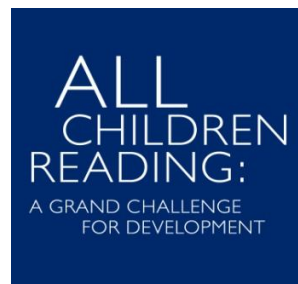




# **OLINGA FOUNDATION SHORT PROFILE AND ACHIEVEMENTS**



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**GHANA 2012**

## **OLINGA FOUNDATION SHORT PROFILE AND ACHIEVEMENTS.**

**GENERAL OVERVIEW:** Over the last 12 years, the Olinga Foundation for Human Development (Olinga) has been developing a scalable model of literacy teacher training support/intervention at the upper primary level in collaboration with the Ghana Education Service (GES) in three districts across the country: Wassa Amenfi East and West in the Western Region, and the Afram Plains/Kwahu North in the Eastern Region. These districts fall under the Government's most deprived criteria and experience very low rates of literacy attainment among P6 children and experience high dropout rates particularly among the upper primary levels. The Olinga Foundation for Human Development has worked in a close collaborative relationship with the GES and the Ministry of Education in order to achieve a level of scale in each of its target districts in a cost effective and efficient manner.

**RECOGNITION:** The Ghana Education Service (GES) has endorsed the programme at district, regional and national levels and has encouraged its expansion in all districts of the country (see attached letter from GES Director General). The Enlightening the Hearts Literacy Campaign of the Olinga Foundation, was ranked 11 out of 300 NGOs by The Hewlett Packard Foundation award for the best education programmes in Africa under its Ashoka Award for Education.

**INNOVATION:** The Olinga Foundations' key innovation is its approach to literacy attainment aimed to transform the instructional practice of teachers and their attitudes towards teaching in the primary classroom. The nine month literacy programme is integrated into the school timetable during the period for literacy and local language learning at the upper primary level in order that primary students who have never learned to read are able to finally break through to literacy. The Government of Ghana literacy achievement testing suggests that less than 25% of children at the upper primary level are able to read and write at an international standard (MOE, 2010) after six years of primary schooling in Ghana. Although the Olinga Foundation recognizes the tremendous need for early grade literacy interventions (at P1-P3) its work has been focused on assisting Government at the upper primary levels in order to provide a remedial approach for children who are still unable to read (75% of those in P5 and P6).

**MORAL COMPONENT:** The Olinga Foundation has also developed training modules and on site supervision approaches which help teachers become moral leaders and morally responsible teachers in their classrooms transforming their teaching practice and approach towards students. For example, several of the schools in which the Foundation has worked have become free of corporal punishment and have adopted alternative disciplinary approaches. Teachers have also become more gender sensitive towards their female students ensuring larger participation among pupils in the classroom.

**METHODOLOGY AND SCOPE:** The methodology is based on a phonic and syllabic approach using three of Ghana's major local languages<sup>1</sup> which accelerates the time needed to attain the basic foundation for reading simple words and sentences within a nine month period. The Olinga Foundations main approach is to train a set of 50-75 teachers across 50 schools each year in target districts in a systematic and scalable manner. At the beginning of each academic

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year consultative planning meetings are held with the District Education Office in the target district to select deprived educational circuits which will be the focus for the year. A three to four day residential training programme is then held at the district level for the target schools. After the training a set of 35-40 basic primers for children are provided to each school. Cost sharing agreements with the District Assemblies ensure that teacher training and on site supervision events are sustained after the second year of programme implementation.

The program has been tested for the last 12 years and has been found to ensure that at least 40% of the learners who enter the programme are able to achieve basic literacy within the nine month school cycle at the P4, P5 and P6 levels. Over 20,000 children have been involved in the Olinga Foundation's literacy programme and over 450 teachers have been trained in the two regions since its inception in 2000.

