Tobago



# Disruptive Talks on Literacy

The D-Talks have witnessed the participation of 174 speakers from 22 countries in the first series.

Speakers have included activists and academics, policymakers and practitioners at all levels: government,

international agencies, non-profit sector, donor community, corporates, universities, youth and schools.

We look forward to engaging discussions with you in Series 2.0 of the D-Talks.

## 174 Speakers from 22 Countries Include



**Robert Jenkins**



**Dr. Abdulla Rasheed**



**Vicky Colbert**



**Jon Corripo**



**Mary McCool Berry**

Global Director,  
Education &  
Adolescent  
Development,  
UNICEF

Minister of State for  
Education  
Head, National  
Institute of  
Education (NIE),  
Maldives

Founder & Director  
Fundación Escuela  
Nueva

Co-Author, The  
Eduprotocols  
Field Guide Book 1  
and 2 & Eduprotocols  
Math Edition

Reading Specialist  
Literacy for All  
Advocate

Albania

Argentina

Bangladesh

Brazil

Bulgaria

Colombia

India

Kenya

Maldives

Pakistan

Portugal

Qatar

Serbia

Slovakia

South Africa

Switzerland

UK

USA

## Country *wise* Talks



Scan Me To Watch the D-Talks



Click here

Nepal

New Zealand

Netherlands

Nigeria

## From 20 schools to 20 districts

ALfA had its origins in literacy labs conducted in the slums of Lucknow. It has since spread far and wide across India, with numerous languages and states piloting ALfA or even implementing it at the district level.



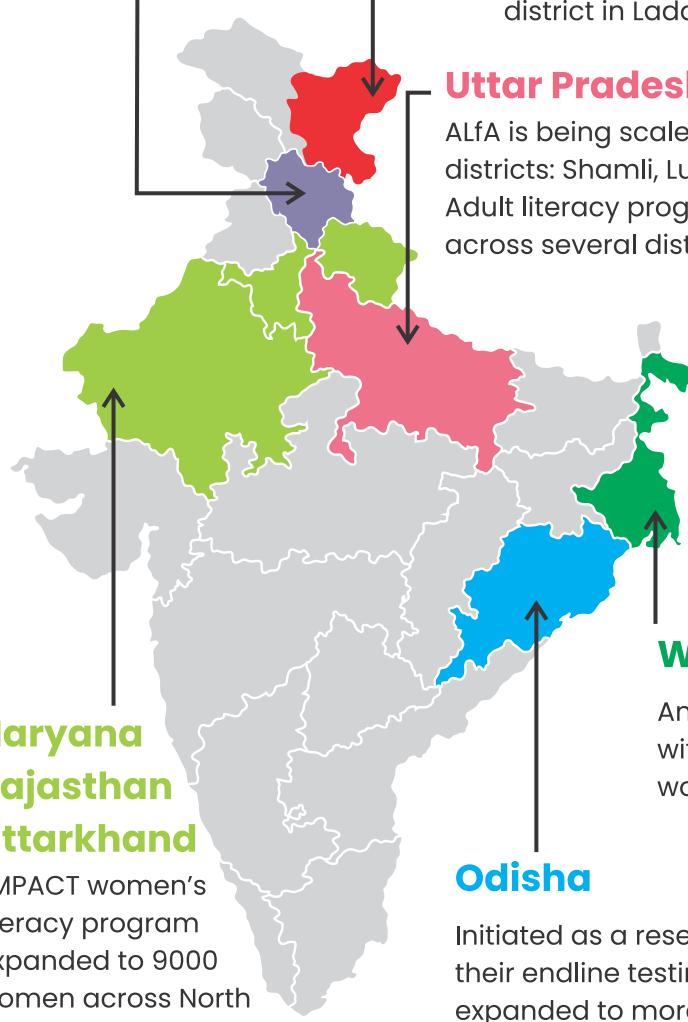
Children in Himachal Pradesh, India, make maths questions for each other and use hands-on techniques to solve.

# FROM THE MOUNTAINS TO THE SEA

Since its inception in 2022, ALfA has exploded in schools and adult literacy programs around the country. Looking forwards, many other districts and states have expressed interest in starting or expanding ALfA programs.

## Himachal Pradesh

Implementation has begun in 496 schools of Solan district, with an MOU in place for taking it state-wide in the 2024-25 session.



## Exponential Growth

### Ladakh

We are piloting a new way of disruptive learning - ALfA with 17000 ft Foundation in 30 selected schools of Leh district in Ladakh.

### Uttar Pradesh

ALfA is being scaled up in schools across four districts: Shamli, Lucknow, Unnao and Barabanki. Adult literacy programs are also being implemented across several districts.

### Mizoram

An adult literacy program implemented in partnership with the department of education has reached 5000 learners. There are now plans to implement ALfA in primary schools too.

