



# USAID Partnership for Education: *Learning*





**USAID  
Partnership  
for Education:  
Learning**

According to the 2013 and 2015 Early Grade Reading Assessment and the Early Grade Math Assessment conducted by the National Education Assessment Unit, most pupils in Ghana are performing poorly in reading and numeracy. Only the top 2% or fewer pupils in Primary 2 could read with fluency and comprehension. The Government of Ghana wants to change that alarming statistic and turn early grade pupils into readers. Improving the reading skills of primary school pupils is also a major priority for USAID. To support the Government of Ghana in reaching its reading goal of all children reading at grade level in Primary 2, USAID/Ghana has awarded Partnership for Education: Learning to FHI 360.

The USAID Partnership for Education: Learning is a 5-year (2014-2019) Activity that supports the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service (MOE/ GES) to improve performance in reading for pupils in KG2, Primary 1 and Primary 2.

*Learning* uses a “learning-by-doing” approach in which *Learning* staff work as a teams with the staff of the MOE/GES at the district, regional and national levels to design, plan, implement and assess progress. *Learning* also works with other educational institutions such as universities, Colleges of Education and language associations to harness and leverage the strengths of Ghanaian institutions to build and sustain improved reading performance.

**Learning** is headquartered in Accra near the MOE/GES with staff co-located in the Regional Education Offices of GES in all 10 regions of the country. MOE partners and beneficiaries include:

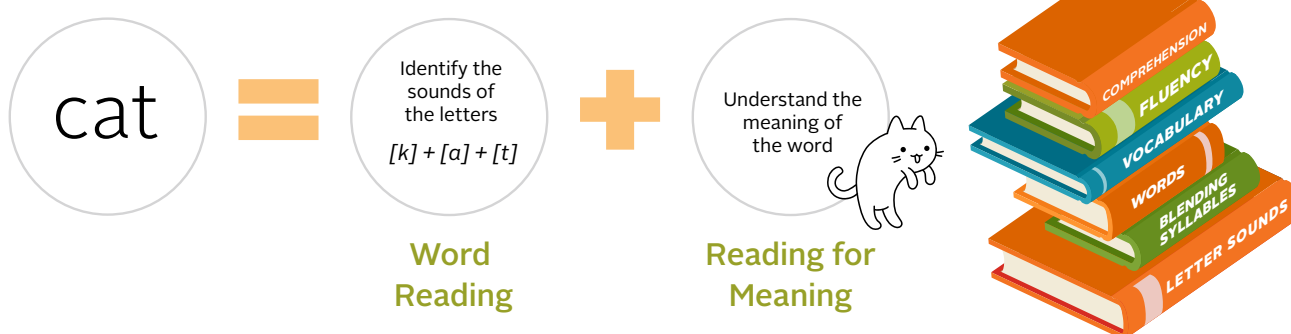
- Ministry of Education
- Ghana Education Service
- National Council on Curriculum and Assessment
- National Teaching Council
- National Inspectorate Board
- University of Education-Winneba
- University of Cape Coast
- Colleges of Education



## Learning's Approach to Reading

Learning's approach to reading, which is based on research and international best practice, systematically teaches the building blocks of reading: introducing letter sounds and syllables in a carefully paced sequence so that children can begin reading words independently in just a few weeks.

### Building Blocks of Reading



Oral language and writing are reinforced at each stage of reading.

Language analyses of each of the 11 Ghanaian languages were conducted using a computer program that provides the best order to teach the letters in each language for children to learn most easily. Using this language progression, and integrating learning outcomes for reading from the Ghanaian curriculum, Ghanaian and international reading pedagogy experts developed the scope and sequence, pupil lessons and teacher scripted lesson plans for each of the languages.

As required by the MOE Language Policy, *Learning* uses the 11 approved Ghanaian languages as the medium of instruction in KG2 through Primary 2, and will introduce English materials in Primary 2 to facilitate the transition to reading and writing in English in Primary 3.

The USAID Partnership for Education: *Evaluating Systems* will conduct a rigorous impact evaluation of Learning's reading program. The findings of the impact evaluation will provide critical information to the MOE/GES needed to inform the scale-up of the reading program for country-wide implementation.

### Dagbani Prototype

*Learning* prototyped pupil books and teacher guides in the Dagbani language in Primary 1 classrooms in 20 schools in the Yendi Municipal District of northern Ghana, starting in January 2017. Teachers, Head Teachers, Curriculum Leads and Circuit Supervisors were trained in the use of the materials, and books were produced and distributed to pupils on a one-to-one ratio for use in the classrooms. The prototype schools were monitored and teachers were supported to implement the program with fidelity.

