



ALEF Annual Report 2024



Table of Contents

Annual Report.....	3
The ALEF method.....	4
Updates from ALEF, our partners, and ongoing projects.....	6
External evaluation of ALEF.....	6
Improved learning materials	8
Capacity development	9
Project results.....	10
Democratic Republic of the Congo (ACDC)	12
Togo (ACATBLI).....	13
Uganda (CACI).....	14
Democratic Republic of the Congo (CEC/BCPAD)	15
Guinea-Conakry (Wakali)	16
Impact of our Work.....	17
Improved living conditions and reduced poverty.....	17
Understand and advocate for your rights.....	20
Strengthened civil society and democratic development.....	24
Protecting your health and environment.....	27
Communication and fundraising.....	28
Partnerships and networking.....	29
The future.....	29
Management Report.....	30
1. About the organization.....	30
2. Major events during and after the financial year.....	32
3. Financial results and position.....	34
4. Income statement.....	36
5. Balance sheet.....	37
Notes.....	38

Message from the Secretary General

In 2024, ALEF, together with our local partners in Togo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo), and Uganda, enabled more than 5,000 people to participate in ALEF courses. These individuals gained skills in reading, writing, and arithmetic. They engaged in discussions and made decisions on important topics such as gender equality, health, human rights, democratic progress, agriculture, and economics. Beyond ALEF courses, they joined savings cooperatives, savings groups, and economic associations, which have sparked new income-generating activities.

In total, more than 20,000 unique course participants have completed ALEF courses since their inception in 2012 and many more are ready to join study groups in 2025.

Our greatest desire is to create opportunities for true empowerment and reduced poverty through these study groups. Many organizations strive for empowerment and poverty reduction, but their efforts don't always lead to these results. That's why we are delighted that the external evaluation that ALEF went through from the research and evaluation firm Multilingual Education (MLE) International in 2024 clearly shows that the ALEF method both contributes to reading, writing, and numeracy skills, as well as to increased empowerment and reduced poverty for those who take part in ALEF's study groups.

Everyone should have the opportunity to take the driver's seat in their own life. Unfortunately, for many around the world, that's not the reality. Yet, we continuously witness how ALEF's method helps people stand tall and become self-reliant. People who once felt weighed down by life's struggles and lacked confidence, now recognize their worth and discover they're capable of so much more than they ever thought possible. In Sweden, we tend to take reading, writing, and numeracy skills for granted, along with our rights and life skills. In many countries, including our program countries—Togo, DR Congo, and Uganda—this isn't always the case. The beauty is that our work is gradually making a difference. Thousands of lives are transformed every year, and it's wonderful to know there's hope in a world that can often seem dark.

We believe and hope that, in the years ahead, we'll be able to take new steps to help even more people experience positive change in their lives. We look forward to nurturing our existing partnerships and paving the way for new ones, which can open further doors for more people's increased empowerment and reduced poverty.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who contribute to our work through your gifts and commitment. Without your efforts, it would not be possible.

With all my best wishes,



Markus Ask

Secretary General, ALEF, Adult Learning and Empowerment Facilitators



The ALEF method

ALEF's raison d'être lies in our method for education and empowerment of young people and adults without primary schooling. Over the years, this approach has proven to be a cost-effective way to give people living in extreme poverty the tools to start changing their lives. It helps them take control of their finances, claim their rights, give their children a good education and find ways to make a living.

There are very few similar programs that focus on both empowerment and providing literacy and numeracy skills. ALEF has developed an approach that reaches those who are most vulnerable and at risk. Our method in adult education leaves a lasting impact on people's lives.

A fundamental principle of the ALEF method is to always design learning materials and curricula in partnership with local organizations. The local organization is the expert on the language and culture. They know the living conditions of the potential participants; the socio-economic, political, environmental and cultural challenges. In a seminar format, a thorough inventory of these living conditions is made, and based on this, possible topics for discussions and texts in the course are identified. The partner organization then formulates the texts in the mother tongue. In this way, the partner organization becomes a co-owner of the content and design of the courses. ALEF functions as a mentor and facilitator in relation to the partner organization, in the same way that the

partner organization then in turn becomes a mentor and facilitator, for the groups of adult learners out in the villages and neighborhoods where the empowerment groups meet.

The non-formal adult education program consists of groups of 20-25 participants aged 15-45, who meet in their local neighborhood. They learn reading, writing and arithmetic using short texts which describe typical situations from the participants' own lives. They discuss what they have read and then create their own texts based on their discussions. At the same time, they make decisions about how they can change their lives and what they can do to lift themselves out of poverty, solve problems and stand up for their rights.

The courses are run by local organizations whose staff are well versed in the language and culture. The full program consists of three courses of 6-8 months each. Study groups meet two or three times a week for a couple of hours each time. Each group is led by a trained facilitator, and receives regular visits from a coach employed by the implementing organization.

In the first course, participants learn to read and write in their mother tongue. The second course focuses on basic math for everyday needs. The third course introduces second language literacy and prepares the group to transform into a cooperative or economic association.

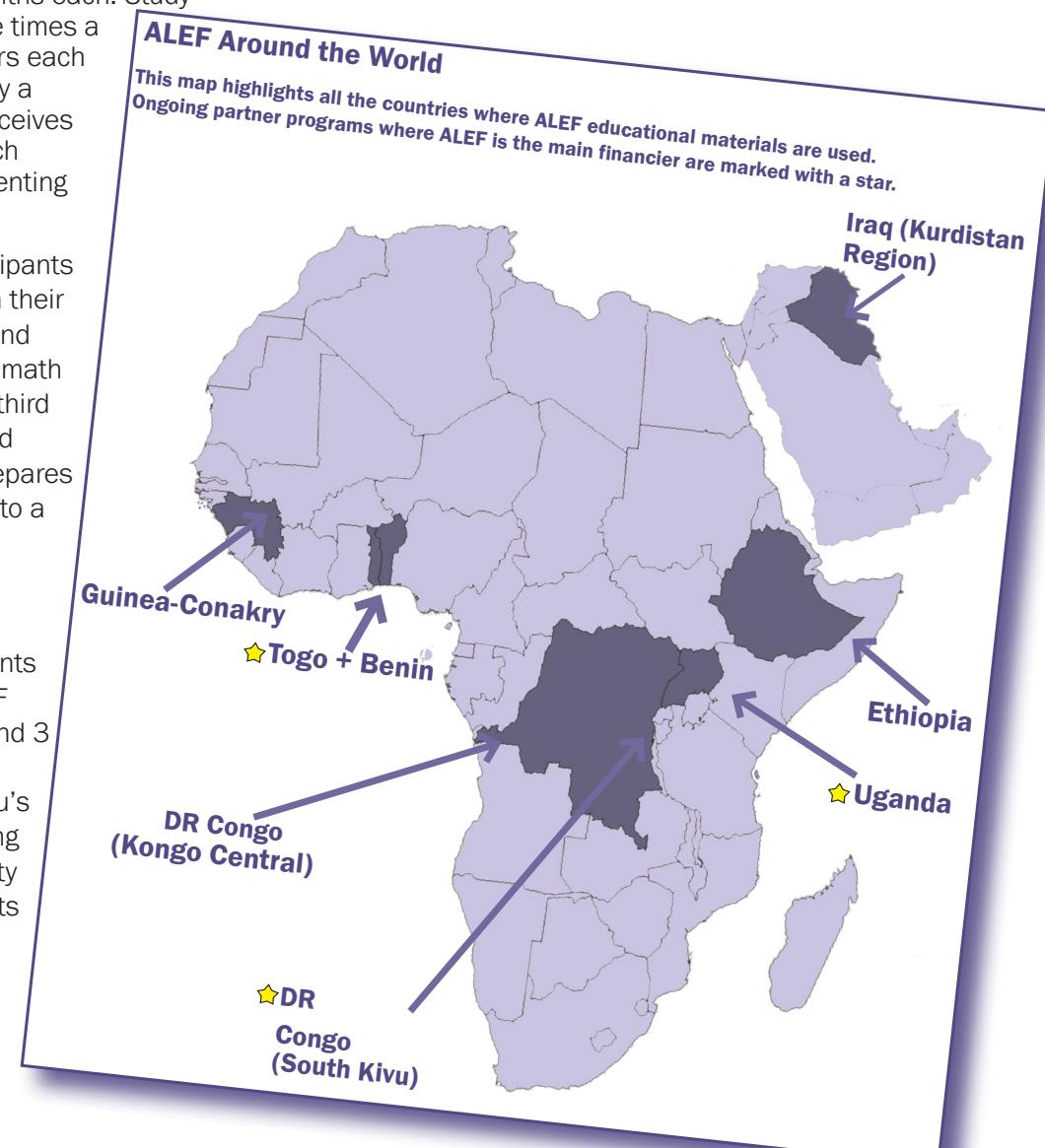
Since 2012, more than 20,000 unique participants have participated in ALEF groups. In addition, around 3 million people joined the Oromia Education Bureau's program in Ethiopia during 2022-2023. The majority of ALEF group participants (80-90%) are girls and women.

For many, the course has been the starting point for earning their own income, asserting their rights, and standing up against abuse of power and corruption. Mothers can support their children's education, access prenatal care and make sure their children are vaccinated. Farmers learn to plan their work and to try out new methods. Many small changes lead to better lives and higher living standards. This approach to empowering people to lift themselves out of poverty and exclusion is both cost-effective and respectful of local cultures and people's dignity.

ALEF's vision is to make the courses available to more people. Over the next few years, we hope to both scale up current projects and launch new projects in new languages for many more of the 750 million young people and adults who have not yet had the chance to learn to read and write.



"It is the partner organization that formulates the texts in the mother tongue. In this way, they become co-owner of the content and design of the courses. ALEF acts as a mentor and facilitator."