### West Bengal

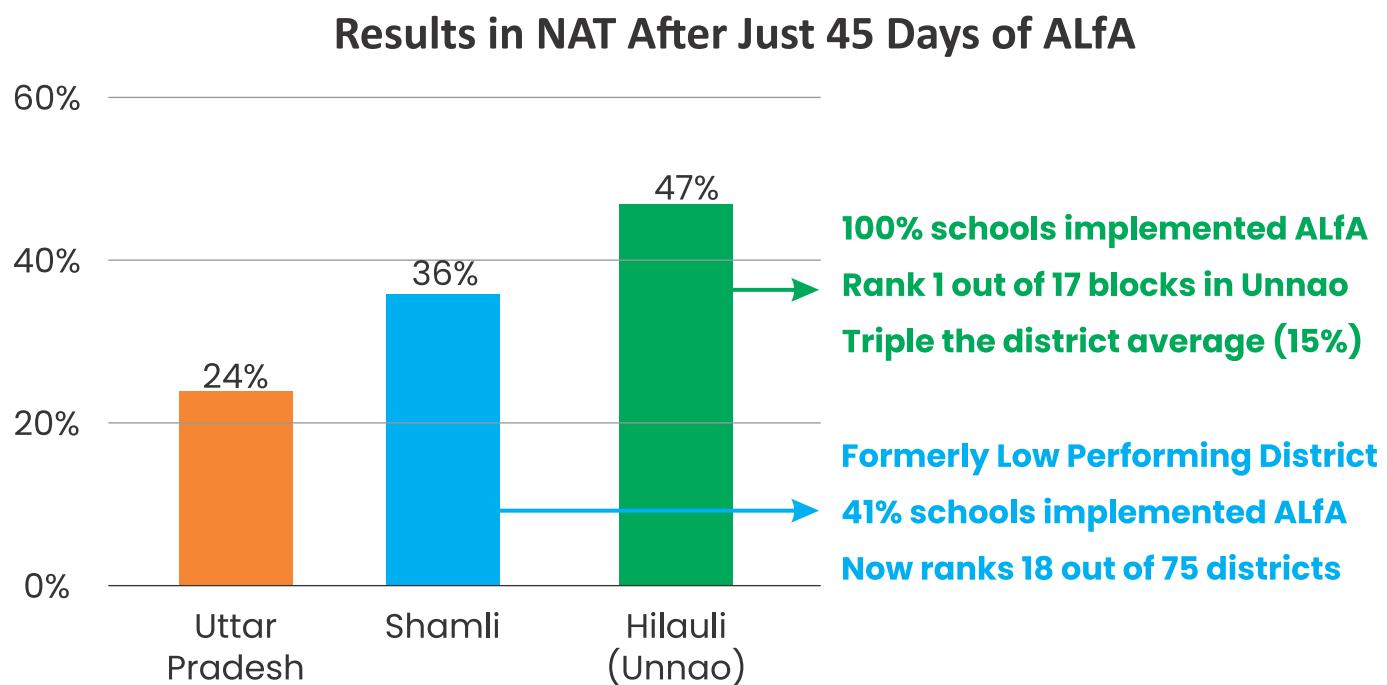
An adult literacy program in partnership with IIMPACT Foundation has helped 1000 women become literate.

### Odisha

Initiated as a research pilot batch of 10 schools will soon have their endline testing done, after which the program may be expanded to more schools throughout the district.

# NIPUN ASSESSMENT TEST

The NIPUN Assessment Test was conducted in schools across Uttar Pradesh in late 2023, and results were released in February 2024. District-wise analysis showed a strong correlation between the proportion of schools taking up ALfA in a particular district, and its scores on the NAT, as shown in the figure below.



## Results in NAT: Comparison of ALfA schools with overall averages

		Schools Tested	# Schools NIPUN	% Schools NIPUN	
UP Overall Schools Tested		68,352	16,169	24%	
4 districts (Lucknow, Shamli, Unnao, Barabanki)	Schools Tested	3,682	638	17%	<b>2X Impact</b>
	ALfA Schools Tested	344	120	35%	
1 District (Hilauli Block versus Unnao averages)	Schools Tested	1,322	193	15%	<b>3X Impact</b>
	ALfA Schools Tested	85	40	47%	



Click/Scan QR to check out  
the UP NAT data yourself



Click/Scan QR to watch a video  
on ALfA in Hilauli and Shamli

## CASE STUDY HILAULI, UNNAO

### 155 SCHOOLS 14,503 STUDENTS

Hilauli jumped from Rank 17 to Rank 1 in Unnao just after 22 working days in the Intensive Mode.

“ I am delighted to inform you that the ALfA pedagogy has been implemented in the 155 schools of Hilauli block since September 2023. There has been a substantial improvement in children’s learning levels, in very little time. In the assessments conducted by the Department of Education, Hilauli has come first in Unnao district. The ALfA pedagogy has helped Hilauli become NIPUN; for this I praise and recommend your work. I hope that you continue assisting in the educational field going forwards. ”

**Sangeeta Singh, Unnao BSA**

47% of schools were found to be NIPUN in Hilauli compared with 15% of schools of Unnao as a whole, and 24% in UP.

प्रेसक

जिला वैशिक शिक्षा अधिकारी

उन्नाव।

सेवा मे

डॉ. सुनीता गांधी

संस्थापिका

देवी चरणेन, लखनऊ

फ़ोन ३३६४५

फ़ाइल २२-२-२५

विषय: हिलौली ब्लॉक के प्राइमरी स्कूलों में ALFA पद्धति का प्रयोग महोदया,

हमें आपको यह सूचित करते हुए अत्यंत खुशी हो रही है कि ALFA पद्धति, जिसका अनुसंधान आपने किया है, हिलौली ब्लॉक के 155 स्कूलों में वर्ष 2023-24 के शैक्षिक सत्र में सितंबर माह से लागू किया गया है बहुत कम कार्य दिवसों के समय में बच्चों के शैक्षिक स्तर में काफी सुधार दिया है।

विभागीय निर्देशानुसार बच्चों के शैक्षिक दक्षता जांचने के लिए एक मूल्यांकन किया था इस मूल्यांकन में हिलौली विकास खण्ड में न्यूनतम स्तर था, वर्तान मूल्यांकन में शैक्षिक स्तर पर निपुण पाया गया और उन्नाव जिले में प्रथम स्थान पर आया है।

आपके ALFA पद्धति, प्रयोग और सहयोग को हिलौली ब्लॉक को निपुण बनाने में हम आपके काम की प्रशंसा और सराहना करते हैं।

हम आशा करते हैं कि आप शिक्षा क्षेत्र में इसी प्रकार आप शिक्षा आपका सहयोग प्राप्त होता रहेगा।

धन्यवाद।

संगीता सिंह  
जिला वैशिक शिक्षा अधिकारी  
उन्नाव।

## NEWSPAPER CLIPPING

In a government test conducted in November 2023 (partway through the ALfA implementation), Hilauli topped the ranking among Unnao's 17 blocks. 85 of Hilauli's schools were tested, out of which 40 were deemed to be 'NIPUN schools'.\* This translates to 47% of Hilauli's schools being NIPUN, over triple the rate for Unnao overall (15%) and double the state average (24%).

