



# Learning: developing a phonics-based reading program in the Dagbani language

USAID Partnership for Education: *Learning* is supporting the Ministry of Education and the Ghana Education Service to improve reading and learning outcomes in KG2 to P2 in public schools in Ghana. *Learning* has developed a systematic phonics-based reading program with materials for P1 that are being prototyped in the Dagbani language in 20 schools in Yendi Municipal in the Northern Region of Ghana.

The Dagbani Prototype program was launched in January 2017 in 20 Yendi Municipal schools. Literacy and Dagbani language experts developed a P1 Teacher's Guide and Pupil book based on a systematic introduction of letters and syllables in the Dagbani language. Twenty-four teachers, 20 head teachers and curriculum leads, 11 circuit supervisors and 10 District Teacher Support Team members (language experts) were trained in the use of the materials. The training involved teaching and learning demonstrations and reflections, and teaching practice to equip the teachers with the required techniques and skills for teaching literacy in Dagbani.

**+13** LETTER SOUNDS *per* **MINUTE**

In 8 weeks, 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.



After 8 weeks, the percentage of **pupils who could read a syllable** INCREASED by **31%**



After 8 weeks, the percentage of **pupils who could read a word in a decodable text** INCREASED by **26%**





After 8 weeks, **teacher attendance improved** with **1.2 more teachers** attending each school every day.



**78%**

78% of planned teaching and learning activities are being implemented by teachers as they were designed in the Teacher's Guide, as measured by classroom observations conducted by Circuit Supervisors every two weeks.

The systematic phonics-based approach to teaching reading introduces letters and syllables in a carefully paced sequence, so that children can begin reading words independently in just a few weeks. The Dagbani language was analyzed by linguists with the help of special software, and each of the other 10 approved Ghanaian languages of instruction will be analyzed independently in the same way.



**Learning's approach involves systematically teaching the building blocks of reading.**

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

The Dagbani Prototype program will be scaled-up to

**11** LANGUAGES across **100** DISTRICTS in Ghana

*".. I have been to some phonics training in the past, but the systematic approach and the type of materials for this workshop will make it easier for me to teach my pupils to read."*

– Juliana Dagba, Early Grade Teacher  
Jubilee Primary School, Yendi, Northern Region

*".. in 6 to 8 weeks most of the children in my school could identify letters and sound them because of the new approach we learnt and adopted from the training, coupled with inputs from my supervisor."*

– Raphael Ayeriba, a P2 teacher and Curriculum Lead  
of Bambaya Presbyterian Primary School,  
Yendi, Northern Region

For more information, please contact [learning2019@outlook.com](mailto:learning2019@outlook.com).