Updates from ALEF, our partners, and ongoing projects

External evaluation of ALEF

As ALEF continues to expand and the method reaches more people, it becomes increasingly important to confirm that the unique approach we've developed with our partners over the years is grounded in scientific research and leads to measurable outcomes. In 2024, the research and evaluation firm Multilingual Education (MLE) International was commissioned to conduct an external evaluation of ALEF's results and impact—not only whether participants learn to read, write, and do math, but especially to what extent involvement in ALEF groups leads to increased empowerment and reduced poverty.

The evaluation was led by Dr Carol Benson, a researcher in multilingualism

Part 1: In their own words

Each ALEF study group is visited at least once a month by a trained coach, who observes the lesson, checks the group's progress, and gives feedback and advice to the group leader. The coach also takes time to talk with participants about their experiences and asks if anyone would like to share a change in their life that resulted from the ALEF course. In this way, dozens of "participant stories" are collected each month, offering a rich and nuanced view of how individuals and groups are putting new ideas, skills, and knowledge from the ALEF groups into practice to improve their own lives and those of their families.

MLE's initial investigation focused on

and mother tongue-based education in low-income countries and former associate professor of education at Columbia University in the USA, and Dr. Erina Iwasaki, a researcher at the University of Notre Dame with a focus on educational policy and minority languages.

Based on a thorough analysis of ALEF's goals and method through course materials and interviews with office staff, MLE planned a two-part investigation that aimed to provide a comprehensive picture and allow everyone involved, not least the participants themselves, to make their voices heard. The evaluation was made possible thanks to a grant from the Tornspiran Foundation and several gifts from individual donors.

a qualitative and quantitative analysis of over 400 stories gathered from participants in study groups in Uganda, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo), and Togo by our partners in 2023. MLE used specialized digital tools to uncover patterns within these participant stories.

MLE's report highlights the impressive outcomes achieved with the ALEF method. It shares stories of men and women who, through their study groups, have started sending their children to school, improved their farming practices, launched small businesses, and even begun to stand up against injustices in their families and local communities.

The report authors highlight the importance of the lesson texts as a key reason behind the method's success. Each ALEF course lesson centers on reading a realistic story in the participants' mother tongue, reflecting common dilemmas or challenges from everyday life. These stories serve as the foundation for a structured, democratic discussion, where participants analyze underlying issues and develop practical solutions together.

"Our analysis suggests that the most vital aspect of the ALEF program is the lesson content, which provides information

Part 2: In the Field

MLE's second investigation was a comprehensive field investigation of ALEF's collaborative projects in the DRC and Uganda. In August, Erina Iwasaki spent a week visiting our Ugandan partner CACI, where she observed six different study groups as well as a group that continued to meet after completing the third course. She interviewed participants, group leaders, coaches, and project staff. Due to security concerns in the DRC, MLE couldn't be there in person, so ACDC staff received training in data collection and conducted field visits over two weeks in November. All lessons and interviews were recorded on video. Coaches and project staff were interviewed directly by MLE via video link.

Over the past two years, ALEF has developed new systems for tracking and data collection that make it easier for us and our partners to monitor participants' progress in detail throughout the course (see also Capacity development below). Beyond interviews and lesson observations, MLE was able to review individual results from annual skills assessments, hundreds of texts written by study groups based on their group discussions, as well as survey data covering participants' living conditions, attitudes, abilities, and civic engagement.

and sparks conversations about concrete action steps participants can take in their own lives and communities. [...] Participants often mention these themed discussions, which they've used to process new information, share experiences and ideas, and build group unity. [...] These stories are strong evidence that the ALEF program empowers participants to put their literacy and new knowledge into practice, boosting their confidence and problem-solving skills."

"When participants in empowerment groups share their experiences and feelings, they find connection and grow stronger together. As they delve into lesson topics, they learn about their rights and discover new paths to improve their lives, both individually and as a community."

Based on these extensive findings, the report authors conclude that the ALEF method succeeds in combining the learning of pure reading and writing skills with also conveying real empowerment that leads to meaningful and lasting change. Participants learn to read, write, and count, but what truly enables them to put these new skills into action in everyday life is the sense of community built within the group—where everyone discusses, analyzes, and takes action together.

"The evaluation explores how ALEF helps participants, their families, and their communities gain greater empowerment. We see strong evidence that ALEF's approach connects literacy and empowerment through lesson topics and methodology, as well as through opportunities for participants to form savings groups and launch small income-generating projects. When

ALEF group members share their experiences and feelings—like the embarrassment of not being able to read medicine labels, facing discrimination, or struggling to understand their children's school reports—they find connection and become stronger. As they dive deeper into each lesson's topics and open up about the challenges they face, they learn about their rights and discover ways to move forward and improve their lives,

both individually and as a group. These powerful insights wouldn't happen if lessons only focused on the alphabet and math exercises.

The evaluation shows that ALEF's method—and the strong collaboration with its highly committed partners—has enabled most participants in the DRC and Uganda to make meaningful improvements in their lives.

Improved learning materials



The course materials that have been used for many years for level 1 in the Ifé language in Togo were created before ALEF took over the funding of the project. In recent years, some elements of the ALEF method have been added, but the materials didn't fully align with the ALEF method.

For four weeks in January and February 2024, ALEF's chair of the board, Hélène Boëthius, led an on-site seminar in Atakpamé, Togo. The goal was to develop a new level 1 course using ALEF's conversation-based method, with fresh topics relevant to the participants' daily challenges and a

structure that would help participants overcome the unique challenges of learning to read and write in Ifé, a language with many tone marks and diacritical signs.

A strong team with wide-ranging expertise was assembled for this task. Among them were ALEF's and Acatbli's founders, Hélène Boëthius and Akoété Agbemadon, who both helped develop the written form of Ifé in the 1980s, as well as young coaches with up-to-date field experience from the project. Work on producing the learning materials and instructor's guide continued remotely throughout the year.

Level 3 in Togo was also updated in 2024. Education Coordinator Adam Bott ran a three-week remote curriculum seminar in September, working with a team at Acatbli's office in Atakpamé. Together, they developed brand new lessons on human rights, improved agriculture and animal care, and agricultural cooperatives. The idea of the new level 3 course is for participants to learn how to form, register and run a functioning cooperative to increase their income.

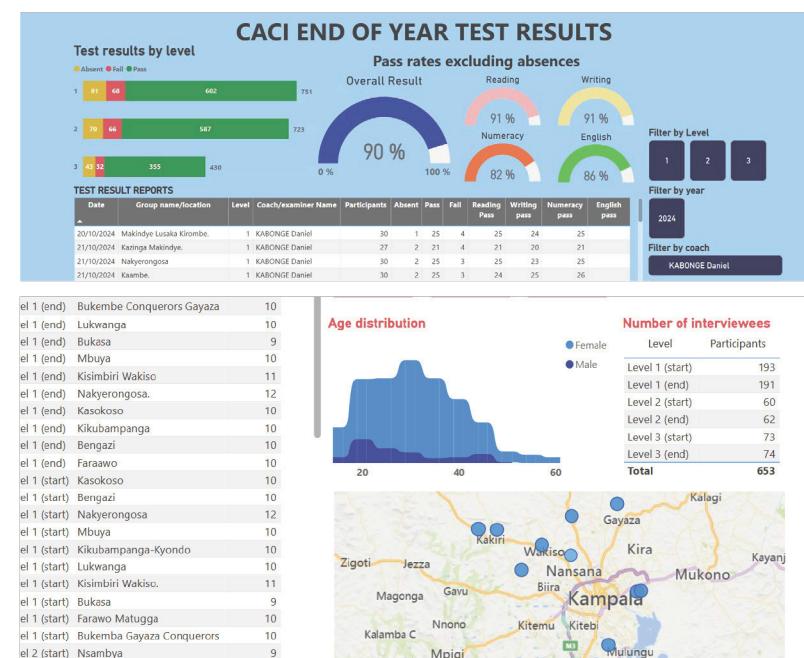
The curriculum and teaching materials for level 3 in Uganda were revised remotely between September and November, introducing brand-new lessons on substance abuse, exploitation of migrant labor, and land theft. Responding to participant feedback, new interactive English exercises were added to build everyday vocabulary—especially useful when communicating with English-speaking customers and employers.

Capacity development

In January, ALEF's Education Coordinator, Adam Bott, led a week-long training session for coaches working within CACI's Luganda language program in Kampala, Uganda. The group included several experienced coaches who have been successfully implementing the ALEF method for many years. During the training, it was discussed how we can improve support for study group leaders by developing the course manual, group leader training and continuous follow-up.

In February, Adam, together with consultant Slije Overvåg, conducted a week of training for newly hired coaches and other project staff in BCPAD's program using the Kikongo language in Kongo Central province, in Democratic Republic of the Congo, supported by Sida through Equmeniakyrkan. New lessons were created on entrepreneurship and the use of energy-saving "improved stoves," which are healthier and more environmentally friendly than traditional fireplaces. This seminar was a key step for the project's major expansion in 2023, where 40 new level 1 study groups were launched across the province, reaching a total of 1,000 participants.

A crucial part of quality assurance in ALEF's partnership programs is the skills testing carried out for all participants at the end of each level. In 2024, new guidelines were developed in dialogue with our three



funded partners. Both the content and testing procedures were revised to make results more comparable across countries and better reflect the reading, writing, arithmetic, and language skills participants need in their everyday lives.