A 'NIPUN school' is defined as one in which 80% or more of sampled students passed the basic literacy assessment in each of Grade 1, 2 and 3.

## निपुण भारत मिशन में हिलौली प्रथम, पुरवा दूसरे और हसनगंज तीसरे स्थान पर

लाएँ की रैंक प्रतिशत के हिसाब से
1-हिलौली 40
2-पुरवा 32
3-हसनगंज 20
4-नवाबगंज 16
5-असोहा 11
6-बिठिया 11
7-सिकन्दरपुर कर्ण 11
8-मियापाज 10
9-सर्फिपुर 10
10-ओरास 09
11-गंजमुरादाबाद 09
12-झांगमठ 04
13-बीषापुर 04
14-सिकन्दरपुर सरोवरी 04
15-फ़रहमुर 01
16-सुमेरपुर 01
17-नगर क्षेत्र 0

# The Missing Piece

Discover how this disruptive pedagogy works, and what makes it more impactful than the best of existing systems.

Young girl shows how to represent a number using ice cream sticks and matchsticks. Fast track literacy camp, Lucknow, India.



# A STRUCTURED PEDAGOGY

Accelerating Learning for All (ALfA) transforms the process of learning, enabling 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.

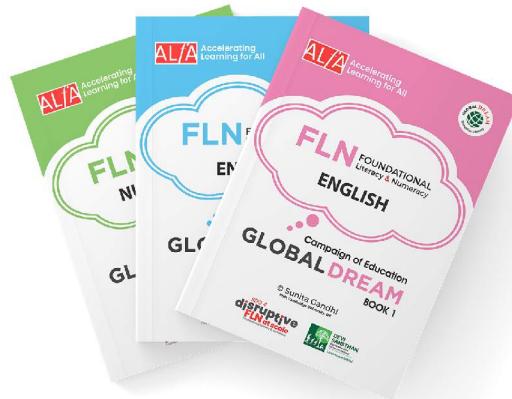
## PAIRED LEARNING

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.



## PEDAGOGY

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

## HOLISTIC EDUCATION

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

# HOW ALFA MAKES LEARNING...

Accelerating Learning for All (ALfA) transforms the process of learning, making it fast, holistic and joyful.

## Fast

Cutting down the baggage of the traditional education system: for example, children don't need to start by learning the alphabet; instead they go straight onto words. This saves a year or more.

Children are focused and motivated a much greater proportion of the time, as they are actively involved in the learning, which accelerates it.



## Joyful

- Children interact with each other: learning is cooperative rather than competitive.
- This builds connectedness, which is key to socio-emotional wellbeing.
- New pairs are made every day, so children get the chance to work with many different classmates.
- There are lots of fun, hands-on activities.

## Holistic

- Students make questions for each other, developing their critical thinking and creativity.
- Children spend more time on task, enabling them to go deeper.
- Hands-on activities mean children understand the concepts more clearly and practically.
- Paired learning builds citizenship skills and character



# TEACHER TRAINING AT SCALE

Teachers are the backbone of the education system, making teacher training and empowerment one of the most crucial tasks in educational reform. Online training is often regarded as ineffective. DEVI Sansthan experimented with a Massive Open Online Training (MOOT) series, which used an interactive live-videostream to deliver effective, engaging training.

## Data Highlights MASSIVE OPEN ONLINE TRAINING (March 2023)

**66**

**countries** with representatives from all 6 continents participated

**93%**

of participants found the online format of the training to be **effective**

**97%**

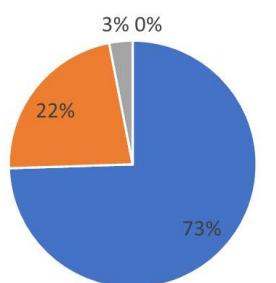
of participants **passed the quiz** & were shared free access to ALfA materials

**99%**

of teachers said they had **new take-away points** from the training

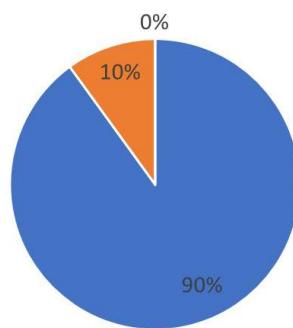
Several audience polls were used in the MOOT to gauge participants' attitude. The results, which were overwhelmingly positive, are shown below.

How did you find **today's training**?



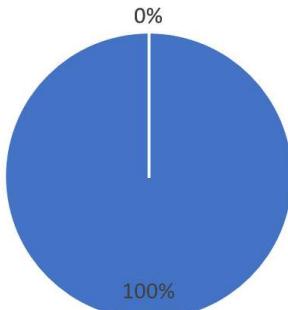
■ Excellent      ■ Quite Good  
■ Ok              ■ Nothing new

Do you want to adopt the **ALfA pedagogy** and processes in your classes?



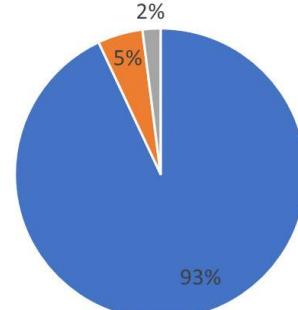
■ Yes      ■ Maybe      ■ No

Do you want to adopt **paired learning** in your classes?



■ Yes      ■ Maybe      ■ No

Has the **online format** of this MOOT been effective for you?



■ Yes      ■ Maybe      ■ No

# RESEARCH PAIRED LEARNING

Children working together in pairs, rather than passively listening to the teacher, can transform the pace and quality of learning.



## The Problem

In a traditional classroom, the teacher is unable to pay attention to each individual student: as the teacher progresses through the curriculum, many students are left behind.

## A Disruptive Approach

In pairs, even the shiest child becomes an active participant in learning. Learning is highly engaging, with each pair progressing at their own pace.

Click or Scan the QR to read more paired learning research.



