

ALL CHILDREN READING PHASE 2

END LINE STUDY REPORT FOR TEN PROGRAM AND TEN NON-PROGRAM SCHOOLS

SEPTEMBER 2023

**VENUE
SUHUM – AYENSUAO DISTRICTS**

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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 15 years in Ghana. The approach focuses on equipping the teachers both professionally and morally with the attitudes, skills and behaviors to assist primary school children “break through to literacy” in the shortest possible time frame (nine-month period). The main goal of the programme is to improve literacy attainment (grade level reading skills) among primary school children and to ensure that teachers are well equipped with the simplest and most relevant instructional practices.

The All Children Reading Phase 2 (Year 1) was initiated in 2022 with the support of Pebbles to Pearls (formerly Mona Foundation). Its literacy programme focused on schools in Suhum – Ayensuano districts. The programme was implemented in forty- five school across three circuits, with the focus on upper primary (Basic 4-6).

The programme has impacted approximately ninety teachers (at least one Ghanaian language teacher and one headteacher per school) as well as officers from the district Ghana Education Office. Approximately, 4,500 students have benefited from this intervention this past year.

This report, therefore, presents the findings on the end-line evaluation involving headteachers, teachers and students across selected schools based on the implementation of the ACR 2 program.

Key Findings

Pupil Performance and Learning Outcomes Based on ASER Assessment

Recent findings gathered from the evaluation data conducted under the All Children Reading (ACR 2), reveal a significant but slow progress in the first year of the project.

The assessment data demonstrates substantial improvement in literacy levels over the course of the program. Specifically, there was a notable decrease in the percentage of non-literate students from 43.4% at the beginning (baseline) to 15.3% at the end (endline). This positive

progress underscores the effectiveness of the program in enhancing literacy skills among the participating students. It indicates that the interventions and strategies implemented have been successful in moving a significant portion of non-literate students towards literacy proficiency. This outcome is a testament to the program's impact on improving educational outcomes and empowering students with crucial literacy skills.

The assessment data reveals that the proportion of literate and semi-literate students increased significantly from 41.7% at baseline to 53.6% at endline for the first group, and from 14.9% at baseline to 31.1% at endline for the second group. These improvements indicate a marked enhancement in the overall literacy levels of the students. This positive outcome signifies the effectiveness of the program in equipping students with crucial literacy skills and highlights the program's impact in driving positive educational outcomes.

What these results mean is that nine months after teachers in these schools benefited from Olinga Foundation training, pupils have improved their ability to recognize and sound out individual letters and two and three letter phonemes, as well as improving their ability to decode, read and understand whole words, phrases, and sentences.

However, with regard to teachers' attitudes and behaviors, further evidence from the interviews conducted reveals that patterns of teacher absenteeism or lateness have experienced little change and can be traced to a wide number of reasons that appear to have become an institutional norm. However, disciplinary practices such as weeding, caning, kneeling down etc. which hitherto were prevalent during the baseline, have become less frequent as a result of the child centered approach and the moral lessons that have been incorporated into the Olinga teacher training agenda. Likewise, both teachers and pupils are changing their attitudes gradually. Findings from focal group discussions with key stakeholders like the SMCs/PTAs at the district and school level suggest that community support, in addition to creating a conducive learning environment and motivating teachers to stay in the rural communities, can also provide a platform upon which strategies for gauging teacher performance can be instituted. Such communal support strategies include checking teacher absenteeism; monitoring test and assessment results; checking pupils' exercise books; and generally discussing teachers' behaviors with pupils. However, there is also evidence that there are parents who do not have a clear

understanding of the benefits of mother tongue instruction and feel that education should be geared toward English instruction at every level.

Findings from the evaluation indicate further work is still needed regarding patterns of teacher absenteeism and lateness and outreach to communities so that all stakeholders have a clear understanding of how mother tongue instruction and improved teaching methodology can impact children's achievement in reading.

Key Recommendations

Based on the findings and evidence from this evaluation, the following recommendations are made:

1. It is evident from the findings of the end-line survey that the 45 program schools have achieved visible and significant improvements. However, comparatively, the gap between non-program schools is not wide enough. Thus, supplementary materials (teacher guides, club manuals, story books and TLMs) need to be made accessible to schools, and emphasis must be placed on vigorous use of these materials. Especially, the teachers need to be helped in learning to use their guides effectively.
2. More engagement with District Education officers to coach head teachers on the content and importance of the ACR programme is needed.
3. More efforts should be placed on ensuring that head teachers and SISOs attend ACR training sessions in order that they can effectively follow up at level with coaching and mentoring teachers after these trainings.
4. The duration of the training sessions should also be increased to ensure greater effectiveness in relation to teacher uptake of the newly introduced pedagogical strategies.
5. High levels of teacher mentorship and support at the school level and classroom level are necessary in order to achieve effective support and result in high teacher uptake of improved pedagogy.

6. To sustain the gains made through school reading clubs, learning to continuously lead the literacy change agenda in schools, the GES, as part of its school management processes, should provide the necessary support.
7. It was evident that the school reading clubs will require sustainable funding resources to remain functional and innovative. This requires the development of guidelines for clubs on approaches to generating internal funds from their host communities, PTAs/SMCs, philanthropists, and businesses, etc. within their catchment areas.

Chapter 1: Introduction, Background and Methodology

1.1: Introduction

The Olinga Foundation's key innovation is its approach to literacy attainment aimed at transforming the instructional practice of teachers and their attitudes towards teaching in the primary classroom. Its methodology for sharpening literacy skills is based on a phonic and syllabic approach, using three of Ghana's major local languages (Twi, Ewe, Ga). Over the past year the ACR 2 (Year 1) has reached over 4,500 children with its reading methods and teacher empowerment strategies. Recent baseline and end line results for the year 1 cohort (2022/23) under the All Children Reading programme have revealed that over 40% of learners have moved from 'illiteracy to 'literacy' within the nine-month cycle in the 3 ACR circuits.

The ACR program aimed to improve the literacy levels and reading of P4, P5 and P6 pupils in Suhum, Coaltar and Anum Apampam Districts. Another important transformation envisaged by the program was the reduction of teacher absenteeism and an increase of time on task for the literacy hour among teachers in target schools. Olinga also worked with teachers to reduce verbal abuse and physical punishments of the child and thereby create a child friendly teaching environment which included participatory methods of language instruction and alternative disciplinary practices.