Project results

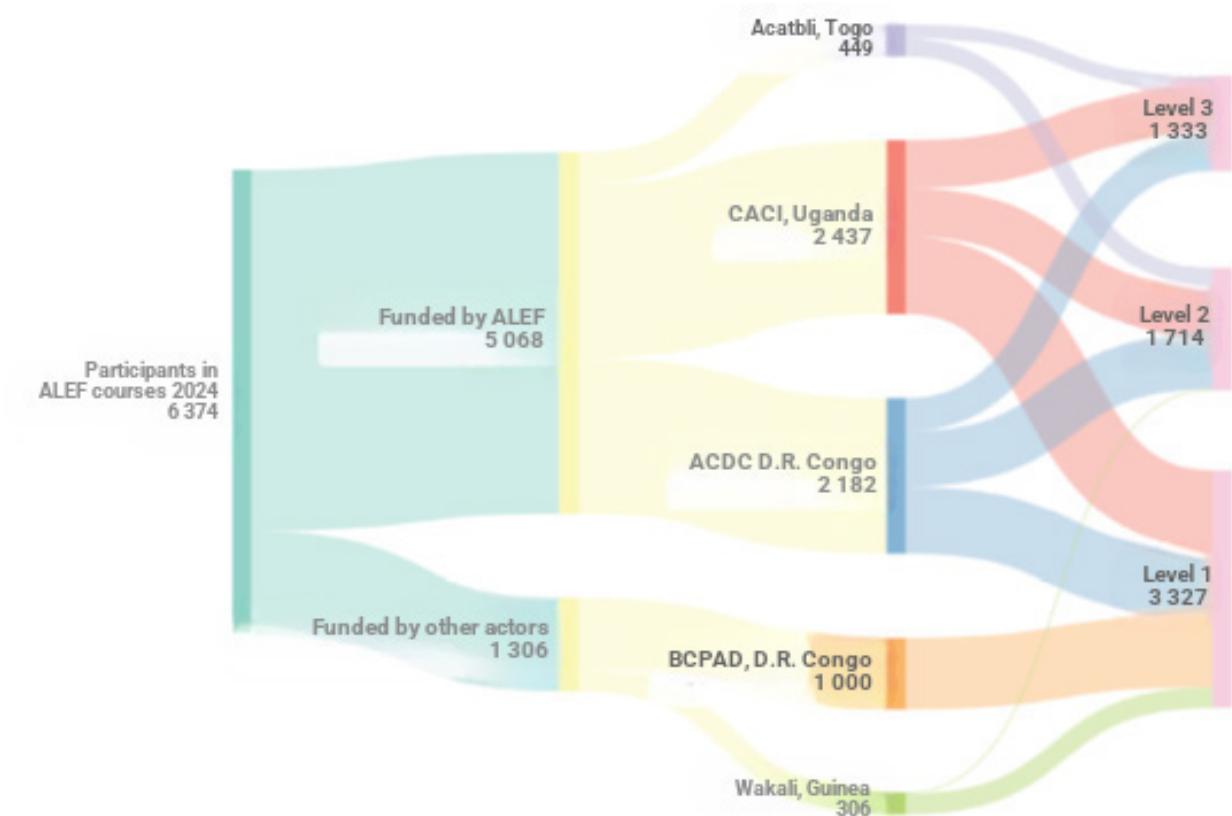
Teaching materials based on the ALEF method are now available in seven languages:

- Ifè in Togo and Benin
- Luganda in Uganda
- Mashi in South Kivu Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Kikongo in Kongo Central Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Kurmanji in Iraq
- Oromo in Ethiopia
- Maninka in Guinea

Since 2012, more than 20,000 unique participants aged 15–45 have taken part in ALEF courses, not counting the approximately 3 million reported by the Oromia Education Bureau from its program. ALEF funds three project collaborations: In Uganda in the Luganda language, in the DR Congo in the Mashi language and in Togo in the Ifè language. In 2024, around 5,000 people joined study groups in these projects. In Togo, there were no level 1 groups since the level 1 teaching materials were being revised during the year. In 2024, 89 percent of participants were women.

A new system for digital reporting and compilation of test results from the field was developed and implemented for the first time in both Uganda and DR Congo in 2024. The system is set to launch in Togo starting in 2025.

The chart below shows the distribution of participants in ALEF groups during 2024:



Democratic Republic of the Congo (ACDC)

Partner Profile

Language: Mashi

Partner Organization: ACDC (Association Congolaise pour le Développement Communautaire)

Collaboration since: 2013

Funding Source: ALEF (parts of the project were funded through a Sida grant transferred to ALEF by ForumCiv)

Sub-partners: ISF (Initiatives de Solidarité Sans Frontières)
COPDIMIR (Comité pour les Droits et le Développement en Milieu Rural)
ADESH (Actions pour le Développement social et Humanitaire) CEST
(Centre d'Encadrement de Spécialisation Techniques) CADE (Club d'Amis pour le Développement et de l'Environnement)

Other projects: Accelerated primary school; Small-scale farming projects

Number of study groups: 100

Number of Participants: ACDC managed 55 groups with 1,231 participants, 82% of whom passed the final exam. ACDC's partner organizations ran 45 groups with 951 participants; in total, all 100 groups included 2,182 participants.

Percentage of Women: 99%

Number of savings cooperatives: 87

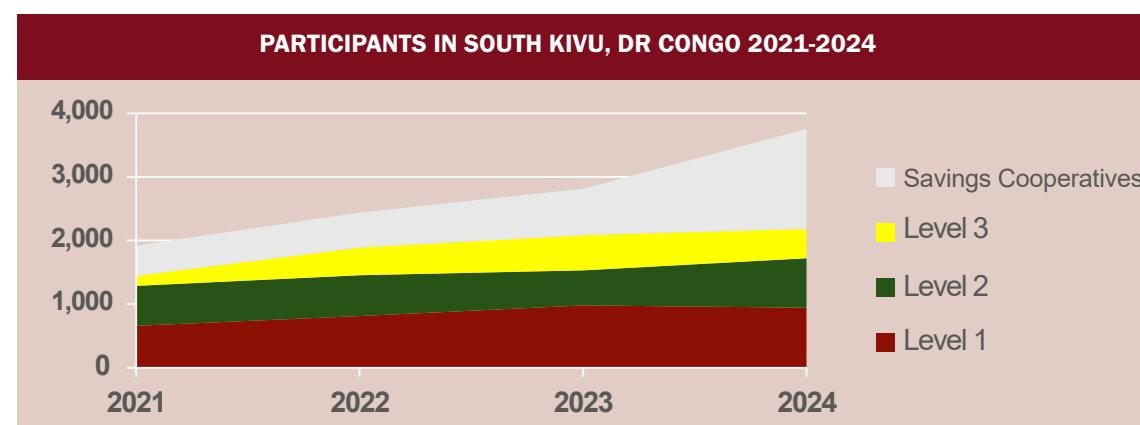
Number of participants in savings cooperatives: 1,575

Association Congolaise pour le Développement Communautaire (ACDC) has worked for many years in the conflict-affected South Kivu province in eastern DR Congo. The mother tongue Mashi is spoken by more than a million people.

In 2024, a total of 100 study groups were held, involving 2,182 participants at levels 1–3. Out of these 100 groups, 55 were organized by ACDC and 45 by their five local partner organizations. Group leaders and coaches from these local partners were trained by ACDC staff at the start of the year, then independently ran their own study groups. ACDC provided some follow-up during the year. Leader training and course materials were funded by ALEF.

After three years, ACDC's study groups are transformed into so-called "MUSO" mutuelles de solidarité. MUSO are savings cooperatives where each member contributes a small amount monthly. The groups write their own statutes, elect a board, and learn bookkeeping. They work together on joint projects. MUSO groups receive support from a coach employed through the project. There are 87 active MUSO groups with around 1,575 members.

Throughout 2024, our partner ACDC and project coaches were interviewed via live link by the research and evaluation firm Multilingual Education (MLE) International. This was part of an external investigation conducted by MLE of the ALEF method.



Togo (Acatbli)

Partner Profile

Language: Ifè

Partner Organization: Acatbli (Association Chrétienne pour l'Alphabétisation et la Traduction Biblique en Langue Ifè)

Collaboration since: 2010

Funding Source: ALEF

Other Projects: Bible translation; a program supporting economic empowerment for women in rural Plateaux through cassava production and processing, funded by OIF (Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie); a livestock initiative for rural household economic growth in Plateaux, Togo, backed by the French association Zebunet; a project promoting functional literacy for women (PAAF) funded by the Togolese government.

Number of Study Groups: 20

Number of Participants: 449, with 90% passing the final exam

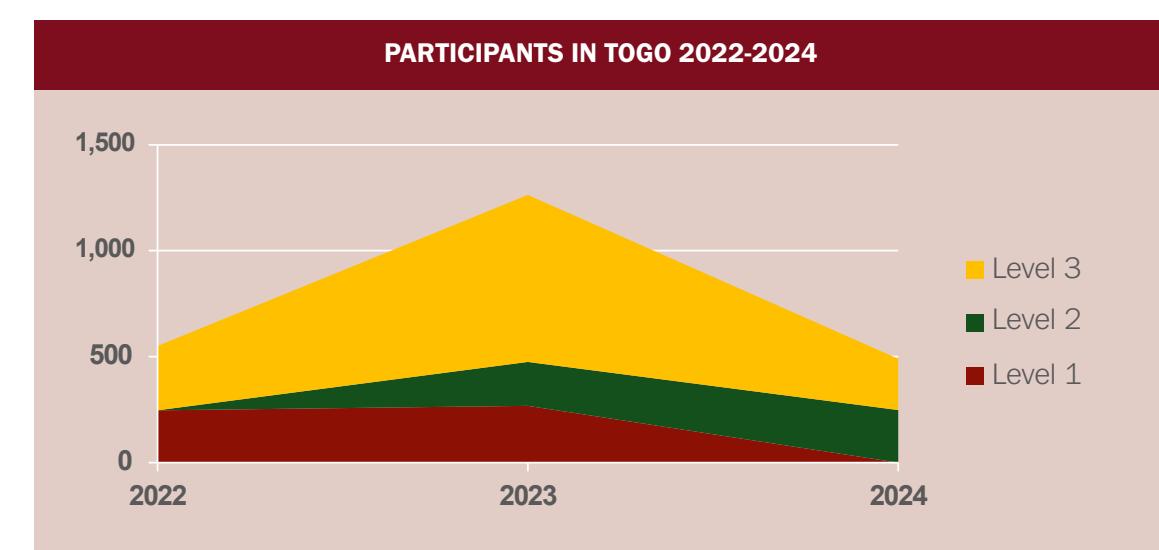
Percentage of Women: 73%

Association Chrétienne pour l'Alphabétisation et la Traduction Biblique en Langue Ifè (Acatbli) is based in Atakpamé, Togo, but also operates in neighboring Benin. Acatbli works in the Ifè language, which is the mother tongue of about 500,000 people in both Togo and Benin.