## Dagbani Prototype Results

After 8 weeks,

**+13** LETTER SOUNDS  
per MINUTE

P1 pupils improved letter sound knowledge from 3 correct letter sounds per minute to 16 per minute, as measured by the Early Grade Reading Assessment.



The percentage of pupils who could read a word in a decodable text

INCREASED by **26%**



Pupils who could read a syllable

INCREASED by **31%**



Teacher attendance improved with

**1.2** more teachers attending each school every day.



78% of planned teaching and learning activities are being implemented

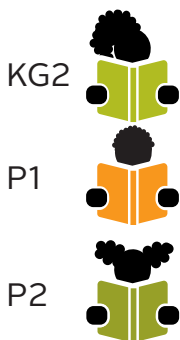
### Scaling-up Learning

Learning is being scaled-up from 20 schools in one district to 7,404 schools in 100 districts. An estimated 1.1 million pupils and 30,000 teachers, Head Teachers and Curriculum Leads will receive over 3 million teaching and learning materials.

**Materials.** Teachers in KG2, Primary 1 and Primary 2 receive Teacher Guides with scripted lessons for three school terms. They also receive alphabet strips for their classroom and a set of flashcards. The Teacher Guides include guidance on using supplementary reading materials as well as guidance on how to conduct assessment and review. Every pupil receives a Pupil Book for each term in Primary 1 and Primary 2.

## Teaching and Learning Materials

### New scripted lessons



### New pupil books



### Supplementary teaching & learning materials



- NALAP books
- Conversation posters
- Alphabet strips
- Flash cards
- Take-home readers



**Institutional Partners for Training and Monitoring include:**

**National Core Trainers (120):** Language and literacy pedagogy experts from Colleges of Education, University of Education-Winneba, University of Cape Coast, retired teachers and professors and *Learning* Regional Training and Coaching Specialists

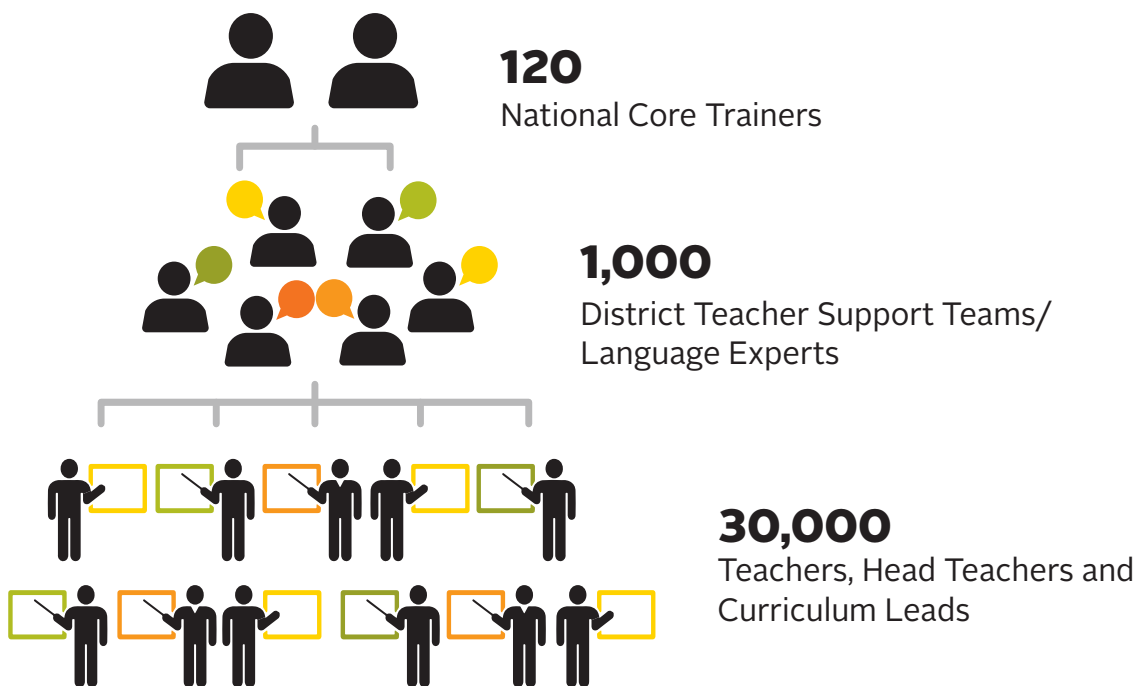
**District Teacher Support Teams (pedagogy) (1,000):** District-level language and literacy specialists assigned by the District Education Office to provide pedagogical support to teachers in primary schools