An end line survey was conducted to ascertain the literacy levels of pupils/students. The survey was conducted in August 2023 in two districts, the Suhum and Coaltar circuits.

1.2: The Objectives of the ACR 2 Program and the Olinga Foundation Targets

The main goal of the All Children Reading Project Phase 2 has been to enable the target population to "break through to literacy" within a nine-month period. The second goal of the program has been to improve the motivation of teachers. The Olinga Foundation's introduction of moral leadership among teachers in the program schools as part of the regular school curriculum is aimed at enhancing the moral transformation of both students and teachers.

The specific objectives of the All Children Reading Project are:

- to improve literacy levels and reading abilities of P4, P5 and P6 students after the first- and second-year cycles;
- to reduce teacher absenteeism and increase time on task at the literacy hour among teachers in target schools;
- to reduce verbal abuse and physical punishment of the child and create a child friendly teaching environment through participatory methods of language instruction and alternative disciplinary practices in at least 40% of Olinga target schools; and
- to increase the level of community participation in the supervision and oversight of its teachers and to ensure the improvement of their time on task.

1.3 Context of Learning across the Eastern Region of Ghana

Many diverse factors need to be considered regarding the learning environment across the Eastern Region. The physical environment in most of the districts includes good classroom structures with a few poor ones scattered in rural and remote communities. Often, these classrooms are furnished with simple dual student desks and a table in front for the teacher. A few of the schools lack these dual desks, and pupils are made to sit on the floor. Access to a library and other information resources is difficult to come by. It is important to also note, in these schools the class size is larger (30 or more students per class) this makes challenging for teachers to give individualized attention to each student. This can lead to struggling students falling behind without the necessary support. Teachers also find it harder to cater to different learning styles and paces in a large class. This can result in some students feeling either bored or overwhelmed.

Some of the schools have old computers which are not in use, and, in some cases, no availability of electricity hinders their use. The lack of teachers who are competent and well-trained in information communication technology is another setback against the quality delivery of ICT.

School management structures and leadership are vital elements in ensuring quality of teaching and learning in schools. Where good managerial leadership qualities are exhibited by head

teachers, an environment conducive to learning is created: both teachers and pupils are encouraged to give of their best, and teaching and learning progress uninterrupted. Conversely, where the school climate consists of weak management and laissez-faire attitudes of teachers, students lack the motivation and passion for learning, with the result that their reading abilities do not develop and they perform poorly in their studies. As evidenced in other research studies carried out in Ghana (AfC 2013), strong leadership structures are frequently found in schools that enjoy the additional oversight of a religious mission (eg. Roman Catholic, Presbyterian). In mission schools like the Presbyterian primary 'A' in the Suhum/Ayensuano district in the Eastern Region, the commitment and dedication of head teachers serves as a major inspirational factor in the improvement of pupil performance. With regard to the ACR program, this commitment to fulfilling the aims of the project results in the improvement in pupils' ability to decode and sound out letters and words and read simple sentences with comprehension. Teachers' steadfast attention to the program's goals enables students to progress from being non-literate, to semi-literate, to fully literate.

The community's involvement in the administration of the schools and the sustenance of good rapport between the school and the community are important ingredients in the creation and promotion of a quality learning environment. Frequent visits by the SMC/PTAs to the schools help to identify the schools' problems and attempt to solve them. During these visits, SMC/PTA members seek the welfare of both the pupils and teachers, and motivate both parties by socializing with them, boosting their morale, and encouraging them to do better. Such friendly practices contrast with the practice of some SMC/PTAs which, reportedly, only visit when there are problems that require the attention of community members to help solve.

In schools serving rural deprived and remote villages, many challenges impede teaching and learning. Most of such schools are not easily accessible due to poor roads. The difficulties they face such as the lack of electricity and the challenge of providing potable water worsen the plight of teachers. Many, particularly trained teachers from other places, are reluctant to accept posting to such areas. These teachers prefer living in peri-urban communities and commuting daily, which often results in their being late to school, thereby reducing time on task.

Chapter 2: End line Objectives, Methodology and Sampling Framework

The main objective of the end line study was to collect data from a cluster sample of participating schools in different deployments that will be utilized to inform changes in desired outcomes of the project for final reporting and to inform recommendations to improve student learning and teacher capacity in basic schools. Specifically, the study sought to achieve the following outcomes:

2.1 Objectives of End line Study

Specific objectives of the end line:

- testing the reading and comprehension abilities of the children,
- understanding the nature of disciplinary practices of teachers,
- observing whether the teachers appear morally responsible,
- assessing community involvement in the schools; and
- assessing teachers' behaviors – absenteeism, time-on task and teaching methods.

2.2 Methodology and Limitations of Year 1

The baseline assessment for ACR 2 (Year 1) was conducted shortly after the first training took place early in 2022. The evaluation took the form of a mixed method approach, which included quantitative data in the form of reading tests as well as qualitative data in the form of interviews with pupils, head teachers, teachers and members of SMC/PTA.

The assessment included a short literacy test in the local language – Akuapem Twi – in order that student achievement could be tracked across the life of the project. The test assessed the ability of students to read single and double letter phonemes, a selection of longer words and a short passage on which questions were posed to test comprehension. Evaluation teams aimed to test the 20 selected children in each school, 10 girls and 10 boys from upper primary, P5 making a total of approximately 400 students tested. So that a cross section of results could be included in the sample, pupils were also tested in non-beneficiary schools, allowing for a comparison of pupil achievement in the baseline study. Five program schools and five non-program schools were included in each of the two circuits. The aim for the end line evaluation of the ACR2 Year 1

cohort was to revisit the same schools and re-test the same children in order to make an accurate assessment of pupil progress. Because evaluation took place in a new academic year most of the P4 children made the transition to P5; P5 to P6 and those in P6 to JHS1. Evaluation tests included the majority of P5 pupils who had been tested at the baseline.

2.3 Limitations and Replacement Criteria

The evaluation of the ACR 2 project in the Eastern Region included 10 program and 10 non-program schools. In instances, where the students that were part of the baseline sample were absent as a result of dropout, relocation etc., the said student was replaced with another student who was present at baseline but was not sampled for the survey. In instances where the class numbers did not permit this, the team enumerated only the students who were present.