**The Olinga Foundations approach to implementation includes the following process:**

- **Consultations with the district education office and district assembly are made in order to initiate a memorandum of understanding** outlining roles and responsibilities, the key cost sharing aspects and implementation agreements, etc.
- **A planning meeting is held with all district education staff to agree on criteria for school selection in the program using a targeting approach with systematic roll out** (e.g. two to three circuits for entry each year of the program and selection of rural primary schools).
- **Teachers and head teachers are trained in the EHL methodology on a GES circuit basis covering about 50 schools in each district each year according to the available resources.** The involvement of schools depends on the available funds at the disposal of the Olinga Foundation, the district education office and district assembly.
- **On-site supervision** of all the newly trained teachers is a vital component of the program ensuring that both Olinga and GES staff visit all the teachers who have been trained to conduct classroom observation (1-2 literacy sessions) and then provide feedback in a systematic and appreciative manner which builds teacher confidence. The on-site supervision is then tabulated by GES staff to track "active and non active schools" depending on the teachers' presentation, preparation, instruction roll out and usage of the literacy primers.
- **Refresher cluster based training programs** are organized at the cluster (sub circuit) level which brings about 10-15 teachers from the primary schools together to assess the progress of the programs and refresh the teachers on the basic methodologies.
- **The Olinga Foundation conducts a baseline and summative evaluation** at the end of each annual project cycle in collaboration with the Ghana Education Service to assess the literacy attainment/outcomes, effectiveness and efficiency of the program in transforming learners achievement rates at each level (P4 to P6) across program and non program schools; literacy results among learners from program and non program schools are compared after the nine month literacy program cycle. Teachers and school profiles are also generated which embed the data in a context analysis drawing out the reasons behind high and low performing schools.

**ENGLISH AND MOTHER TONGUE BILITERACY AND EXAM RESULTS:** The other dimension of sustainability embedded in the Olinga Foundation Literacy program methodology is related to the evaluative findings that reveal that children who are involved in the program are able to attain basic literacy in their mother tongue language (Twi or Ewe) within the nine months and that their phonemic awareness assists them translate this skill into reading in their second language--English. The ripple effect of the Olinga Foundations Literacy programme over the last 12 years has been that over 40% of the 20,000 children who have been involved in the 450 schools have improved upon their reading and writing

capabilities in their native languages – Twi and Ewe. Reports from the district education offices in the Eastern and Western Region of the country reveal that the program has made a substantial impact on the local literacy attainment and English results at the JHS exit level (e.g. BECE tests) in the focus districts. The District Education offices reported that from 2007/08 to date their BECE results at Junior High school 3 level have improved based on the implementation of the EHL program and the teaching and learning methods introduced in their schools.

**COST EFFECTIVENESS:** Over the years the cost effectiveness of the program has been seen as a result of the high level of volunteerism by teachers and retired teachers in helping to monitor and support the program at the district and national levels. The EHL program is integrated in the ongoing work of the district education offices and the Olinga Foundation staff maintains a small team to support and ensure the teacher training and quality roll out at the district levels. For instance, since its inception the Olinga Foundation has had no more than 2 to 3 full time paid staff (national coordinator and regional coordinators) at any one time. The support by expert trainers and other consultants has been kept to a minimum in order to ensure high quality and cost effectiveness. Most importantly a team of Olinga foundation trainers has been created at the district level through the GES which includes district circuit supervisors and members of the District Teacher support team. These district based trainers are used by the GES itself during all residential and cluster based training programmes in order to ensure programme continuity, long term sustainability and capabilities of district trainers in the program districts. The book purchase has also been done on a competitive basis to reduce the cost of printing. The Foundation has been able to set up a modest office in the Western and Eastern Regions which reduces the costs of accommodation in these regions since the office also has a small room for accommodating the regional coordinators. Often local transport is used to visit the program schools even within the most remote areas of the country.

**TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION:** The Olinga Foundation is in consultation with one of Ghana's leading mobile phone networks (MTN) in the usage of mobile phone technology to assist teachers communicate on pressing instruction issues and receive guidance with the District Education office and Olinga staff during the roll out of their programme. We are also exploring the usage of the e readers particularly at the primary school levels to support our programme in future<sup>2</sup>. Access to these two technologies would assist children increase their exposure to more African based books and also ensure that teachers are in a position to communicate and receive encouragement throughout the nine month programme cycle<sup>3</sup>.