In 2024, Acatbli did not have any ALEF groups at level 1. The year was instead dedicated to preparations for expanding the work. New teaching materials were developed for level 1, and levels 2 and 3 were revised to make them even more engaging and relevant for the participants in the study groups. The updates have been successful and are expected to strengthen the project's outcomes.

In November 2024, ALEF's new Secretary General Markus Ask visited Togo with Education Coordinator Adam Bott to meet Acatbli and observe their work on site. During the trip, Adam also led basic coach training for the coaches that will participate in the project in 2025. Four new coaches were trained.

Throughout the year, Acatbli has strategically worked to strengthen its organization and establish sustainable funding. They have partnered closely with local churches to foster new collaborations.



Uganda (CACI)

Partner Profile

Language: Luganda
Partner Organization: CACI (Change African Child International)
Partnership since: 2013
Funding: ALEF
Partner Organizations: ALED (Action for Liberty and Economic Development)
 Kakiri Women Development Group,
 Bellins Consulting and Skilling Centre, IST
 (Institute for Social Transformation)

Other Projects: Vocational training in sewing and crafts for youth; counseling and support for people living with HIV/AIDS; assistance for children from vulnerable backgrounds

Number of Study Groups: 104

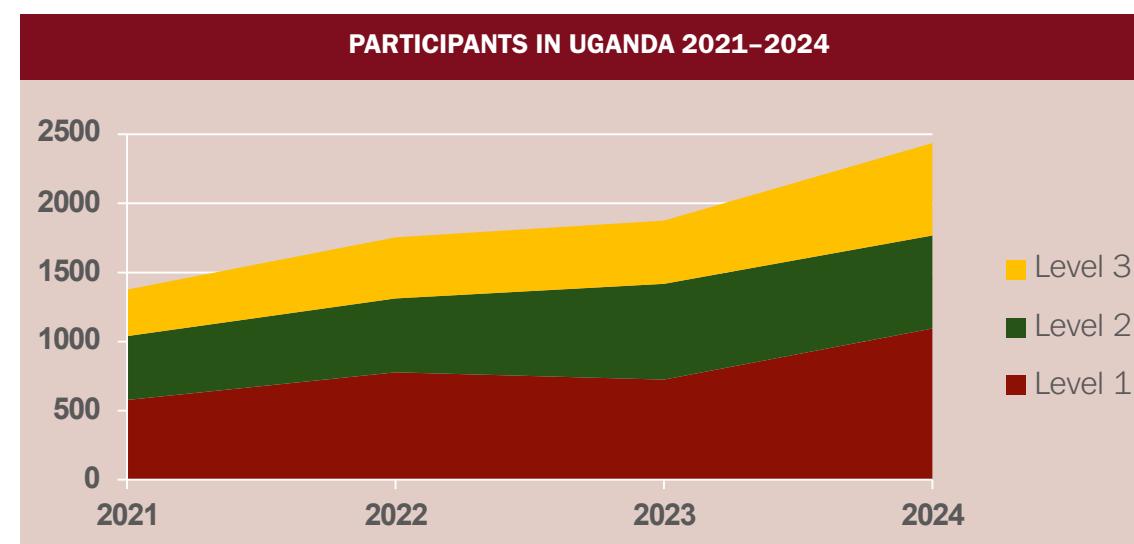
Number of Participants: 2,437 participants, of which 83% passed the final exam

Percentage of Women: 84%

Change African Child International (CACI) operates in and around Kampala and Entebbe, Uganda. They run adult study groups in Luganda, the mother tongue of about 6 million people, and spoken as a second language by several million more.

Over the past few years, CACI's program has expanded, and to give even more people a chance to join the groups, CACI partner with three local organizations. In 2024, these partners ran a total of 22 groups out of the 104 mentioned above. Through CACI, ALEF supports with group leader training, learning materials, manuals, and some follow-up, while the local partner manage the study groups independently, without funding from

ALEF. CACI also runs several groups that have completed level 3 and now continue as reading clubs or economic associations. These groups mostly operate on their own. At the start of 2024, ALEF organized a training session for the project's coaches. During the seminar, a new digital tracking system was also introduced. The coaches received additional training in the ALEF method to strengthen the program. Throughout 2024, our partner CACI was visited by the research and evaluation firm Multilingual Education (MLE) International, who observed groups and interviewed participants as part of the external investigation of the ALEF method.



Democratic Republic of the Congo (BCPAD)

Partner Profile

Language: Kikongo
Partner Organization: BCPAD, aid agency for the CEC church (Communauté évangélique du Congo)
Partnership since: 2017
Funding: Equmeniakyrkan in Sweden with Sida funding through the Swedish Mission Council
Other projects: Agricultural development; vaccination; healthcare; human rights
Number of study groups: 40
Number of participants: approx. 1,000

Between 2018 and 2021, ALEF partnered with congregations from the Equmeniakyrkan and their local partner, the CEC Church, to develop learning materials in Kikongo. Materials were produced for three course levels, and a program was launched in the municipality Wombo with six groups per level. Since 2022, the project has been funded by Sida as part of Equmeniakyrkan's collaboration with BCPAD, the aid organization of the CEC Church.

At the start of 2023, BCPAD requested to use ALEF materials to expand the project, scaling up to 40 study groups with a total of 1,000 participants in 2024. This expansion is made possible by a Sida grant through

the Swedish Mission Council. ALEF's Education Coordinator Adam Bott and consultant Silje Overvåg led a weeklong training in the ALEF method for coaches and project staff in Kimpese in February 2024. At the same time, learning materials were updated with new content focused on sustainable agriculture and entrepreneurship. Although we don't have detailed participant statistics, BCPAD reports from their follow-up visits that both participants and group leaders have responded very positively to the method, and all study groups will continue with level 2 in 2025.



Guinea-Conakry (Wakali)

Partner Profile

Language:

Maninka

Partner Organization:

Association Wakali (previously the project was operated under Église Assemblées de Dieu de Guinée, EADG)

Collaboration since:

2022

Funding Partner:

Huskvarna Pentecostal Church

Number of Study Groups:

17

Number of Participants:

306

During 2022–2023, ALEF teamed up with the EADG church to create course materials for levels 1 and 2 in the Maninka language of the Kankan province in eastern Guinea-Conakry. Maninka is spoken by more than three million people across Guinea and Mali. In recent years, life in the villages where the ALEF courses take place has changed dramatically due to a gold rush, with many young people from struggling farming communities seeking risky work in and around the numerous newly opened small-scale mines.

The first pilot groups in Maninka launched at Level 1 in 2023.

An evaluation showed that participants valued the course, but better follow-up and support for group leaders were needed to improve the results. The team was strengthened with a new project coordinator and new coaches.

In 2024, a new independent NGO called Association Wakali was established that took over project management from EADG. During 2024, 15 new study groups completed level 1, and two groups advanced to level 2. ALEF remains in contact with Wakali to explore developing a third course level in the coming years.

In November 2024, ALEF's Secretary-General Markus Ask met Abidonou Awamessi Abla in the village of Akparé, Togo. She's a determined woman who started her first ALEF course in 2021 and has now completed all three levels. Her motivation for joining was a deep desire to learn how to read.

During our conversation about what she's gained from the courses, she shared that she's learned, above all else, to care for others and that her circle of friends has grown.

She didn't know how to read before, but now she does. She also emphasized how important it is to be able to use her phone and recognize who's calling her.

Abidonou is both a farmer and a businesswoman who sells clothes. Being able to count, which she learned through the ALEF courses, is invaluable and really helps her improve her business.

When asked about her hopes for the future, she said her greatest wish is to teach others what she herself has learned—so they too can read in their mother tongue, Ifè. She's especially eager to teach her children to read in Ifè, their own language.



Impact of our work

Improved living conditions and reduced Poverty

Improved finances

In ALEF's level 2 course, participants learn basic math skills and practice managing shopping lists, receipts, and keeping a simple cash book. These abilities make it easier to organize household finances and conduct income-generating activities. Many participants report that they have gained confidence and increased empowerment through the ALEF groups. They've experienced opportunities that were unavailable before joining. In Uganda, 80 percent began income-generating activities after just the first year.

A female participant in one of ALEF's study groups in Uganda, who had missed school due to her disability, described how she was considered a failure who couldn't even write her name. After the ALEF course, she expressed that:

"I am deeply grateful for all that the ALEF course has helped me achieve. When I started, I had nothing at all, but thanks to the group sharing their experiences, I found the courage to open a small vegetable business. I'm no longer a beggar, as I used to be. Now I am better off than other people who chose not to be part of the program."

Another female participant, aged 40 and mother of seven, from DR Congo, shares: "Ever since I was young, I've sold ripe bananas, but every time, my money was stolen because customers knew I couldn't read or count. Now, I know how to calculate the right prices and give the correct



change. These days, I sell my bananas myself at the market and I've noticed I earn much more than before."