The criteria also included replacing a male absentee with another male and a female absentee with a female. In instances where the gender-informed replacement was not possible, either gender was selected as a replacement.

Some of the teachers and headteachers trained to lead the implementation of the program at the school level had either been transferred or had left the service. This may have contributed to how the ACR was implemented, with a possible effect on the expected level of change in knowledge.

2.4 Selection of schools, Sample size and Sampling Procedures

Twenty schools were selected across the two circuits to ensure a rural/urban balance and to match the intervention and non-intervention schools. All of the schools were adequately matched, taking into consideration the urban/rural dynamics, distance from district capitals and access to socio-economic resources.

The table below gives a breakdown of the extent to which the teams were able to locate and test those learners who were included in the end line.

Table 2.1: Sample size

Circuit	Number of Schools (<i>Program & Non- Program</i>)	Schooling Level	Number of Girls	Number of Boys	Number of Sampled Students
Suhum	10	P4, P5 & P6	99	88	1287
Ayensuano(Coaltar)	10	P4, P5 & P6	90	97	187
Total	20 schools		189	185	374 students

2.5 Approaches to Testing Methodology

Upon the arrival at the school, the team visited the head teacher to discuss the purpose of the visit and the mode of testing. The evaluation took the form of a mixed method approach with some qualitative data collected in the form of interviews with pupils, head teachers, teachers and members of SMC/PTA as well as assessment data in the form of the results of reading tests. The test was comprised of single letter and two letter phonemes, a selection of longer words and then a short passage on which questions were posed to test comprehension. Evaluation teams aimed to test as many as possible of the 20 children in each school who had been tested at the baseline: 10 girls and 10 boys.

2.6 Grading of Learners

The reading test used with pupils for this final evaluation was designed to assess learners' ability to sound out single letters: vowels and then consonants; 2-letter words and short words. The last part of the test took the form of a reading passage which the children were asked to read and then answer questions in order to test their comprehension of what they had read. The test content was organized in order of increasing difficulty. After taking the test, pupils were graded and classified as being literate, semi-literate or non-literate.

Chapter 3: Results ACR 2 Year One- Reading and Comprehension Abilities of the Learners

In order to assess their reading and comprehension abilities, pupils across all four districts were given a short reading test. For the purposes of comparison and to track progress, pupils selected for this test were drawn from schools that had benefited from having teachers trained in the Olinga methodology and who had received reading books written in the appropriate Ghanaian language (program schools), and schools that were not included in the training program (non-program schools). Furthermore, those children who were tested as part of the baseline assessment exercise were targeted for tests conducted as part of the end line evaluation. Due to various constraints, the end line evaluation was conducted after the children who were in P6 for the baseline assessment had made the transition to JHS; it was therefore only possible to conduct an end line evaluation of their progress in a limited number of cases.

3. 1 Student Sample across Baseline and End line Surveys.

Students across two districts were assessed on their ability to read single and double phonemes, a selection of longer words, and finally a short passage on which questions were posed in order to assess their reading and comprehension abilities. For the purposes of comparison and to track progress, pupils selected for this test were drawn from both program and non-program schools. The program schools had teachers trained in the Olinga methodology and equipped with reading books written in the appropriate Ghanaian language.

Baseline Results:

Table 4.1 shows the number of students included in the sample for the baseline assessment. In each district 10 program and 10 non-program schools were targeted with a total of three hundred sixty-five (365) students. Most students assessed

were in Primary 5 (P5) – 281, with the remaining in Primary (P4) - 35, and Primary 6 (P6) - 49.

Table 4.1 Number of students interviewed for the Baseline Assessment

District	P4		P4 Total	P5		P5 Total	P6		P6 Total	Grand Total
	Female	Male		Female	Male		Female	Male		
Coaltar	3	0	3	59	95	154	19	16	35	192
Non-program										
School	3	0	3	39	44	83	10	4	14	100
Program School	0	0	0	20	51	71	9	12	21	92
Suhum	17	15	32	62	65	127	3	11	14	173
Non-program										
School	3	8	11	35	37	72	1	4	5	88
Program School	14	7	21	27	28	55	2	7	9	85
Grand Total	20	15	35	121	160	281	22	27	49	365

Endline Results:

In this section, we highlight findings from the end line assessment, focusing on the number of students assessed across the two participating districts (Ayensuan-Coaltar and Suhum). Table 4.2 provides a comprehensive breakdown of the number of students tested in this evaluation by district, gender, grade (P4, P5, P6), and intervention category (non-program schools and program schools). In order to track the progress of the students tested for the baseline assessment, the same schools were included in the sample and the same children were given a reading test.

Overall, three hundred and seventy-four students (374) evenly distributed between the two districts (187 each) were evaluated in the endline survey, with majority (326) being in the P6 grade. Forty students in P5 and 8 in P4 were also assessed to complete the sample. Gender variation in the number of students assessed was minimal across all grades.

Table 4.2 Number of students interviewed for the Endline Assessment

District	P4		P4 Total	P5		P5 Total	P6		P6 Total	Grand Total
	Female	Male		Female	Male		Female	Male		
Coaltar	0	0	0	0	0	0	90	97	187	187
Non-program School	0	0	0	0	0	0	46	53	99	99
Program School	0	0	0	0	0	0	44	44	88	88
Suhum	4	4	8	25	15	40	70	69	139	187
Non-program School	0	0	0	5	7	12	45	35	80	92
Program School	4	4	8	20	8	28	25	34	59	95
Grand Total	4	4	8	25	15	40	160	166	326	374

3.3 Overall ACR2 End line Literacy Results.

Table 4.3 below shows, the distribution of students assessed across three literacy levels: “literate, semi-literate, and non-literate”, with regard to their reading and comprehension skills. Regarding their ability to read single and double phonemes, a selection of longer words, and a short passage in the Akuapem Twi dialect, a majority of the students (46.5%) were categorized as literate, with approximately one-third (32.6%) classified as semi-literate, and the remaining 20.9%, non-literate. A comparative analysis of endline literacy results between program and non-program schools showed that there were more literate students in program schools (53.6%) compared to non-program schools (39.8%). Non-literate students in non-program schools (26.2%) also outnumbered those in program schools (15.3%).