**Studies around the world have found that peer learning has a huge array of academic and social benefits:**



improved academic performance<sup>1</sup>



deeper understanding<sup>2</sup>



equality between students<sup>3</sup>



higher engagement<sup>4</sup>



improved behaviour<sup>5</sup>

**Table Key differences between traditional and ALfA classrooms**

Traditional classroom	ALfA classroom
Students working in whole class or groups, sitting in rows facing the teacher.	Students working in pairs is the main modality, they are facing each other.
Children are grouped by skill level. Groups are fixed for a long period of time.	Random pairing ensures diversity. Pairs are changed frequently, so that children get to mix and work with others of all ability levels and backgrounds.
All children are on the same textbook page, everyone is working on the same question. Some are bored while others find it too difficult	Different pairs are on different modules at any given time; children ask each other questions so work on unique problems.

## Research & References

- Academic Performance:** Babayigit, Ö. & Erkus, B. (2022). Effect of Peer Teaching on the Academic Achievement of Fourth Grade Primary School Students. International Journal of Psychology and Educational Studies, 9(3), 782–791.
- Deeper Understanding:** Romano, P. & Walker, J. (2010). "Bio Buddies:" Peer Tutoring as an Instructional Strategy. NERA Conference Proceedings 2010 (3), pgs 1–69.
- Equality:** Lorenzo, M. et al. (2006). Reducing the gender gap in the physics classroom. American Journal of Physics 74(2), 118–122.

**Higher Engagement:** Arieno, C.L. (2007). The Advantages of Class Wide Peer Tutoring in an Urban Eighth Grade Inclusion Science Class. [Unpublished master's thesis]. State University of New York at Brockport.

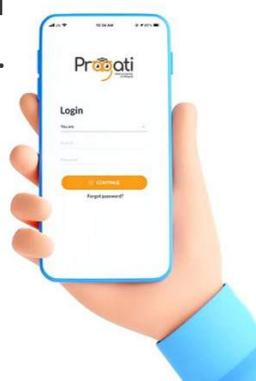
**Improved Behaviour:** Eskay, M. et al. (2012). Use of Peer Tutoring, Cooperative Learning, and Collaborative Learning: Implications for Reducing Anti-Social Behavior of Schooling Adolescents. US-China Education Review (11A). Pages 932–945.

# WHY ALfA ASSESSMENTS

AlfA assessments foster cooperation not competition and prompt students to focus on learning progress, not marks.

## The Problem

- Many exams test factual recall but not deeper understanding.
- Exams are used to classify students into 'strong' and 'weak' – labels that are unhelpful for all.
- Exams take days or weeks for teachers to mark, creating a substantial lag between the student sitting the exam and receiving feedback.
- When students do receive feedback, all they typically get is a percentage or grade, which doesn't help them understand the specific areas they need to work on.<sup>1</sup>



**Click or Scan the QR to  
read more research on  
ipsative assessments**

## A Disruptive Approach

Assessment data should be used to 'identify areas of learning and development where children may need support or extension'.<sup>2</sup> Tests should be ipsative – that is, children should be competing with themselves, striving to improve over their past efforts, rather than competing against each other.<sup>3</sup>

**Table: Re-examining exams**

	<b>Traditional Assessments</b>	<b>Paradigm Shift</b>
<b>Why? Purpose</b>	<b>Summative:</b> Sorting and ranking students.	<b>Formative:</b> Informing the teaching-learning process. Students compete with themselves, not each other.
<b>What/ When? Methods</b>	<b>High-stakes exams:</b> Lots of memorisation required, fixed timings.	<b>Low-stakes repertoire:</b> Mix of assignments and portfolios too. Frequent, unannounced tests, problem-solving and unseen passages.
<b>How? Reporting</b>	<b>Focus on overall marks:</b> Lots of teacher marking required, delayed results, takes away time from learning.	<b>Focus on Progress:</b> Use Pragati or similar app to provide specific, easy-to-understand feedback for learner, teacher and policy-maker.

## Research & References

<sup>1</sup>Markovich, Isidora. 2021. Why Giving Instant Feedback is Important for Effective Learning. EDUME. <https://edume.com/blog/role-of-feedback-in-improving-learning>

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Education, Government of India. 2021. NIPUN Bharat Guidelines, p. 131. [https://dse.education.gov.in/sites/default/files/NIPUN\\_BHARAT\\_GUIDELINES\\_EN.pdf](https://dse.education.gov.in/sites/default/files/NIPUN_BHARAT_GUIDELINES_EN.pdf)

<sup>3</sup>Gandhi, Sunita. 2017. Compete With Yourself (CWY): Maximising Learning Gain in Schools. In: Hughes G. (eds) Ipsative Assessment and Personal Learning Gain. Palgrave Macmillan, London. [https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-37-56502-0\\_11](https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-37-56502-0_11)

PARTNER FOR CHANGE

# Join the movement

If ALfA is spreading quickly around the world, it is thanks to our hardworking partners, including governments, NGOs and schools. If we all work together, we can achieve literacy for all.



A partnership between DEVI Sansthan and Vision Spring enabled 10,000 government primary school students to have their eyes tested and get free glasses, if required.

# 45-Days-to-FLN Challenge

Experience the power of the Accelerating Learning for All program in a school-based research program, enabling children to learn to read swiftly and joyfully.

## ALfA Benefits

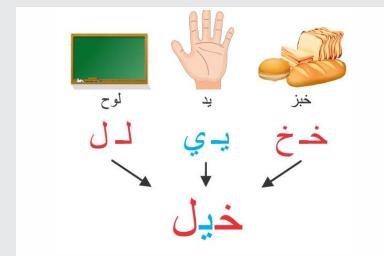
- **10x faster.** Children learn basic FLN in three months – instead of three years.
- **10x lower climate impact.** FLN in just 72 pages (averaging 18 pages per child – shared among two children, used for multiple classes) compared to 180 page textbook per subject + 180 page workbooks. No plastic, only reusable materials.
- **10x cheaper.** Thin, low-cost booklets. Free mobile app & e-Learning materials.