Collaboration and entrepreneurship

In DR Congo, participants actively help each other and diversify their income-generating activities. Now, most have side businesses beyond farming, bringing in extra income. The majority run small enterprises or make and sell soap. Many are also working to buy, or even craft, their own mattresses.

Furaha Kamungu, a member of an ALEF group in DR Congo, shares:

"I sleep on a mattress I made myself now, instead of my old wooden bed covered in straw."

Agriculture

The level 3 ALEF course in Togo contains a wide range of texts focused on sustainable agriculture and animal care. Participants read and discuss topics such as raising chickens, using organic fertilizers, and soil improvement techniques. Improved agricultural practices means families enjoy better access to food and can boost their income by selling surplus harvests.

In Kabare, DR Congo, a member of an ALEF group shares:

"We have started saving seeds in our group. Each member donates at least 10 measures of beans and 5 measures of soybeans, which we will sell in August. With the income from the sales, we'll make joint purchases for our group."

A 35-year-old female participant in DR Congo says:

"Before joining the group, I farmed without doing anything to improve the soil, and my cultivation didn't produce enough. We've now learned to use local fertilizers. I bought five guinea pigs, and after four months I had 25. I sold 10 guinea pigs, which allowed me to pay for my two children's school fees and other needs. I spread the guinea pig droppings as fertilizer on my field. My first harvest was so abundant that I was able to sell some and keep the other part for my own consumption. Now my plan is to buy a goat."

Education

Education for the next generation is crucial for community development and families' future livelihoods. Lack of money is one of the main reasons many project participants have school-age children who aren't in school. We hear from many who, thanks to new income-generating activities, can now afford to send their children to school. A female participant, 30 years old and mother of five, from Kakenge in DR Congo, explains:

"When I joined the group, I couldn't read or write. I was already raising a few pigs. I borrowed FC 80,000 (SEK 265) from the ALEF group while I was in level 1 and bought a pig for FC 90,000 (SEK 298). That pig has now given birth to ten piglets. Today, a piglet sells for FC 65,000 (SEK 215). Thanks to pig farming, I can send my children to a private school and support my family. Thank you for helping us solve all the challenges we face here."

Sometimes, however, there are reasons other than lack of money that stop schooling. Patriarchal norms also stand in the way of girls' schooling. In ALEF's learning materials,

ALEF's Secretary General Markus Ask met Kotchenin Abla, 30 years old, in the village of Akparé in Togo during his trip to Togo in November.

Kotchenin started her first ALEF course in 2021 and has now completed all three levels. She chose to participate in the ALEF course because she wanted to learn how to read and write, both in her native Ifè language and in French, the national language of Togo.

When we talk about what she has gained, she emphasizes the joy that she can now write. In addition, she also highlights that she has gained knowledge about how to manage her life. By discussing texts that deal with her own life situation, she can find new ways forward.

One major outcome of the ALEF courses is that she's now able to help her children with their schoolwork. She has also gained an expanded community through the other participants she has gotten to know over time.

In terms of future dreams, her deep wish is for her children to have a better future.



lesson texts often focus on the right to education. Many participants say their view on education has changed since joining the study groups. They've convinced their spouses that all their children—girls and boys alike—should go to school. Now, they can also help them with schoolwork.

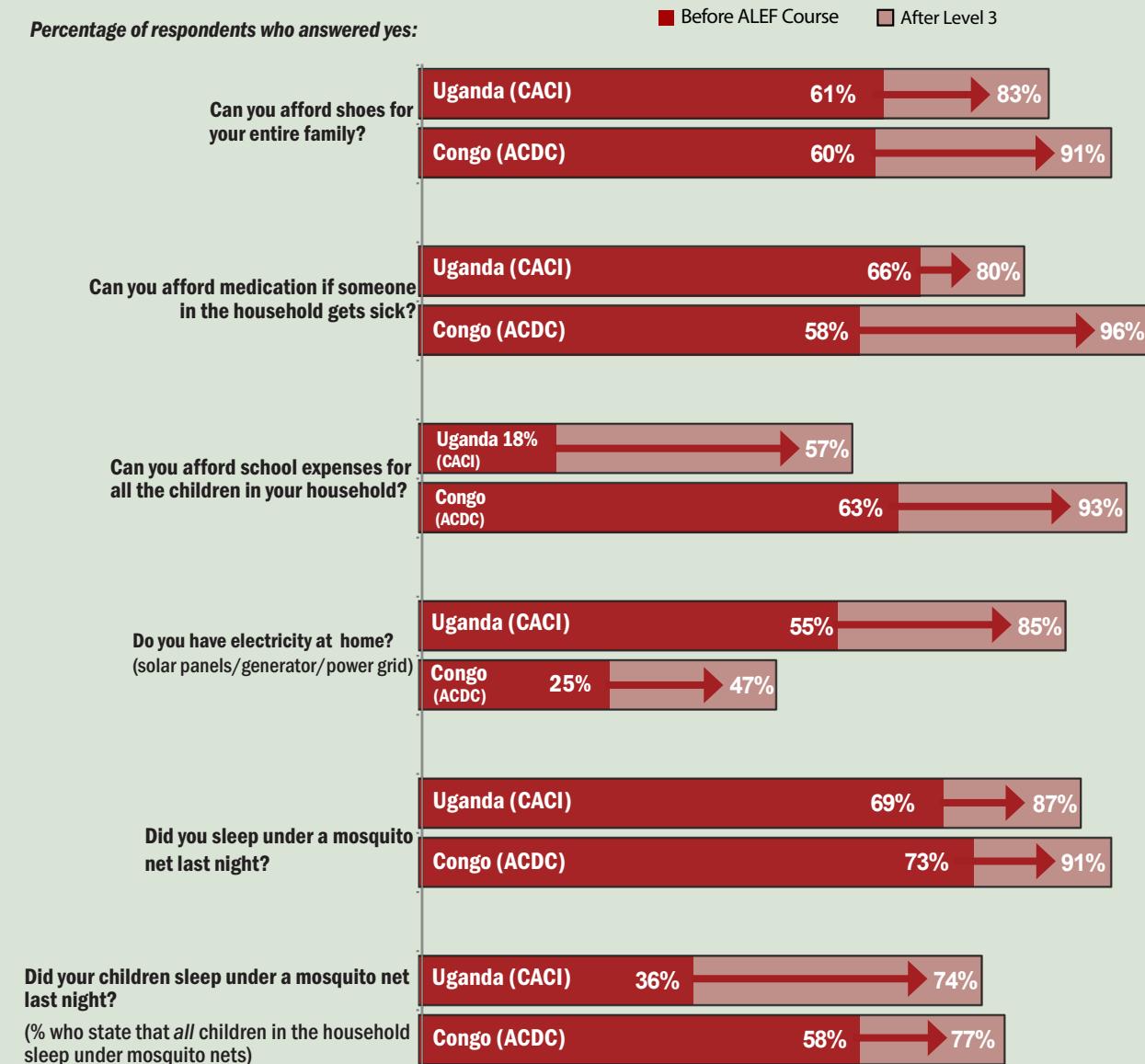
A 40-year-old woman and mother of four in DR Congo says:

"Lesson number 10 touched me deeply because my husband is an alcoholic. Every week, he earns at least FC 120,000 (SEK 397), but all the money goes

toward buying alcohol. I joined the ALEF group, started saving, and bought five pigs—but my husband sold them. I moved in with my parents for six months. Later, in the ALEF group, we discussed how important it is for men and women to work together. That's when I returned home, and we began cooperating. Thanks to this, he changed and even stopped drinking. Our lives are different now: we've built a house with five bedrooms and a new metal roof, and we've sent our children to school."

Can joining an ALEF group improve your quality of life and health? The chart below is based on interviews with 257 course participants in Uganda and 304 participants in DR Congo during the operating years 2023 and 2024.

Percentage of respondents who answered yes:



Understanding and advocate for your rights

Women's rights

Participants in ALEF groups gain access to a safe environment where they can exchange and share their experiences. Thanks to this environment, it becomes easier for them to open up to others and seek help and solutions to problems related to violations of their rights. In addition, they begin to actively assert their rights, both individually and as a group, against the authorities and others responsible for these violations.

The education provided through the ALEF groups benefits women's economic independence. Women who can read, write and count have greater opportunities to both earn their own income and have a stronger voice within the family.

We get many reports from participants whose family owns a small shop or market stall. Previously, the husband handled everything related to money. But when he sees that the wife, with her new math skills, is getting the books in order and making the business profitable, she is allowed to take on an increasingly larger role and be involved in decision-making.

A woman from Ndejje-Kibutika, Uganda, level 3 said:

"In my family of seven children, I was the only one who dropped out of school after getting pregnant at a young age. My parents tried to persuade me to go back to school, but I refused, knowing that other students would laugh at me, and finally I got married. I tried to run a few businesses, but failed. My husband started a business for me where I sold coal, but it went bankrupt simply because I didn't know how to keep books. He was disappointed! I will never forget the day I heard an announcement about ALEF"



courses on the village radio. I rushed to the municipal office to register. In the second year after learning addition and subtraction, my husband gave me some money to start a fruit stand right outside my home. I have managed to keep the business going and my husband has given me additional money to expand the business. I keep a record of the daily sales and every Sunday he reviews it. I am happy to be able to finish my third year in the program. I can read, write, count and add sums, count money and speak a little English! My husband is also happy that I have more space."

For many, the ALEF group is their first exposure to laws and international conventions that guarantee women's equal rights. An important goal of the ALEF method is to equip women to stand up against oppressive norms and drive change in their families and communities. It is not just about learning about their legal rights, but also about women gaining new self-confidence as they discuss and analyze gender equality issues in groups, share their experiences, and find concrete solutions. Participants gain strength and power from each other; they help and encourage their fellow students to stand up for their rights.