Table 4.3: Overall Endline Literacy Results

Literacy Level	Frequency	Percentage
Literate	174	46.5%
Semi- literate	122	32.6%
Non- literate	78	20.9%
Total number of students	374	100.0%

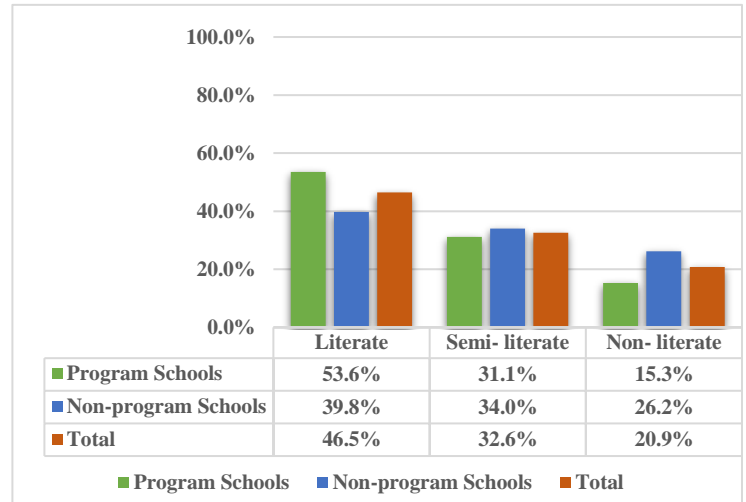


Figure 1: Overall Endline Literacy Results by Schooltype

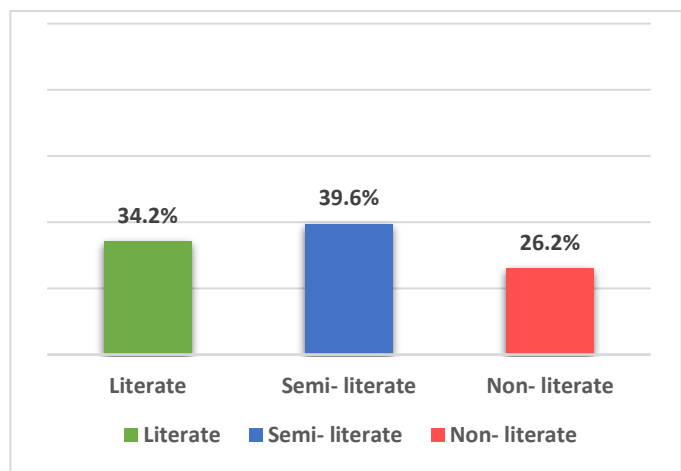
3.4 Literacy Results Disaggregated by District – Endline Survey

Results from the endline evaluation in the Ayensuano (Coaltar) district indicate that over a third of students (34.2%) achieved literacy status when assessed, followed by 39.6% being semi-literate. Literacy rates in program schools versus non-program schools suggest a higher proportion of literate students (40.9%) in the former as compared to the latter (28.3%). In contrast, there were fewer semi-literate (34.1%) and non-literate students (25.0%) in program schools as compared to non-program schools (44.4%) and (27.3%) respectively.

Table 4.4: Literacy Results for Ayensuano (Coaltar) - Endline Survey

Literacy Level - Coaltar District	Non-program Schools	Program Schools	Total
Literate	28 (28.3%)	36 (40.9%)	64 (34.2%)
Semi- literate	44 (44.4%)	30 (34.1%)	74 (39.6%)
Non- literate	27 (27.3%)	22 (25.0%)	49 (26.2%)
Total	99	88	187

Figure 2: Literacy Results for Ayensuano (Coaltar) - Endline Survey



Endline Survey

According to the endline evaluation results in the Suhum district, overall, most of the students (58.8%) had achieved literacy status when assessed, with approximately a quarter (25.7%) being semi-literate, and the outstanding 15.5% still non-literate. Comparatively, there were more literate students in program schools (65.3%) than in non-program schools (52.2%), Similarly there was a greater proportion of semi-literate students in program schools (28.4%) as compared to non-program schools (22.8%). In contrast, non-literate students in program schools (6.3%) were fewer than in non-program schools (25.0%).

Table 4.5: Literacy Results for Suhum - Endline Survey

Literacy Level – Suhum District	Non-program Schools	Program Schools	Total
Literate	48 (52.2%)	62 (65.3%)	110 (58.8%)
Semi- literate	21 (22.8%)	27 (28.4%)	48 (25.7%)
Non- literate	23 (25.0%)	6 (6.3%)	29 (15.5%)
Total	92	95	187