Peer learning through  
A4 sized books



Use of Locally Available  
Counters



Available in 30+  
languages internationally

It's easy to run the FLN challenge, with DEVI Sansthan supporting every step of the way:



Select 20 or more schools, randomly allocate half each to implementation and reference groups. This helps rigorously measure the program's impact.

Conduct a simple test, using a multiple-choice OMR sheet based on NIPUN goals. The survey can be conducted by a third party, for example, college students.

DEVI Sansthan's team will conduct a one-day online training for teachers in the implementation schools, and provide them with ALfA materials.

The program can be conducted over a 45 to 90 day period, with one or two periods per day. Students first complete the thin ALfA booklets, then move on to reading textbooks, storybooks and newspapers with understanding.

Depending on the results and a thorough review of the process, the project can be extended and scaled up to more schools.

# GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS



**Quizizz, International**  
Massive Open Online Trainings partnership



**Teachers Without Borders**  
Toolkit Replication partnership



**World Climate School, Norway**  
Knowledge & Training



**Literacy Chicago, USA**  
Adult Literacy program



**Kupanda Sisters, Guyana**  
Single school pilot



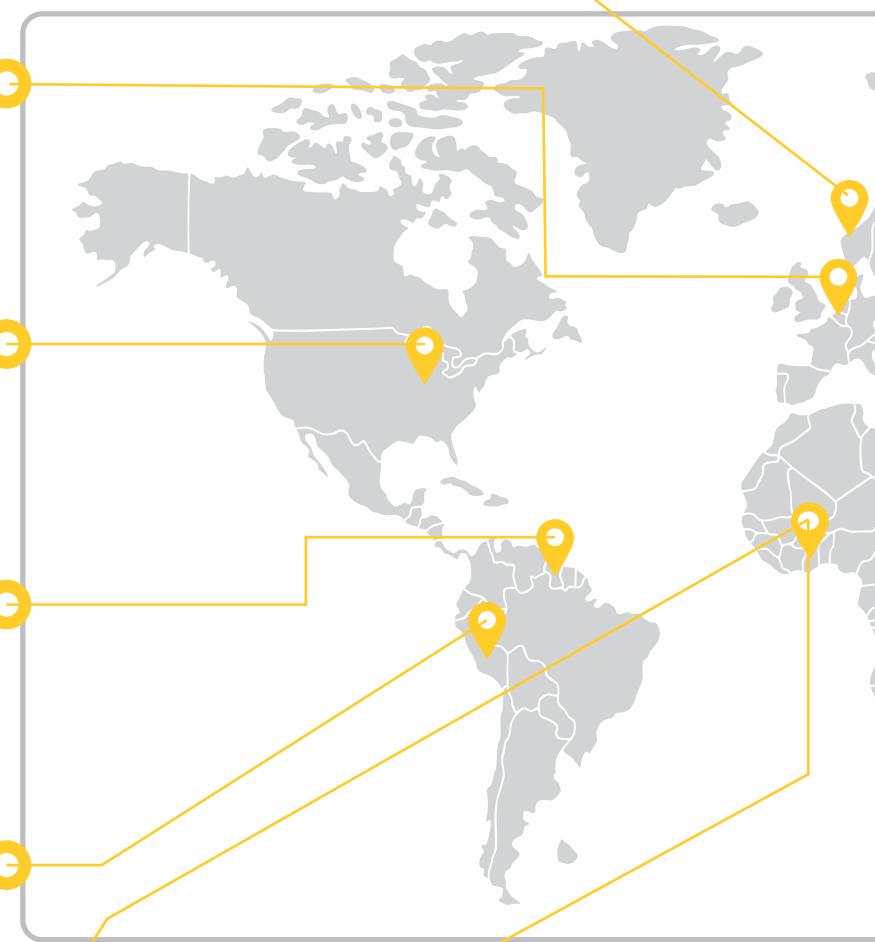
**Arca Beta, Peru**  
Pilot in a school in Amazon



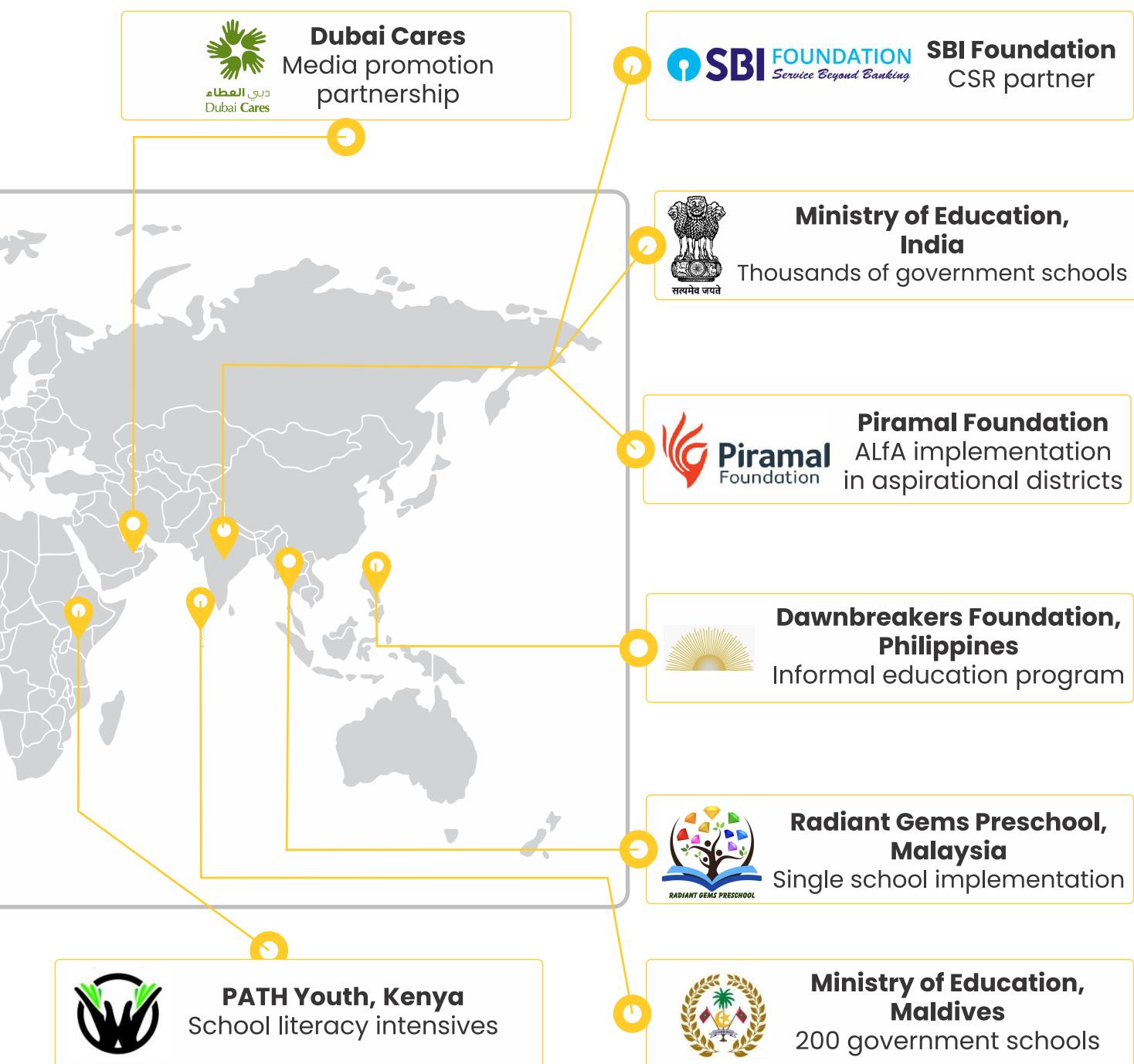
**All Africa Students Union**  
Knowledge & training partnership