A 32-year-old woman in Togo, who is a housewife and a member of the ALEF group in the

village Gbagbadjakou, has driven change within her family. She tells:

"In my family, women are strictly forbidden from attending family gatherings and their voices are generally not taken into account. But thanks to the ALEF group, my situation has changed. I was surprised to be called and involved in the decision-making at my late father's funeral. I was also present at my father's inheritance. The group gave me the confidence and skills to speak up and be heard in my family."

Furthermore, a 27-year-old mother of six from the Democratic Republic of the Congo tells of her struggle for justice after the death of her parents. Her parents had not made a will before their death, and her brother took possession of the fields and livestock. The woman, together with her sisters, filed a complaint with the human rights office, despite opposition from within the family. She ultimately won the case, praising the impact of the lessons she learned in the ALEF group, which enabled her to stand up for her rights.

A 43-year-old mother of eight in the Democratic Republic of the Congo also told of a difficult situation regarding inheritance rights in her family. After her husband's death, his sons tried to claim the family's farmland at the expense of her daughters. Thanks to the lessons learned in the ALEF group, she organized a family meeting to defend her daughters' rights. Despite opposition from some family members, her case was taken to court, and a court decision is expected soon.

In Uganda, a participant stood up for a child who was being abused:

"I am a mother of three children. I used to hit them for every mistake they made, but after talking about it in the ALEF group, I realized that it was wrong. So one day when I was going to the market, I saw a woman who was beating a child badly. I immediately told the woman to stop hitting the child, but she replied: 'This is not your child, so deal with your own.' Right then and there I got a phone number

to the police and called them. When the mother heard me talking to the police, she stopped hitting the child. The police came anyway and warned her: 'The next time you are reported, we will punish you.'

Equality

One of the most striking inequalities between girls and boys in the DR Congo is that parents often enroll their boys in school, but not their girls. A large number of participants in the ALEF groups now report that they no longer make any gender distinction in this regard, and that all their children, boys and girls, are enrolled in school.

A level 1 group in the village Nvuzacuma, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, has decided that every member of the group will enroll their children in school by September 2024. They say that traditionally, girls have not received an education because they have often been responsible for caring for infants or accompanying their parents to town to sell vegetables. However, this situation is changing thanks to their participation in the group.

In Uganda, the courses are yielding results on gender equality in families. In the participant survey and regarding the question of whether my husband/wife listens to me and respects my opinion, 29 percent answered yes at the beginning of the project and a full 58 percent towards the end of the level 1 course.

Corruption and abuse of power

Many of the communities where our partner organizations conduct study groups are plagued by gross corruption. Schools and healthcare sometimes charge for services that are free by law. Civil servants can invent non-existent taxes and fees, and employers cheat employees out of their salaries. There are police officers who use their power to extort money from law-abiding citizens, but release the real criminals if they can afford to pay. People who cannot read and write are particularly vulnerable, both because they are more easily deceived and because they are less likely to speak out.

That's why corruption is one of the key topics covered in our lesson texts. We receive many reports from our partner organizations about participants who, inspired by group discussions, have begun standing up for their rights.

A mother of six in level 3 in DR Congo shares her story:

"I'm really interested in this study group, especially after learning about human rights. I had built a house with three bedrooms and a living room out of sheet metal with my own funds. But my husband kicked me out of the house and installed his second wife there. After our ALEF group talked about human rights, I consulted our facilitator, who referred

me to a human rights office. In the end, the court ordered my husband to build a new house for me and split the property, including the fields and livestock, equally. I am deeply grateful to the ALEF group, our facilitator, and ACDC."

A 38-year-old mother of seven from Chahoboka shares her appreciation for the ALEF course. She explains how she faced an attempted scam by the school administration, who tried to get her to pay an unreasonable amount for her children's education. Using the knowledge she acquired through the ALEF course, she reported the situation and managed to get back the money they had wrongly requested.

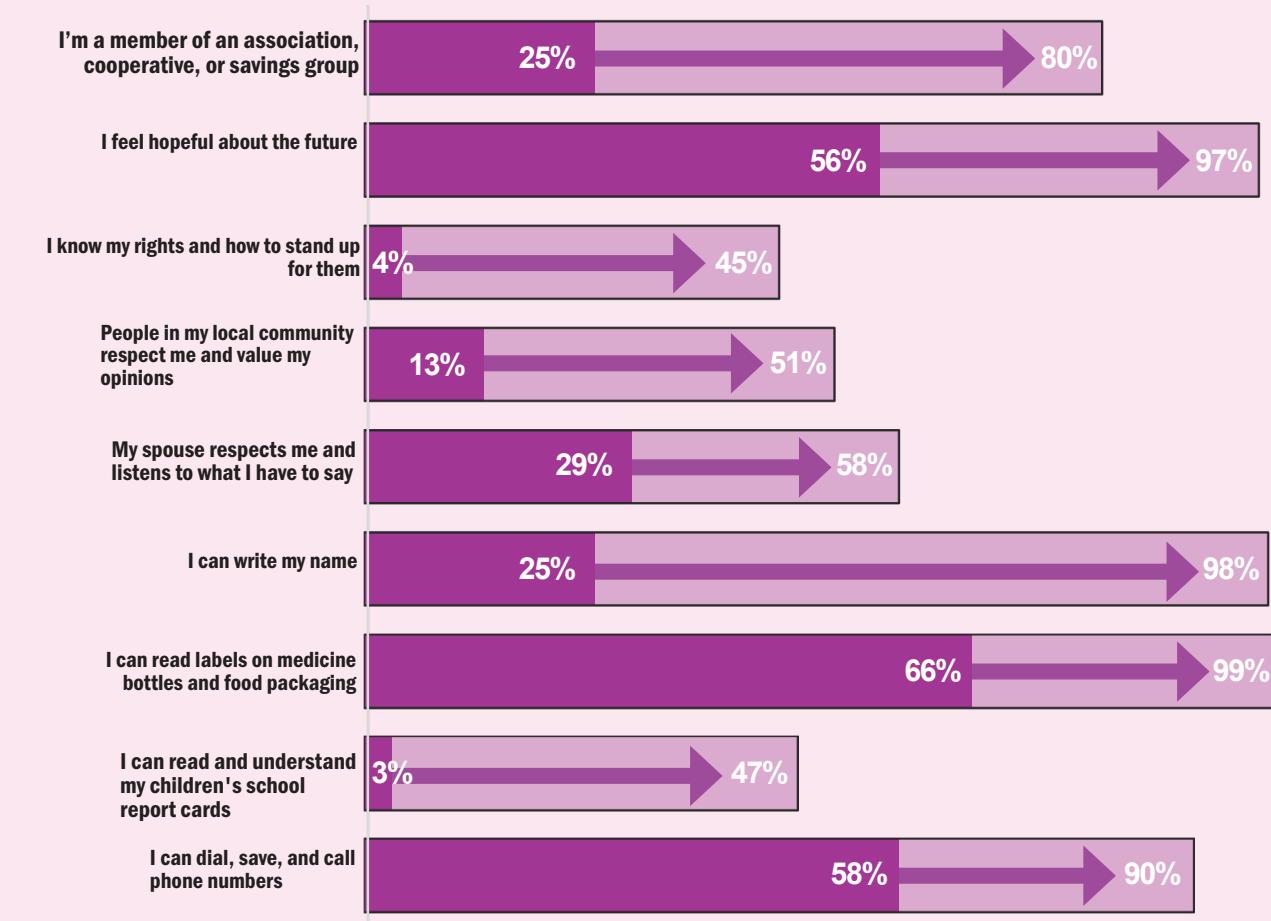


"I will never forget the day I heard an announcement about ALEF courses on the village radio. I rushed to the municipal office to register. In the second year after learning addition and subtraction, my husband gave me some money to start a fruit stand right outside my home. I have managed to keep the business going and my husband has given me additional money to expand the business. I keep a record of the daily sales and every Sunday he reviews it. I am happy to be able to finish my third year in the program. I can read, write, count and add sums, count money and speak a little English!"

-participant in a study group in Ndejje-Kibutika, Uganda

A complete ALEF program includes three courses over about seven months. After just the first course, most participants have learned to read and write and have begun to make changes in their lives. CACI interviewed 100 people who started the ALEF course in Kampala, Uganda, in March 2024. The same participants were interviewed again at the end of level 1 in November, and we'll continue to follow up after levels 2 and 3. It's inspiring to see how much participants' confidence and hope for the future have grown after the first ALEF course.

■ Before the ALEF course ■ After Level 1

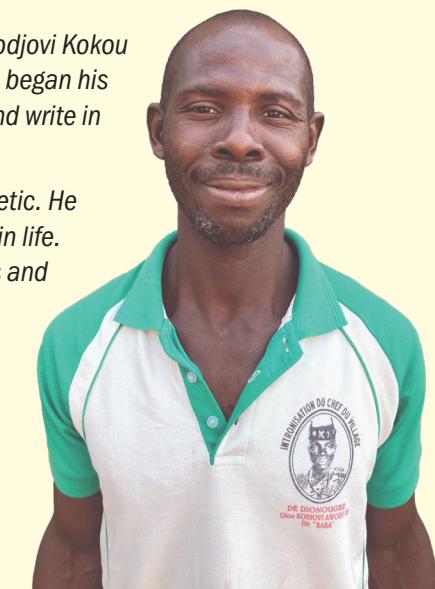


In Togo, ALEF's Secretary General Markus Ask met with 43-year-old Kodjovi Kokou in November 2024. Kodjovi has completed all three ALEF courses. He began his first ALEF course in 2021, driven by a strong desire to learn to read and write in his mother tongue, Ifé.