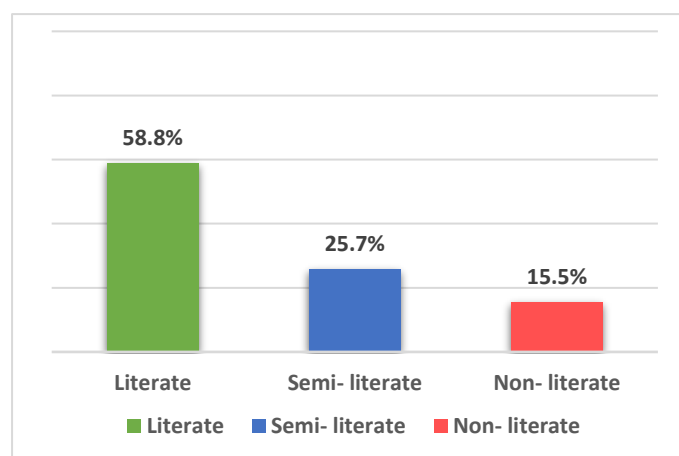


Figure 3: Literacy Results for Suhum - Endline Survey

3.5 Literacy Results for Program Schools - Baseline and Endline Surveys.

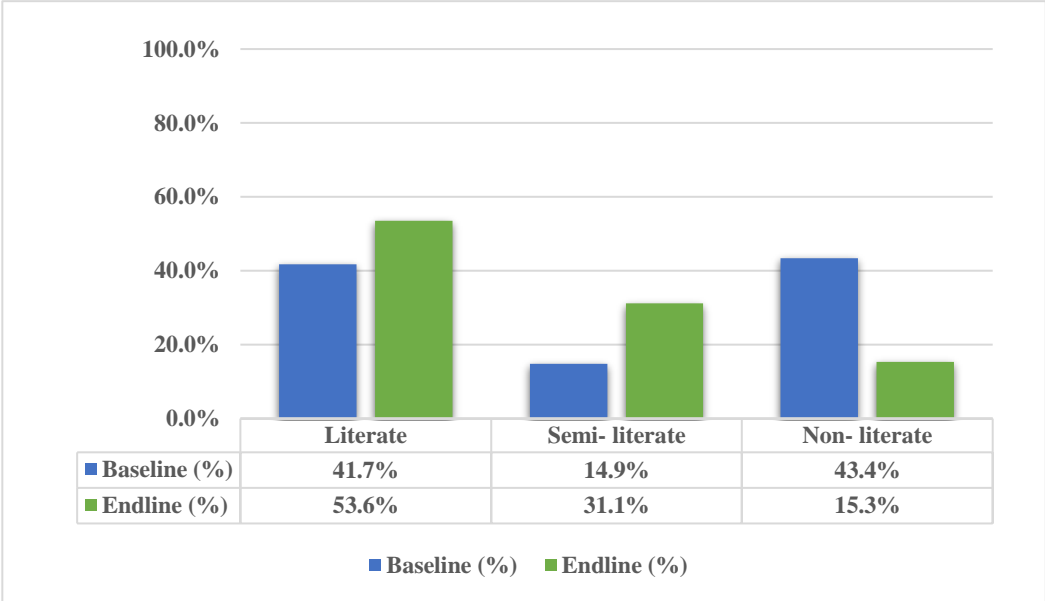
The findings of our comparative evaluation of literacy rates among students from program schools indicate moderately higher literacy levels at end line compared to the findings at baseline.

Figure 4 below provides a breakdown of literacy levels within our baseline and endline results, and underscores a general increase in literacy rates over the course of the program.

The proportion of literate and semi-literate students increased from 41.7% at baseline to 53.6% at endline and from 14.9% at baseline to 31.1% at end line, respectively, indicating marked improvements in literacy levels.

In contrast, the proportion of non-literate students fell substantially from 43.4% at baseline to 15.3% at endline, emphasizing positive progress in literacy levels.

Figure 4: Literacy Results for Program Schools – Baseline and Endline Surveys



3. 6 Literacy Levels for Program Schools by District - Baseline and Endline Surveys.

A comprehensive view of literacy levels within program schools across the two districts is highlighted in Table 4.6 below, offering a clear comparison between baseline and endline surveys. This data underscores the evolution of literacy rates over time and across locations, providing valuable insights into the impact of the program interventions.

In the Ayensuano (Coaltar) district, the baseline survey revealed that 23.1% of students were classified as literate, 17.6% as semi-literate, and a significant 59.3% as non-literate. However, the endline survey demonstrates a substantial improvement, with the literacy rate increasing to 40.9%, the semi-literate rate at 34.1%, and the non-literate rate dropping to 25.0%. This indicates positive progress in literacy levels within the district over the course of the program.

Turning our attention to the Suhum District, the baseline results indicated that 61.9% of students were literate, with 11.9% classified as semi-literate, and 26.2% as non-literate. At the endline, we

observed a further improvement in literacy levels. The percentage of literate students increased to 65.3%, the semi-literate category saw an uptick to 28.4%, while only 6.3% remained non-literate.

These findings demonstrate the impact of our program on enhancing literacy levels among students in program schools. The upward trend in literacy rates is a promising sign of progress, highlighting the effectiveness of the program in these districts.

Table 4.6: Literacy Levels for Program Schools by District - Baseline and Endline Surveys.

District		Literate	Semi- literate	Non- literate
Ayensuano (Coaltar)	Baseline	21 (23.1%)	16 (17.6%)	54 (59.3%)
	Endline	36 (40.9%)	30 (34.1%)	22 (25.0%)
Suhum	Baseline	52 (61.9%)	10 (11.9%)	22 (26.2%)
	Endline	62 (65.3%)	27 (28.4%)	6 (6.3%)

3.7 Literacy Levels for Program Schools by Sex – Baseline and Endline Results.

This section presents the results of our research into literacy levels among students in program schools categorized by sex. We aimed to assess the distribution of literacy levels—literate, non-literate, and semi-literate- among both male and female students.

Literacy rates among both male and female students recorded marked increases from baseline to endline surveys.

Among females, the proportion of literate students increased from 48.6% at baseline to 53.8% at endline, while for male students, there was a steep surge in literacy rates from 27.6% at baseline to 53.3% at endline.

In contrast, despite a slightly higher non-literate female rate, overall, the proportion of non-literate students in both male and female populations dropped from 29.5% at baseline to 12.2% at endline and from 23.6% at baseline to 18.3% at endline respectively.