**Forum for African Women Educationists**  
Knowledge & training partnership



DEVI Sansthan is collaborating with numerous schools, NGOs and governments around the world in the effort to bring higher quality education for all, with a special focus on disadvantaged groups. From Peru to Chicago, from Maldives to Kenya, ALfA is showcasing impressive results, which are showcased in the coming pages. **Come, join the movement!**



# GLOBAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

We thank our advisory committee for their expert guidance and motivation.



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Founding Member of  
FAWE, Guinea



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Kupanda Sisters Inc.  
Founder & CEO,  
Guyana



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Fundación Escuela Nueva,  
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# TESTIMONIES

# Voices from the Field

The ALfA pedagogy has been recognised by many eminent leaders - both politicians and pedagogues. Many teachers have also appreciated the transformation it has brought to their classrooms



Teachers from the Maldives enjoy solving questions at an ALfA numeracy training.

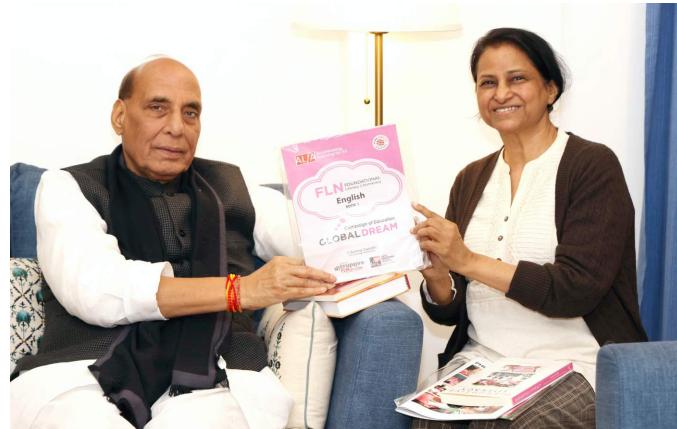
# POLICYMAKER TESTIMONIALS

## Hon. Defence Minister, India

Mr Rajnath Singh

“Dr. Sunita Gandhi’s 30 hour literacy and numeracy model is highly innovative, and highly scalable, that can benefit school children, out of school children and illiterate adults.”

Click or Scan the [QR code](#) to watch **Shri Rajnath Singh discuss the ALfA program.**



## Former Minister of Education, Guinea

Ms Aicha Bah Diallo

“Dr. Sunita Gandhi’s innovative ALfA method allows learners of all ages to quickly master essential foundational skills. It surpasses traditional methods, promoting holistic learning. Learning happens in pairs, embedding critical 21st-century skills into the curriculum.”



Click or Scan the [QR code](#) to hear other prominent policymakers' views on ALfA

## Minister of State for Education, Maldives

Dr Abdullah Rasheed Ahmad

“Despite all the efforts which may countries are making, still a large proportion of students are suffering from low literacy. Why? It's because we all are repeatedly doing the same thing in the same way. Thank you Dr Sunita for coming up with a totally new strategy for teaching literacy and numeracy. Rather than taking years, students can learn literacy in just three months.”



Click or Scan the [QR code](#) to watch **Dr Ahmad announce the launch of ALfA in Maldives**



# PEDAGOGUE TESTIMONIALS

**Director of Education & Adolescent Development, UNICEF**

Mr Robert Jenkins

“

Acquiring foundational literacy and numeracy is key for children as they progress. Unfortunately, many schools systems around the world are failing very large numbers of children. We need a step change in the education sector, to reach children with access to quality education so they can realise their full potential.

”



Click or Scan the [QR code](#) to watch **Robert Jenkins** addressing DEVI Sansthan's **Global Policymakers Conclave**

**Reading & Dyslexia Expert, USA**

Mary McCoolberry

“

Dr Sunita Gandhi's dream is brilliant, huge, ambitious and daring. What I love about the ALfA kits is that they accelerate the process for readers across the world. I have used them with students I teach. The toolkits meet the learners at their instructional level. I love the fact that kids are building on their background knowledge.