**District Management and Support:** 800 Circuit Supervisors, GES Regional Statisticians and Regional EMIS Managers, and Learning Monitoring & Evaluation Regional Coordinators

**Training.** *Learning* is using existing MOE/GES systems to build capacity and ensure sustainability. A cadre of National Core Trainers and District Teacher Support Teams are trained in *Learning's* reading methodology and in the use of the teaching and learning materials. The National Core Trainers train the District Teacher Support Teams, who in turn, train teachers, Head Teachers and Curriculum Leads. Training includes face-to-face workshops and video-conferenced workshops conducted remotely from Accra into 20 e-Learning In-service Training Centers based in Colleges of Education across the 10 regions. Training also includes an e-course to complement and reinforce the face-to-face workshops.

**Training Delivery System**

**WHO**



**HOW**



Face-to-Face



Video Conferencing



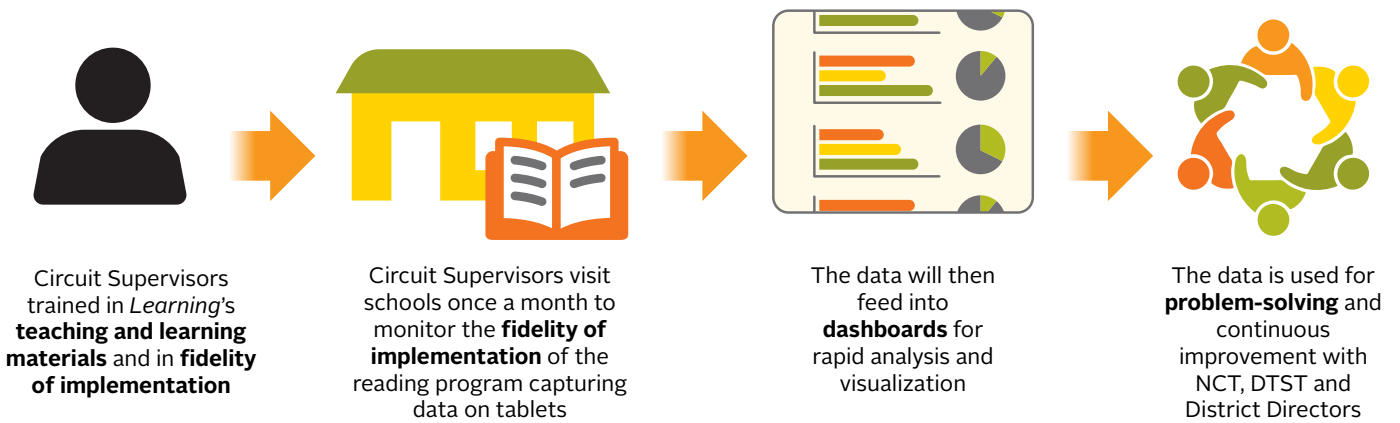
E-course

## Monitoring and Support

In the *Learning* model, each district prepares a District Reading Action Plan to set reading goals, monitor and support the implementation of the *Learning* Early Grade Reading Program, and promote a culture of reading in the communities. Using the systems of the Ghana Education Services Regional and District Offices, Circuit Supervisors are trained to monitor the fidelity of implementation of the reading

scripted lesson plans, and monitor the coaching and School-based In-service meetings using tablet-based tools to collect and analyze data from the classroom observations. The data from the tablets are aggregated and fed into online dashboards to allow disaggregation at the district, cluster, circuit and school-level. These dashboards will be used monthly by the District stakeholders to review progress, problem-solve and develop strategies for continuous improvement.

### Monitoring and Support System



### Reading Activities

#### District Support

The District Reading Action Plans are also a vehicle to spur local initiatives to develop a culture of reading through activities such as Reading Clubs, Reading Festivals, Spelling Bees, Book Kiosks and Mobile Libraries. *Learning* will support districts to engage private sector partners and the media to support these activities.