**RELEVANCE:** The program is also relevant to the new moves by the Ghana Government and its development partners for a decentralized education process to take place at the district levels. District Assemblies are being empowered through several USAID projects to find local level solutions to improving quality education through the Transparency and Accountability Project (TAP) and the more recent Ghana Decentralization Project. USAID is also supporting large infrastructure investments under its Millennium Challenge Account with the Ghana Government. This project proposal is designed to complement these programs and find sustainable cost effective solutions for improving quality and ultimately reading improvement among the upper primary levels of children in targeted districts.

The *Theory of Change* for this project is based on the notion that the teacher is the main facilitator of learning at the classroom level and their attitudes, skills, competencies and behavior can have a lifelong impact on the learners they interact with. The project is based on substantive research that this highly sensitive relationship between the teacher and learner is pivotal to the child's ability to build confidence,

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self esteem and transition to learning at all levels of education (Brooks, 1991<sup>4</sup>; Perrott, 1982; Montessori, 1967). The Olinga Foundations training approach helps teachers recognize the high “station” and importance of their work to the transformation of the learner and the important role they play in transforming society through the work they do in the classroom. The training and on-site supervision and support are focused on building the teachers moral responsibility towards the learner and ensuring that they understand that every step and action they take has a long lasting impact on the learner. The Olinga Foundation’s training is tailored to addressing four main aspects of these moral responsibilities along with the basic instruction practice of simple phonic based approaches to teaching reading and writing in local language

- The training is focused on creating a gender sensitive and child friendly teacher through using participative techniques at the training programme and helping teachers integrate these practices at the classroom level;
- The teachers are asked to reflect on the important role of a teacher in transformation of the classroom students, in community development and national development process. They are asked to explore how they can become role models to their students, parents and communities;
- The teachers are also asked to use and explore alternative disciplinary action which includes the way they speak to their children, the way they work with the children and the manner in which they punish children (avoiding corporal punishment and verbal abuse).
- The teachers are trained to use inspirational writings of moral leaders to continue focusing and improving their attitudes and behaviors in the classroom.
- A moral leadership award is given to the best teachers who meet these moral leadership benchmarks and improve the literacy rates of children in their classes in each district.

The close inter-relationships between teacher attitude/behavior and literacy instructional practice are at the heart of the Olinga Foundation’s methodology and practice. Successful program teachers are able to master both the skill of teaching simple literacy methods to their students and at the same time remain as exemplary individual teachers in the classroom employing a mixture of creative, inspirational and leadership qualities.

From the learners perspective the change process often happens in primary school with children feeling a level of security and empathy with their teachers to allow them to explore their strengths and weaknesses. The ability to read is one of the most fundamental milestones for the child and youth to experience. It is also the most important milestone to prove to parents that the school and teachers are functioning (Casely-Hayford, 2010). The theory of change therefore involves more than just the focus on the teacher and also addresses the need to build the child’s confidence with his/her peers and significant others (e.g. parents). This project sees the need to start reading clubs and introduce some extra school activities (e.g. reading competitions and writing etc) as part of the process of literacy attainment and confidence building particularly among girls. One of the most important aspects to literacy attainment for children in Africa is access to books (Abadzie, 2008). Access to books will be a vital part of this project which will ensure that children all have at least one primer and that extra teaching and learning materials are available to each class in order for the reading clubs to access in their mother tongue.

The intermediate objectives of the project and indicators as identified in the Theory of Change:

- Improve literacy levels and reading abilities of P4, P5 and P6 students after the first and second year cycle; (Indicators: Ministry of Education’s NEA and SEA results in districts and target schools; impact assessment from Olinga annual tests at the end of the year).
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- To reduce teacher absenteeism and increase time on task at the literacy hour among teachers in target schools (on site observation recorded by District Circuit supervisors and PTA/SMC mobile phone technology to track absenteeism).
- To reduce the usage of abuse and physical punishments towards the child and creating a child friendly teaching environment through participative methods of language instruction and alternative disciplinary practices in at least 40% of Olinga target schools. (Classroom observation and PTA and SMC feedback questionnaire).
- Increasing the level of community participation in the supervision and oversight of their teachers and ensuring time on task is improved. (Indicators: number of SMC PTA site visits to schools to observe teaching and learning during literacy period; consultations on test results at the baseline and end of year evaluation process using the School Performance Appraisal Meetings (SPAM) with School Management Committees (SMC's).