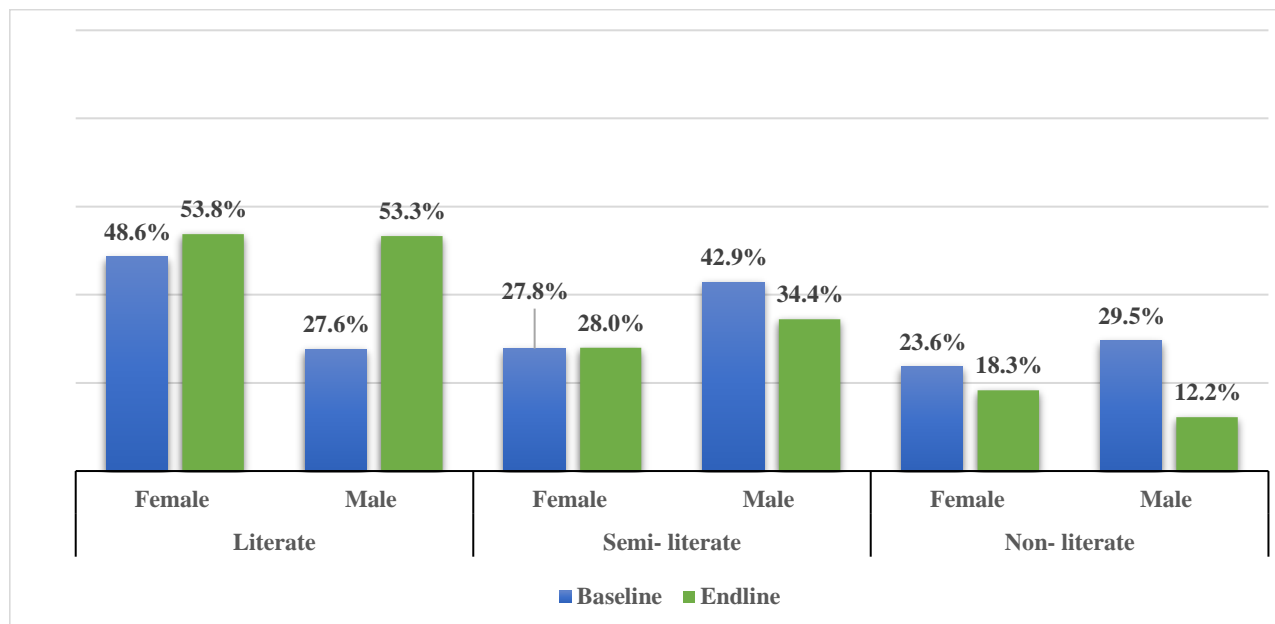


Figure 5: Literacy Levels for Program Schools by Sex – Baseline and Endline Results

3.8 Conclusions – Outcomes

In summary, the comparative evaluation of literacy rates among students from program schools revealed promising outcomes. The findings clearly illustrate an overall increase in literacy levels among students from baseline to endline, with evaluation results indicating a positive impact of the Olinga program interventions.

Across both Ayensuano (Coaltar) and Suhum districts, there was a noticeable shift towards higher literacy rates. In Ayensuano, the proportion of literate and semi-literate students increased significantly, while the number of non-literate students declined markedly. Similarly, in Suhum, the percentage of literate students rose, and as did the percentage of semi-literate students, with a substantial reduction in non-literate students.

These results underscore the program's effectiveness in improving literacy outcomes within program schools. The journey from lower baseline literacy rates to more encouraging endline figures signifies tangible progress and highlights the value of continued efforts to enhance educational achievements in these districts.

Moving forward, the Olinga Foundation seeks to build upon these successes and further consolidate gains to ensure sustainable improvements in literacy across the region.

Chapter 4: Head Teacher and Teacher Transformation, Teacher Increases Time on Task and Learning Instructions.

This chapter discusses the findings relating to the knowledge level of head-teachers and teachers. The head-teachers and teachers' data in relation to the baseline and end line was collected and analyzed qualitatively. Further, discussions of the findings in relation to teachers and students were conducted with an emphasis on comparing findings at baseline and end-line to make inferences and attributions relating to changes in knowledge levels across all the key targets.

In order to assess the extent to which teachers in both program and non-program schools demonstrated commitment to their role and in particular responsibility based on a moral imperative to provide a nurturing and child-friendly learning environment in their classrooms, in depth interviews were conducted with the teachers, students, head teachers and PTA/SMC representatives. The questions asked were focused on the teaching techniques of teachers; the teaching strategies used; means of improving effectiveness in the classroom; the motivational practices used; the performance of the girl child in the classroom; students' participation in teaching; teachers' attendance; learners' encouragement; challenges faced in providing quality teaching; and lastly, their views on the requisite moral qualities of a teacher.

Spiritual and moral qualities of teachers play a vital role in how they transform as individuals and educators. When asked what qualities are important for a teacher, the teachers most frequently mentioned commitment, love, respect, and physical appearance.

4. 1 Learning Instruction

One of the core objectives of the All Children Reading Program Phase 2 is to equip teachers with the appropriate methodologies for child-centered learning and effective breakthrough to literacy. In order to further investigate pupils' satisfaction with strategies used by their teachers, they were also asked how well the teachers teach the local language. Responses from students in the program schools regarding teaching and learning quality in the classroom revealed that students enjoy how teachers use the methodology in their classes.

Differences in teaching strategies, particularly in the context of teaching reading, between program schools and non-program schools were noted. Below, is a summary of the key differences in the approaches mentioned:

Interactive Activities vs. 'Read and Repeat' Approach:

In both program and non-program schools, teachers use interactive activities like dramatization and dialogue to engage students actively in the learning process. These activities encourage participation and can make learning more engaging. However, in some program schools, teachers also adopted a technical approach. They focused on teaching strategies that help students understand letter/sound relationships, phonemes, and decoding longer words using phonological and syllabic methods. This suggests a more systematic and structured approach to phonics instruction.

Phonological and Syllabic Approach:

In program schools, there was an emphasis on teaching students how to decode words by understanding the relationship between letters and sounds, as well as syllable-based decoding. This approach aligns with phonics instruction, which is a research-based method for teaching reading. On the other hand, the 'read and repeat' approach, where the teacher models pronunciation and the class repeats, appeared to be more common in non-program schools. This method might focus on whole-word recognition rather than phonetic decoding.

Overall, this information provides valuable insights into the diverse teaching methods employed in different schools and highlights the importance of tailoring teaching strategies to meet the unique needs of the students.

Below are extracts from interviews with head teachers and teachers, describing these strategies.

“The teachers now use of phonics. Lessons are more child centered. Ability groupings. They organize remedials for slow learners.” (Male Head Teacher, Anomansa M/A Primary, Suhum)

“Trial tests are given to students. Teachers pay particular attention to slow learners one after the other. As well as organizing remedials to slow learners.” (Female Head teacher, Densuso M/A Basic School, Suhum)

With this intervention, the strategies teachers and head teachers use to create a positive and child-friendly classroom environment and to motivate students include the following:

Building Strong Teacher-Student Relationships: Teachers aim to establish strong and supportive relationships with their students. This helps create a comfortable and trusting atmosphere in which students feel safe to make efforts to learn.

Praising and Rewarding: Teachers praise and reward students to provide positive reinforcement for their efforts and achievements. This can motivate students, especially those who may be struggling or have lower abilities.

Peer Grouping: Teachers often use peer group methods, where students with different capabilities are grouped together. This approach allows stronger students to help weaker ones, fostering a sense of collaboration and support among peers. It can also facilitate peer learning and mentorship.

Role-Playing: Role-playing is used as a teaching strategy. This active learning method encourages students to engage with and apply the knowledge they have acquired. It can make learning more memorable and engaging.

Demonstration: Teachers incorporate demonstrations into their teaching methods. Demonstrations not only help students understand concepts visually but also promote leadership skills and confidence among students. When students take part in demonstrations, they become active participants in their learning.