As a result of the ALEF courses, he can now read, write and do arithmetic. He has also learned to find solutions to various problems that may arise in life. Through his participation in the group, he has received many new tips and ideas that he can apply in his farming and animal husbandry.

Previously, Kodjovi did not seek medical help at clinics or hospitals when his children were sick. Now he has a greater understanding of how healthcare works, and uses the healthcare that is available.

His deep desire in life is for his children to go further than he did. The ALEF courses have helped him contribute to making that happen.



Strengthened civil society and democratic development

Confidence and participation

The core of every ALEF lesson is the discussion, a structured conversation where participants themselves analyze a pressing topic based on their own experiences and knowledge. Regularly discussing important and even sensitive topics in a group is a way to learn to speak in front of others and a training in thinking of oneself as a citizen whose voice counts.

Our partner organizations testify that many participants who initially had difficulty speaking in public now, thanks to the study groups, dare to express their opinions out loud and participate actively in civil society and local decision-making.

Those who join our study groups are often among those with the lowest status in the local community – poor women with little or no education – but after just the first year, many have taken on leadership roles in savings groups, cooperatives, or the church. A 38-year-old mother of seven from Chahoboka in the Democratic Republic of the Congo expresses her pride:

"I am very happy and proud to have learned to read and write properly. I was even able to read the Bible in church and as a result I was elected secretary of the women's association in our church two months ago."

The idea behind the ALEF method is that the discussions that begin in the group should not stop there but should influence the public discourse in the local area. Some of the texts that the participants write together are printed by our partner organizations and put up on notice boards in visible places where they can attract the attention of passersby. It is not uncommon for proposals that were first developed in the study group to later be raised in village meetings where all residents can participate.



Collaboration that drives change

We receive many reports of participants acting together to drive change and development in the local community. Participation in the ALEF courses creates community and collaboration, which in turn drives change in various ways.

A 38-year-old mother of seven children and chairperson of one of the groups in DR Congo, testifies to the effect of the ALEF course:

"Our study group in Konge has decided to do community service every Saturday morning from 6:00 to 8:00. For example, we have prepared a path to the spring in the village of Maliba. After this achievement, our village chief let us hold a motivational meeting for the entire population of our village. We are almost finished with this project, and when it is finished, we will plan other community activities through the reading and writing group."

Civil society organizations

An ALEF study group is also a course in democratic collaboration. Participants debate, make decisions, and formulate texts together. At level 3, they learn about the practical work of forming and running their own organization. The work of helping participants organize and participate in civil society is directly linked to our operational goals. It is also important for the sustainability of the operation – that meetings and conversations do not stop as soon as the course is over.

Most study groups in DR Congo continue as independent MUSOs ("mutuelles de solidarité" – savings cooperatives) after the course ends. They are not only economic organizations but often get involved in local social issues. Thanks to the ALEF groups

MUSO groups are being established, which become new civil society structures. Some of these MUSOs have acquired arable land, which means that more land is being cultivated and food production is increasing. The presence of such organizations in the communities helps to combat human rights violations and injustices. The members of the MUSO groups already know each other and have started to exchange information between their groups even without going through ALEF's local partner ACDC. In this way, a network of interconnected MUSO groups is growing in the area, which can persist even when ACDC's involvement ends.

In Uganda, many groups of people who have completed level 3 meet both to continue practicing their reading and to engage in activities together. Some form cooperatives or register as civil society organizations. Others are more informal.

Democracy

A prerequisite for a democratic society is education and it is crucial for the stability and development of a society and for people to be able to live in security. In the ALEF groups, participants discuss human rights in general but also children's rights, group rights and individual rights more specifically. When participants discuss rights in the groups, they share their experiences. They learn from each other and gain the courage to change situations together in a group or on their own.

A woman from DR Congo shared a story about how she mustered up the courage to bring home her 11-year-old son who was working in a mine:

"My family is very poor. That's why my 11-year-old son stopped going to school and ran away to a mine to work. After just over a year, he hadn't come home. I was afraid to go there and look for him. It was only after several group discussions in the ALEF group that I

In rural areas, civil society activities are generally less developed than in cities. However, many groups, after becoming aware of the need to register their organizations, have managed to get documents approved by local authorities. These groups meet regularly without problems and actively participate in community work.

In Togo, the groups formed during ALEF courses are mostly focused on agricultural cooperatives. In 2024, three study groups in the villages of Afolé, Agbolé and Kèlèkpè were restructured into cooperatives, which allowed them to benefit from further training in cassava production. The training was offered by another organization that works to empower rural women through cassava production. This organization provides the machinery needed for production.

plucked up courage and went to get my child. I went to the mine where they said he was. It was 60 km from home. When I got there, there was a military man in charge of the mine. I asked permission to go in and get my child. He refused and threatened to tell the soldiers to beat me. It was evening, so I went to the houses nearby to find a place to stay for the night. The next day I tried again without success. When he refused on the third day, I went to the local authority and asked for help. On the fourth day, an official went with me, and finally I was allowed to go in.

Inside the mine I saw terrible things. There were underage girls being sexually exploited or doing rough physical labor. Some of them told me about the hell they were living in. When I left with my son, I went up to the manager and expressed my horror at what I had seen. He may not have cared, but he at least noticed how shocked I was.

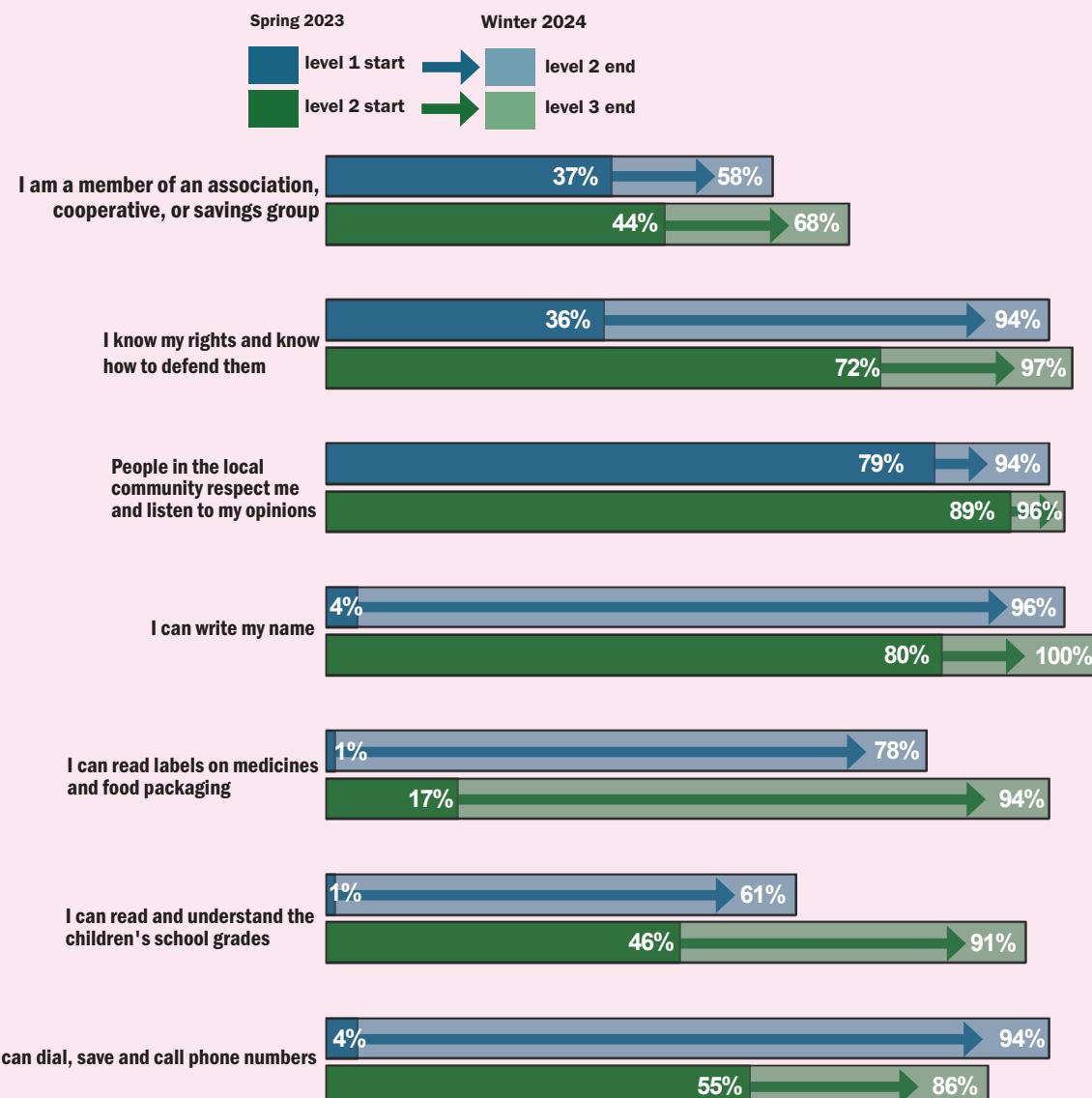
Once I was back in the village with my son, I shared everything with the ALEF group. They were shocked, and together we decided to write to the traditional king, Mwami, asking him to help free all the children who had run away from home to work in the mine.

I've now reached out to our village school to enroll my son. Now I'll have to work extra hard to pay for his schooling from the fall semester."

Knowledge of rights gives courage, and together the participants dare to question improper behavior from authorities.

The engagement that we receive reports of in the groups in our partner countries testifies that the oppression against civil society organizations that sometimes occurs is being counteracted by more and more people organizing themselves in democratically structured groups.