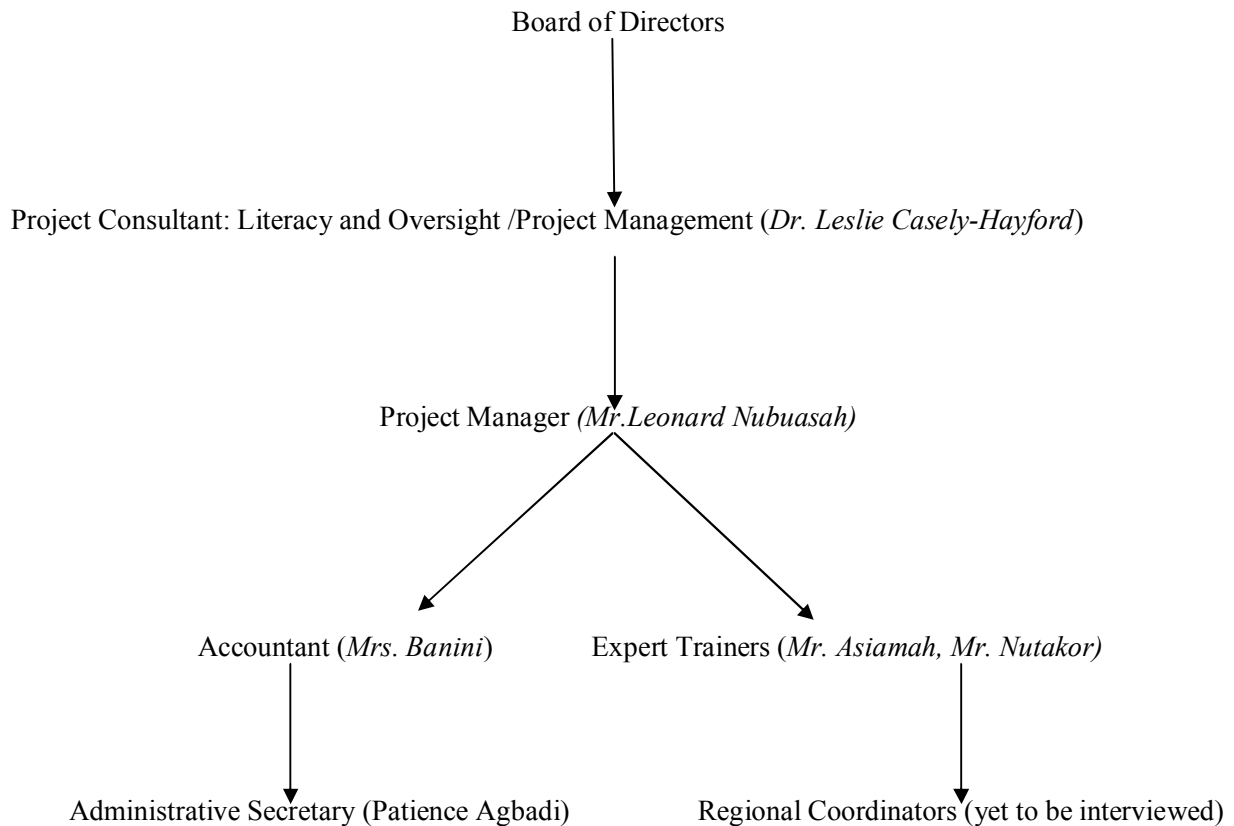
### **Sustainability**

Capacity building has been a vital part of the Olinga Foundations approach to scale up at the district and regional levels in Ghana. A close working relationship with the district assembly and district education office has been established in all of the current operational districts and is pivotal to the ability of the project to go to scale in any new districts. The time spent on negotiating and consulting with the district assembly and district education offices across the new districts will lay the ground work for a strong and supportive working relationship with Government agencies and Olinga staff as facilitators (e.g. regional coordinators etc) will ensure ownership and leadership by the District itself. This facilitative role played by Olinga staff at the national and regional levels ensures that the leadership of the district education office is in full control of the project and that all project interventions (e.g. teacher training and teacher onsite supervision and support) are planned and implemented by the District education staff.