Use of Local Language: Teachers use the local language alongside English to support better comprehension. This bilingual approach can bridge the gap between the students' native language and the language of instruction, making it easier for students to grasp the content.

These strategies create an inclusive and supportive learning environment where students of varying abilities can thrive. They emphasize the importance of active engagement, positive

reinforcement, peer support, and effective communication in the classroom. Such approaches can contribute to a more child-friendly and motivating educational experience for students.

Below are extracts from interviews with head teachers and teachers, describing these strategies.

“Group presentation. Report work. Motivating children during teaching especially slow learners.” (Female Head teacher, Tei Mensah, Suhum)

“I have included brainstorming followed by breaking of words into syllables. I also use group method and every child is expected to contribute to discussion. We also use TLRs and dramatization. Boys and girls are grouped together. We organize competitions.” (P6 Female Teacher, Anomansa M/A Primary, Coaltar)

“I assess the pupils through homework, questioning, class exercise, storytelling, read aloud and through group work.” (P5 Male Teacher, Tetekasum, Suhum)

Chapter 5: Community Involvement and Participation (PTA/SMC)

A school cannot be viewed in isolation; it is an integral part of the community it serves and as such when school and community enjoy a symbiotic relationship of mutual respect and support, management and education quality are enhanced (Associates for Change, 2012). In the first instance this relationship is based on the issue of service, it is therefore important that schools be accountable to their communities and that these communities, in turn, have the confidence to hold the schools accountable. Community stakeholders such as SMCs and PTAs are therefore important collaborators in the management structure of the school.

This chapter explores the extent of community involvement and participation in the supervision and oversight of their teachers.

5.1 Key Findings for End Line (Focal Group Discussion with the SMCs/PTA)

Below are the key findings from the 28 focal group discussions with parents regarding the involvement of School Management Committees (SMCs) and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) in supervising and overseeing teachers. Generally, all the SMCs/PTAs executives interviewed in program and non-program schools in the Eastern regions, focused on the schools' success in creating a calm environment that would ensure quality teaching and learning. The responses highlight the active involvement of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) and School Management Committees (SMCs) in the schools' activities. Here are the key points:

Regular Meetings: The PTA/SMC members meet monthly, demonstrating a consistent commitment to their roles. These meetings take place within the school premises, indicating a close collaboration between the school and the community.

Platform for Communication: These meetings serve as a platform for communication and interaction between the PTA/SMC members, the head teacher, and the teachers. This allows for discussions about the progress of the children and any support they may need.

Monitoring Children's Progress: The PTA/SMC members actively monitor the progress of the children. As well as encouraging their children to participate in the Reading Club, the

members supervise reading at home and monitor completion of home assignments. This suggests a genuine concern for the students' academic and overall development.

Addressing Challenges: The PTA/SMC members' involvement in the schools goes beyond regular meetings and visits. They also make extra visits when specific challenges arise. These challenges could pertain to various aspects including infrastructure, teaching methods, or moral education. This proactive attitude demonstrates a hands-on approach to problem-solving and support.

Overall, this level of engagement indicates a strong commitment from the PTA/SMC members towards the welfare of the school and its students. Their regular meetings and visits, along with their willingness to address challenges, contribute significantly to creating a supportive and enriching learning environment.

Below are excerpts from FDGs;

'The community through the support of the chief were able to refurbish our dilapidated school structure which got destroyed last year through 1 rainfall'. (Kukua R/C Basic, Suhum)

"The PTA/SMCs executives supported the school with a number of TLMs to aid teaching and learning and we are grateful to them." (Obuotumpan M/A Basic, Suhum)

"We contribute in the form of money for pupils travels during school activities such as Reading club festival. We have built KG room for the school. Now building a canteen for the school." (Tetekasum Basic)

In conclusion, the relationship between school and community is further strengthened through mutual support, especially in resource poor areas or deprived locations where most of the program/Olinga schools are located and where physical and material support is not just an important aspect of building the relationship between school and community but also a necessity.

Chapter 6: Levels and Approaches to Disciplinary Practices of Teachers

A central theme in the transformation of teachers' training is the focus on encouraging teachers to use child-centered teaching methodologies as well as to create a child-friendly teaching environment. Teachers are trained by Olinga to create a nurturing and positive climate in the classroom, free from harsh or overly punitive disciplinary practices. Disciplinary practices, whether physical or verbal, are adopted in schools with a view to making sure pupils are regular, punctual, respectful, law abiding and, above all, studious. However, many traditional disciplinary measures, such as caning, kneeling down, and collecting stones, create an atmosphere of fear and can lead to pupils absenting themselves or even withdrawing from school altogether.

6.1 Baseline Findings

Evidence from interviews with teachers and pupils for the base line assessment indicates that the "kneeling and caning" are still a significant approach to disciplinary practices in schools. However, teachers also describe more developmental alternatives to this, including exempting children from activities and break times; withdrawal of love; giving advice; and using role models. Pupils at the sampled schools confirm that caning is used, but it is significant that those interviewed in the Olinga supported schools did not describe caning as one of the things that they dislike about the school or classroom, and when asked about which misdemeanors they would be punished for, cited examples such as lateness, disrespect of teachers, stealing, etc. and not (as was the case in other interviews) poor academic performance.

6.2 End Line Findings

In the program schools, 8 out of the 10 groups said that they do not experience any form of abuse. In the non-program schools, interview groups in 6 out of the 10 schools reported various forms of abuse, and in those experiencing abuse, 3 groups said it was a daily occurrence. The reasons given for these forms of punishment included lateness, failure in assignments or exams, noise making in class, quarrels among students, non-payment of classes fees, eating in class, improper dressing and untidiness, disobeying school rules and teachers, irregularity, littering, disrespect of teachers, stealing, and poor academic performance.

In the case of program schools that are *not* using physical or verbal abuse, the modes of discipline described by the teachers to transform recalcitrant pupils included the following:

- intensive moral education
- advice
- scaring pupils by hitting the table
- visiting parents at home to address pupils' problems
- giving challenging tasks to absentee pupils, e.g. serving as prefect or office boy/girl.
- counseling

6.3 Conclusion

The Olinga Foundation methodology encourages child centered, child friendly and morally based teaching methods and disciplinary practices to positively change the attitude of teachers and pupils. When this is successful, the child will learn in an atmosphere free of intimidation, abuse, and fear and be more likely to develop his or her full potential.