”

**Founder, World Climate School, Norway**

Inger Mette Stenseth

“

Dr Gandhi's educational pedagogy, ALfA: Accelerating Learning for All, is truly transformative. It is inclusive, scientifically rigorous, and capable of scaling to reach learners of any age. During my visits to India, I witnessed firsthand the profound impact of ALfA in government schools, slums, and among out-of-school children and illiterate adults.

”



Click or Scan the [QR code](#) to read **Inger Mette Stenseth's** letter

# TESTIMONIALS

## TEACHERS, PRINCIPALS & OFFICIALS

“ I started with 22 children, many of whom had some challenges with reading and mathematics. 19 children can now read fluently, and the rest are in process. I feel delighted with everything I have been observing in my children.

**Zenaida**

*Grade 3 Teacher, Sachachorro School, Iquitos, Peru*

“ In 4th grade, we had so many kids who couldn't write or read. My own daughter's reading ability is now getting better each day, her scores improved significantly. Our school is excited, and our growth is accelerating. Everybody is praising the curriculum.

**Rickie Dhillon**

*Chief Business Official, Kepler Neighborhood School, California, USA*

“ The results are highly positive and exciting. Children's attendance has also improved.

**Rahul Mishra**

*Basic Shiksha Adhikari, Shamli, Uttar Pradesh, India*



“ This is a very easy technique. I think this technique should be used everywhere throughout India.

**Alla Rakha**

*Principal, PS Malakpur Shamli, Uttar Pradesh, India*

“ This is an excellent method. When children use concrete objects, the learning sticks in their brain. Children who were being bored by the traditional method are enjoying learning with ALfA.

**Veena Gupta**

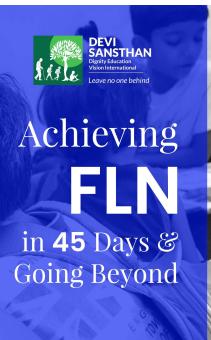
*Principal, PS Ramshehar 1 Solan, Himachal Pradesh, India*

“ We got to learn a lot new in today's training: how to build a solid foundation for children's learning. There was a great exchange of ideas between the trainers and participants.

**Arif Hassan**

*Participant in Massive Open Online Training, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India*

# VIDEO EVIDENCE



Watch a video of Shamli students performing **above Grade Level** after 45 days of ALfA implementation.



Hear the **testimonies of Unnao teachers** implementing the ALfA program.



View a **news report by the Print** on ALfA implementation in Shamli.



See the difference ALfA is making in **government schools of Lucknow**.

## How were these videos made?

WhatsApp groups were set up for different blocks/districts. Teachers were encouraged to post their photos, videos and any questions in the WhatsApp groups, much of the footage in this video was shared by classroom teachers.



Listen to teachers' reviews about the **literacy program in Barabanki**.

# Supporters



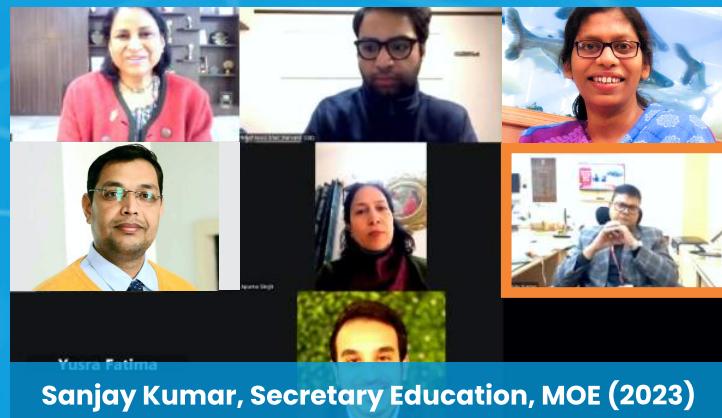
**Shri Rajnath Singh, India's Defense Minister**



**Alok Ranjan, Chief Secretary, Uttar Pradesh (2015)**



**Anita Karwal, Secretary Education, MOE (2022)**



**Sanjay Kumar, Secretary Education, MOE (2023)**



**Vijay Kiran Anand, Director-General School Education, UP**



**Kiran Bedi, then-Lt. Governor, Puducherry**



**Dileep Shukla, Script-Writer, Bollywood**



**Raj Shekhar, then-DM Lucknow**

# A CALL TO ACTION

# A Roadmap for Change

Everyone has an important role to play if we are to achieve SDG4. Join the learning revolution by trying out ALfA in your context!



Two young girls, brimming with optimism. Fast Track Literacy Camp, Lucknow, India

# IMPLEMENTATION ROADMAP

We offer the ALfA pedagogy as a free tool to work towards foundational literacy and numeracy for all. There are several key implementation options.

## SCALE

### System-wide

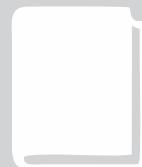
Adopt across a broad geographical area to race towards universal literacy.



## MODALITY

### Incorporate into curriculum

Merge ALfA materials with the existing textbooks.  
Reduce some pages to avoid duplication, keeping overall printing cost low.



## TRAINING

### Training Cascade

In-person training can be rolled out by a sequence of master trainers and trainers.



### Pilot

Randomly select a few schools to try out the ALfA program and compare results with a reference group.



### Separate ALfA books

ALfA booklets are slim. After the ALfA books, students move on to rapidly complete regular textbooks.



### Massive Open Online Training

Online training can be very effective if well-structured and highly interactive.