### **Management and Implementation Plan**

The Olinga Foundation's yearly implantation plan involves a pre-planning meeting with the district education offices across the four districts of operation to identify target schools and set the dates for the teacher training in October, the baseline tests in November and then ongoing monitoring until March when a one day refresher course is organized followed by the evaluation in July.

### MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE/ORGANIZATIONAL CHART:



#### Program Management and Financial Management:

The Olinga Foundation for Human Development has a Board of Directors that steers the affairs of the Foundations work including all projects. The Foundation has two full time staff at the National and Regional levels including a part time accountant who assists with the monitoring and support to the program. The Olinga Foundation has a very strong working relationship with the District Education Offices, Regional Education Offices and Chief Executives of the two focal districts in the Western and Eastern regions where the program operates. The literacy task force members are made up of Olinga Foundation core expert trainers to support the Olinga Foundation during training and program cycle implementation. A part time Accountant is engaged in the financial management and a yearly audit is undertaken. Staff capacity building is put in place where staff is expected to upgrade their skills in current literacy approaches. There are monthly in-house consultative meetings to ensure project management and direction with staff members from the national and regional levels of the programme.

### SUMMARY OF RESEARCH SUPPORTING OLINGA FOUNDATIONS' WORK

The EHL Campaign has had encouraging results from its programme monitoring and evaluation process over the last ten years. Each year a baseline study across programme and non programme schools is conducted in the intervention districts with the GES. The final evaluation is conducted in the same schools with the same children and reveals that after the nine month literacy programme cycle (September to June) at least 40% of learners reach a basic level of literacy. Over the last ten years the impact assessment results suggest that literacy rates increased among the target group by approximately 40% in

the program schools. For instance, in 2002/2003 literacy levels increased from 13% of students tested during the baseline to 56% of students tested during the evaluation exercise. The number of non-literate students declined in the same year from 67% during the baseline exercise to 28% during the evaluation exercise. In 2010/11 levels of literacy among students tested in the baseline moved from 27% of learners to a 47% during the final evaluation in the same program schools. The same trends have been observed over the last ten years from the 2003/2004 program cycle impact assessments to 2010/2011 program cycles (see Table 1 below for details).

### **Literacy Outcomes During Baseline & Evaluative Exercises (2002/2003 To 2010/11)**

	Baseline	Evaluation	Baseline	Evaluation	Baseline	Evaluation	Baseline	Evaluation	Baseline	Evaluation	Baseline	Evaluation	Baseline	Evaluation	Baseline	Evaluation	Baseline	Evaluation
	2002/03		2003/04		2004/05		2005/06		2006/07		2007/08		2008/09		2009/10		2010/11	
<b>No. of Circuit Covered</b>	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	--	--	--	--	4	4	3	3	3	3
<b>No. of School Tested</b>	15	15	17	17	19	19	15	15	6	6	16	16	19	19	10	10	16	16
<b>No. of Student Tested</b>	248	227	310	227	267	224	286	211	107	91	153	112	339	232	180	137	313	247
<b>No. of Student Literate</b>	38 3%	127 56%	57 18.4%	127 43%	43 16.1%	118 53%	64 22%	87 42%	30 25%	47 52%	30 19.6%	68 60%	88 26%	109 47%	38 21%	61 44.5%	84 27%	115 47%
<b>No. of Students Semi - Literate</b>	61 20%	37 16%	33 10.6%	33 11%	23 8.7%	24 10%	15 5%	22 10%	8 7.6%	15 16%	32 21%	13 12%	16 5%	13 5%	18 10%	9 6.5%	38 12%	22 9%
<b>No. of Students Non-Literate</b>	199 67%	63 75%	220 71%	155 42%	201 75.2%	84 37%	207 72%	102 45%	69 64.4%	29 32%	91 54.4%	31 28%	235 69%	111 48%	124 69%	67 49%	191 61%	110 44%





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