Prior to the project, levels of abusive physical and verbal disciplinary practices used by teachers were very high in the districts as indicated in the baseline report. Disciplinary practices included weeding, kneeling down, and caning– just to mention a few. With the introduction of the Olinga methodology, in Suhum- Ayensuano the levels of disciplinary practices have gone down. This is a result of the child centered approach and the moral lessons that have been incorporated into all topics, and both teachers and pupils are gradually changing their attitudes.

Chapter 7: Key Findings and Conclusions

7.1 Conclusions

The following conclusions regarding this end line evaluation of the All Children Reading Program– Phase 2 can be drawn as outlined in the objectives of this project:

Reading and comprehension abilities in program schools:

- Olinga schools show a slightly higher percentage of children attaining the literate bracket compared to non-program schools. This suggests that the program has likely a positive initial impact on reading and comprehension abilities in these schools.
- The primary objective of the program is to address a literacy proficiency deficit. The end line evaluation shows a positive impact of the program on the children's reading and comprehension abilities.

Teaching Methodology

- The evidence suggests that teachers in Olinga-supported schools are actively working to incorporate both the methodology taught at Olinga training events and the resources provided by the NALAP (National African Language Pedagogy) into their teaching practices. This indicates a concerted effort to implement the recommended teaching strategies and utilize the provided resources effectively. This approach demonstrates a commitment to enhancing the quality of education and maximizing the benefits of the Olinga support for the students in these schools. Overall, the convergence of evidence from multiple sources strongly supports the assertion that teachers in program schools have modified their methods in accordance with the training received from Olinga. This is a positive indication that the training is having a meaningful impact on classroom instruction and, potentially, on students' academic performance.
- Overall, the evidence suggests that a significant portion of the teachers interviewed feel a strong moral responsibility in their roles as educators. Their motivations and beliefs align with the notion that teaching is not merely a job but a calling to positively influence

the lives of children through education. This commitment is reflected in their views on the essential qualities of a teacher.

Level of disciplinary practices of teachers

It is clear that that pupils in the program schools are not being punished for simply not being able to understand what is being taught. This is an encouraging trend and helps to contribute to the principle that teachers should improve their ability to ensure that not only is their teaching child-centered but they are creating a learning environment which is child-friendly.

Community involvement in the schools

The relationship between school and community is further strengthened through mutual support especially in resource poor areas or deprived locations where most of the program/Olinga schools are located and where physical and material support from the community is a necessity. Community support and participation in the work of the school is an important aspect of school development; however, further work is needed to support head teachers in their endeavors to ensure that community groups are encouraged to visit their schools regularly and maintain a dialog with school management.

7.2 Lessons Learned

The key learning point from this evaluation exercise is the significant impact that improved attitudes and behaviors of teachers and various stakeholders in the wider school community have on the potential success of a project aimed at improving pupils' learning outcomes in reading skills and literacy.

Here are the key factors identified for best-performing schools:

1. Teacher Training and Head Teacher Support:

Schools that demonstrated the best performance were those with teachers who received additional training from Olinga. These teachers were also supported by head teachers who either received training themselves or were generally aligned with the objectives of

the project. This indicates the crucial role of both well-trained teachers and supportive head teachers in achieving project goals.

2. Head Teacher Commitment and Supervision:

Head teacher commitment was identified as a critical factor in ensuring the success of the project. This commitment involved supervising teaching staff to ensure professionalism, maximizing teaching time, and providing support for project implementation.

3. Resource Management and Utilization:

Effective head teachers ensured that resources were not only available but also stored well and used regularly. This points to the importance of proper resource management in achieving project objectives.

4. Initiating Reading Clubs:

In some instances, the establishment of reading clubs was complementary to the teaching and learning going on in the classroom. One goal of a reading club encourages members to read regularly. This consistent practice helps improve reading skills and comprehension. This approach demonstrates a commitment to creating an environment that promotes literacy and reading skills beyond the classroom

5. Impact of Leadership Changes:

The evaluation also highlighted the potential challenges posed by changes in leadership, particularly in the case where a head teacher had passed away. An Olinga-trained teacher expressed concern about the potential loss of progress if a similarly supportive replacement was not found.

Overall, the evaluation underscores the pivotal role of leadership, both at the levels of the teacher and head teacher, in the success of projects aimed at enhancing reading skills and

literacy. It also emphasizes the need for continuity in leadership to sustain the positive momentum generated by the project.

7.3 Way Forward

The lessons learned provide valuable insights for refining and strengthening the current program. Here are the key areas that require emphasis:

Head Teacher Training:

Providing comprehensive training for head teachers is essential. This should encompass the Olinga Foundation methodology for teaching reading, along with guidance on establishing the moral qualities expected of teachers and strategies for managing unacceptable behavior among teaching staff.

Incorporating Olinga Foundation Methodology:

The program should integrate the Olinga Foundation methodology for teaching reading, ensuring that it becomes a central component of the training and instructional approach.

Defining Moral Qualities for Teachers:

Clearly articulating and instilling the moral qualities expected of teachers is crucial. This serves as a guiding framework for professional conduct and behavior, including using positive disciplinary practices, as opposed to punitive practices.

Strategies for Managing Unacceptable Behavior:

Providing head teachers with effective strategies for managing teachers whose behavior is not acceptable is vital. This includes techniques for constructive feedback, mentorship, and, if necessary, addressing disciplinary issues.

Continued Monitoring (Mentoring and Coaching):

Ensuring ongoing monitoring and support for trained teachers is essential. This could involve regular visits from both Olinga and GES staff, as well as consistent communication through text messages and phone calls. Head teachers should continue to play a supportive role.

Scaling up Reading clubs

Reading clubs play a crucial role in promoting literacy and fostering a love for reading among individuals of all ages, particularly in educational settings. Reading clubs create a sense of belonging among members who share a common interest. They provide a space for individuals to connect, form friendships, and build a supportive community. It is therefore imperative that all schools be encouraged to establish reading clubs.

By placing a strong emphasis on these aspects, the program can enhance its effectiveness in improving reading skills and literacy outcomes for pupils. This comprehensive approach addresses training, support, values, and community engagement, creating a balanced framework for success.