# A Groundbreaking Pedagogy

## ACCELERATING LEARNING FOR ALL

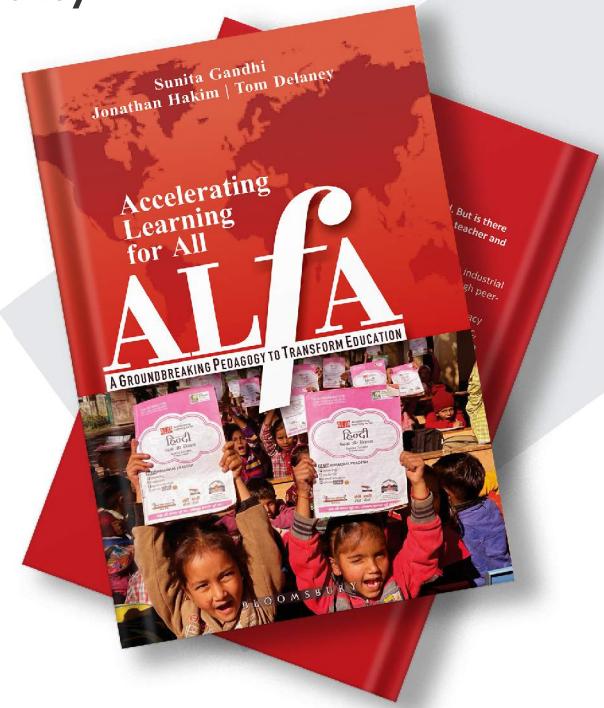


Sunita Gandhi, Jonathan Hakim, Tom Delaney

Published by Bloomsbury, January 2024

ALfA: Accelerating Learning for All breaks the shackles of the industrial education system, revolutionizing the school experience through peer learning and hands-on activities. The ALfA program enables children and adults alike to learn foundational literacy and numeracy in months rather than years. Beyond reading, writing and arithmetic, ALfA builds the crucial life skills of collaboration, creativity, citizenship and character.

Both a classroom guide for teachers and an implementation roadmap for policymakers, this book explores a transformative approach to teaching and learning. Sprinkled with anecdotes from teachers, principals & students, Accelerating Learning for All inspires and equips us to build a better education system."



## A How to Compendium

*"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

*"This book provide some insightful and unique ideas about creating a pedagogy of possibility. It will undoubtedly create the conditions for a better world."*

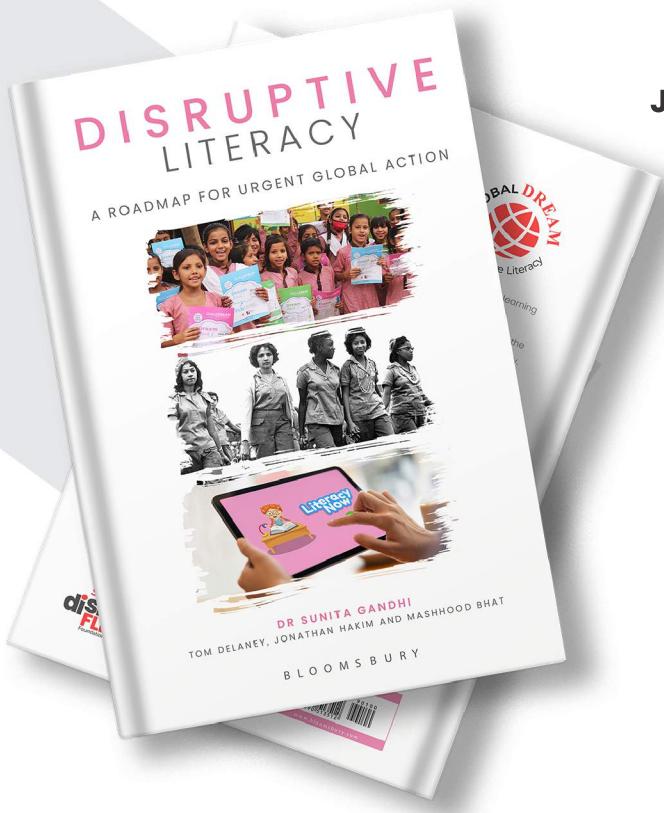
**Sigamoney Naicker**

Professor, University of the Western Cape



# A Roadmap for Urgent Action

## DISRUPTIVE LITERACY



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



"Foundational literacy and numeracy are crucial to every person's well-being. A nation's literacy rate is a key predictor of its social and economic progress. Yet the world still has hundreds of millions of children in school but not learning the basics, and adults deprived of these foundational skills. Why?

Drawing from remarkable examples of movements around the world, and sprinkled with stories from the authors' grassroots educational work in the Global Dream Accelerating Learning for All (ALfA) program, Disruptive Literacy is an easy-to-read but hard-to-ignore manifesto that will touch your heart and inspire you to action."

*"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



# A CALL TO ACTION

Everyone has an important role to play – from policymakers to principals to parent. Join the ALfA learning revolution!

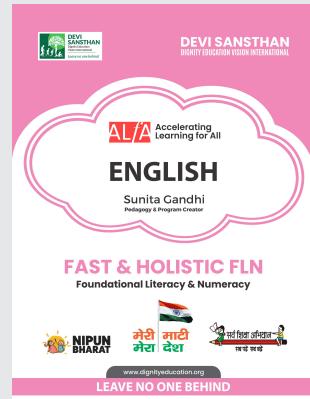
## Research Implementation

Conduct an ALfA pilot in your context to gather compelling evidence on efficacy.

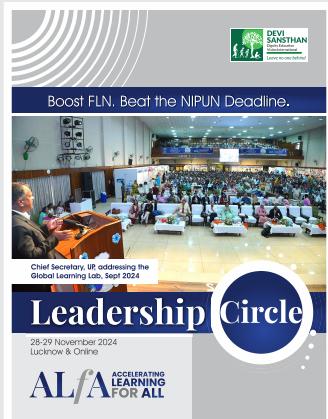


## Replicate

Help convert the ALfA toolkit to new languages, enabling more children access to free, high-quality learning materials.



Scan/Click  
each QR to  
learn more



## Network

Join us at an upcoming in-person or online event, such as the Leadership Circle (28-29 November 2024).



## Advocate

Engage with policymakers, raising your voice for educational transformation.

# Every word read is a step towards a brighter future.



Together, we can make the world literate!

# 1 Billion Literate

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Have big dreams  
*You will grow into them*

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DEVI Sansthan (Dignity Education Vision International) is an NGO with a big vision: to help India and the world achieve universal Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN). DEVI Sansthan is pioneering transformative pedagogies, empowering teachers, and leveraging policy change to enable rapid gains towards literacy for all.

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