### Math Pilot

Since 2015, MOE/GES and *Learning* have partnered to create and operationalize an evidence-based teaching and learning model for primary mathematics in Ghana that seeks to: increase teachers' knowledge of math and effective teaching methods; change their attitudes and beliefs about math teaching and learning; and improve their access to suitable instructional material. The revised model has been tested in Kindergarten to Primary 3 in 20

primary schools in two districts of greater Accra. During the school year 2017-2018, the program will be expanded to 60 new primary schools in two new districts. Social Impact will conduct a rigorous impact evaluation will be conducted in the 60 new schools. The results of the evaluation will serve as a basis for the Government to decide whether it will roll-out this revised model to a larger number of schools and adopt it as part of the national curriculum.

#### The Numeracy Advisory Committee includes:



- National Council on Curriculum and Assessment
- National Teaching Council
- GES, Deputy Director General
- MOE/Planning Budgeting Monitoring and Evaluation
- District Education Offices of Ada West, Ga West, New Juaben and Shai Osudoku
- *Learning*
- University of Education-Winneba
- Mathematical Association of Ghana

In the *Learning* model, each district prepares a District Reading Action Plan to set reading goals, monitor and support the implementation of the Learning Early Grade Reading Program, and promote a culture of reading in the communities. Using the systems of the Ghana Education Services Regional and District Offices, Circuit Supervisors are trained to monitor the fidelity of implementation of the reading scripted lesson plans, and monitor the

coaching and School-based In-service meetings using tablet-based tools to collect and analyze data from the classroom observations. The data from the tablets are aggregated and fed into online dashboards to allow disaggregation at the district, cluster, circuit and school-level. These dashboards will be used monthly by the District stakeholders to review progress, problem-solve and develop strategies for continuous improvement.



*Learning's* lead implementing partner is FHI 360, an international development nonprofit selected by USAID/Ghana because of its wealth of experience leading USAID education activities and making positive, sustainable improvements to education systems in countries. FHI 360 is dedicated to improving lives in lasting ways by advancing integrated, locally driven solutions.

## Core Partners

*Learning's* Core Partners have decades of experience working in and with Ghana's education system.

- **The Ghana Institute of Linguistics, Literacy and Bible Translation (GILLBT)** was established in 1962 to develop and promote literacy in Ghanaian languages. In collaboration with the University of Ghana, GILLBT has developed 40 of the hitherto unwritten languages of Ghana, providing the country with orthographies, grammars, phonologies and other literature in these languages. GILLBT works with the Ministry of Education and other relevant national institutions. The organization has won UNESCO's Nesim Habib award for the development of post-literacy materials in African languages.
- **The Olinga Foundation for Human Development** is a winner of the USAID All Children Reading Grand Challenge, and their scalable model of literacy teacher training at the upper primary level was endorsed by GES. The Hewlett Packard Foundation's Ashoka Award for Education ranked Olinga's "Enlightening the Hearts" literacy campaign number 11 out of 300 NGOs for the best education programs in Africa.

## Resource Partners

*Learning's* Resource Partners provide access to cutting edge expertise and global best practices.

- **blueTree Group** is a not-for-profit organization whose ambition is to improve the learning environment for reading through the development and improvement of a sustainable book chain, giving the other 90 per cent of the children in developing countries access to school books. They support *Learning* in the production and distribution of teaching and learning materials.
- **School to School International (STS International)** is a non-profit organization delivering a new model of educational support for children in developing countries by building the conditions of success in schools through interactive learning, local language instruction, teacher and community training, early childhood education and girls' empowerment. They support *Learning* on the Math Pilot.
- **SIL LEAD** is a faith-based non-profit organization that uses its expertise in mother tongue-based multilingual education to improve reading and learning. As a sister organization to GILLBT, SIL LEAD helps civil society, schools and education departments to establish a foundation of learning and literacy in a language that students speak at home and gradually build competence in a national or international language.
- **Varkey Foundation** is a not-for-profit organization established to improve the standards of education for underprivileged children throughout the world. In Ghana, The Varkey Foundation runs projects, which use interactive distance learning infrastructure to broadcast high quality lessons and training sessions to teachers and students. They support *Learning* by providing video conference technology for virtual training of trainers.
- **Young Educators Foundation (YEF)** is an international non-governmental organization whose vision is to improve the lives of youth through literacy, as well as champion the cause of education in Africa. YEF has partnered with *Learning* to prototype The Spelling Bee in Dagbani, the maiden effort to conduct a spelling bee in a Ghanaian language.