ACDC interviewed 130 participants in South Kivu Province, DR Congo, during March and April 2023, when they had just started level 1 or 2 of the ALEF course. The same people were interviewed again in November 2024, at the end of level 2 or 3. The chart below shows how their knowledge and confidence grew over two years in the ALEF program.



Protecting your health and environment



Hygiene and health

While access to healthcare remains a major challenge, we're seeing real progress in the health of participants and their children. We hear from all our partners that thanks to discussions in the ALEF group, participants are vaccinating their children to a greater extent, that more people are sleeping under mosquito nets to prevent malaria, washing their hands when using the toilet and boiling their drinking water. Based on reports from DR Congo, we have also learned that some have taken the initiative to test themselves for HIV.

A 40-year-old woman in DR Congo shares:

"After the ninth lesson, I decided to voluntarily go to a local health center to find out my HIV status."

Thanks to their reading and arithmetic skills, participants can now more easily keep track of proper medication dosages and expiry dates.

A level 3 group member in Kalerwe, Uganda, said:

"Reading, writing and arithmetic have helped me. When I go to the hospital and they explain to me which tablets I should be given, I can now understand how to take the medicine. I have learned so much from the ALEF group. Through the discussions I have gained a lot of knowledge and my family will not remain the same."

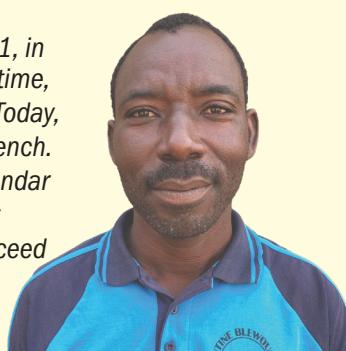
A 34-year-old participant from Gayaza-Bukemba, Uganda, told the group that lesson 7, which was about diarrhea, made her more aware of preventing the disease by making sure to reheat leftovers properly before serving them again, and to wash her hands before meals.

A 38-year-old female participant from Kinaawa, Uganda, appreciated the group discussions. She used to be afraid of going to the hospital, but after the discussion about family planning, she gained the courage to consult a doctor and she received help.

Breaking taboos

The safety and community of the study group makes it possible to address taboo health issues such as sexually transmitted diseases and menstruation. In Uganda, short plays and sketches are sometimes used to make sensitive topics more accessible.

In Togo, ALEF Secretary General Markus Ask met Amouzou Koffi, 41, in November 2024. He started his first ALEF course in 2021. At that time, he had never gone to school. Now he has taken all three courses. Today, he can read Ifè without any problems, and can also read a little French. He has also learned more about how to follow the agricultural calendar to get better harvests. Previously, he went more by feeling, without planning sowing and harvesting. Now he wants his children to succeed in school, and for them to have a better future.



Water and environment

In terms of the environment, participants in DR Congo have increased their understanding of the problems of soil erosion and the importance of planting trees. They hope that traditional agricultural systems will be improved in the long term through agroforestry. In a community in Uganda, the population had problems with toilets that smelled bad and were unhygienic. The toilets were used by many people every day and they became a sanitary nuisance. One of the participants says: *"The lesson that was most meaningful to me was lesson 20. It directly addressed one of the biggest problems we have had in my community. Many in the neighborhood do not have latrines and they*

that we used in common were always neglected and no one cared to clean them, even though we used them daily. This practice caused so many infections and diseases, but little did we know that all of this could be avoided by keeping our latrines clean, by cleaning them at least twice a day. After the lesson, I and some group members gathered other people and informed them about the new insights we had gained and encouraged each other to always keep our latrines clean. It is not so easy to maintain since there are many of us who use the latrines, but we do our best to clean and reduce the spread of infection."

Communication and fundraising

During 2024, a number of different initiatives have been implemented to increase awareness of ALEF among the public and to collect donations. Social media, such as Facebook (facebook.com/adultlearning), Instagram ([alef_sweden](https://instagram.com/alef_sweden)) and LinkedIn (ALEF, Adult Learning and Empowerment Facilitators), and ALEF's monthly newsletter have been our most important platforms for reaching out to the public.



ALEF holds a 90-account, which means both operations and accounts are audited annually by the Swedish Fundraising Control. The requirement to maintain the 90 account is that at least 75 percent of the income goes to the purpose, and a maximum of 25 percent to administration and fundraising. For 2024, 16 percent of the income was used for administration and fundraising costs (12 percent in 2023), and 88 percent went to purpose costs (95 percent

2023). The fact that the percentages do not add up to 100 percent is because both of these years had funds from previous years to use for the operations.

Of the 2024 revenue, 1,127 thousand SEK consisted of donations from private individuals, which constituted 27 percent of the total operating revenue for the year (4,151 thousand SEK). In 2023, revenue from private individuals was 772 thousand SEK, which then constituted 22 percent of the year's total operating revenue (3,521 thousand SEK). This was an increase in funds collected from private individuals of 46 percent from 2023 to 2024.

The large increase in funds raised from private individuals in 2024 was primarily due to two successful fundraising campaigns in March and August where donations were doubled by two individual donors. During the month of March, Curt Holmåkka doubled all donations up to SEK 100,000. A total of SEK 110,109 was raised in addition to Curt's donation of SEK 100,000. In August, ALEF's

founder and chair person Hélène Boëthius turned 70, which was celebrated with a fundraising campaign for ALEF's work. During this campaign, Mats Qviberg doubled all donations up to SEK 70,000. In addition to

Mats' gift, SEK 97,359 was received from a total of 76 donors, proof that many appreciate ALEF and the work that is successfully carried out among some of the world's most marginalized people.

Partnerships and networking

In 2024, ALEF has continued to be active in partnership with its local implementing partners in Togo (Acatbli), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (ACDC) and Uganda (CACI). In addition, ALEF and its staff have been involved in various networks and contexts relevant to the operation, such as the Swedish Fundraising Control, the British Association for Literacy in Development (BALID), ForumCiv and the DR Congo Network in Sweden.

As for the Swedish Fundraising Control Board, ALEF was invited as one of the keynote speakers at their annual information seminar on October 24 to talk about their experience with impact reporting. This is based on ALEF receiving PwC's award for best annual report 2022. To mark International Literacy Day, ALEF

hosted a webinar focused on Literacy and Women's Rights in September, featuring leading scholars and practitioners in adult education and literacy. The event attracted a broad international audience who were able to share experiences and ideas about both barriers to women's education and literacy as a path to empowerment.

On September 25, ALEF held a mingle in Stockholm to thank Hélène Boëthius for her work as operations manager, and to welcome Markus Ask as the new Secretary General.

During 2024, contacts and relationships were also established with future potential partners and actors, such as the Togolese state and DVV International, which we hope to be able to take forward in 2025.

The future

ALEF's goal is to enable more people to take ALEF courses. The ambition is to expand the projects in existing countries of operation but also to spread the ALEF method to more countries.

An important part of this vision is to create conditions for economic growth in our operations, where one goal is to conclude multi-year financing agreements with different types of donors. This is to contribute to increased sustainability for ALEF as an organization and for the operations that we are involved in and facing.

"ALEF's goal is to enable more people to take the ALEF courses. The ambition is to expand the projects in existing countries of operation, but also to spread the ALEF method to more countries."

Annual Report for the financial year 2024-01-01-2024-12-31

ALEF, Adult Learning and Empowerment Facilitators
Organization number 802452-4681

The Board of Directors and Secretary General of ALEF, Adult Learning and Empowerment Facilitators, hereby present the annual report for the financial year 2024-01-01-2024-12-31.

1 | About the Organization

1.1 The organization's mission and purpose

ALEF's statutes contain the following statement about our vision and purpose:

§ 3 Vision

ALEF's vision is, through education for illiterate young people and adults, to help people acquire skills and knowledge so that they themselves are able to:

- improve their living conditions
- defend their rights • gain access to decision processes, community services and common arenas,
- take action to change the mechanisms behind oppression, discrimination and poverty.

§ 4. Purpose

ALEF's purpose is to support development efforts involving adult basic learning (literacy) for young people and adults, primarily in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

ALEF will primarily support organisations and government agencies in planning and implementing mother tongue-based study circles that offer basic education for youths and adults, and in creating study learning materials for these.

The Association's activities consist of:

- **Consultancy and training**, in connection with feasibility studies, planning, development of learning materials, follow-up, evaluations and organisational development, as well as training of project staff.
- **Funding for projects**, educational material and training courses etc.
- **Follow-up projects or sub-projects** leading directly to the application of basic education according to the ALEF method, eg. creation of reading materials, local libraries, cooperatives, vocational training, microcredit, agricultural and environmental projects.

◦ **Research and evaluation** of the ALEF method and project results, including the preparation and publication of scholarly articles thereon.

◦ **Development of manuals and digital tools** for the application of the method

◦ **Advocacy work** towards relevant decision-makers,

*In order to realize the above stated purpose, the organisation will conduct various types of **fundraising activities** aimed at the general public, as well as apply for funding from other organisations and actors*



The Secretary General and Education Coordinator of ALEF visiting our Togolese partner organization Acatbli in November 2024.

1.2 Board, employees, and members

1.2.1 Board of Directors

The board members for the year included:

Hélène Boëthius

Chairperson

Lena Insulander

Vice Chair

Elisabeth Sandlund

Board Member, Secretary

Bertil Forsberg

Board Member

Nikolas Jerkedal

Board Member

Isa-Lei Moberg

Board Member

Johanna Bergsten

Alternate

Annette Melin

Alternate

Karin Tenelius

Alternate

Nomination Committee: No nomination committee was appointed at the 2024 annual meeting.

Board meetings have been held on the following occasions during the year: 2024-01-18, 2024-03-11, 2024-04-15, 2024-06-13, 2024-09-30, 2024-11-11, and 2024-12-18.

Extraordinary annual meeting held:

2024-04-21.

Annual meeting held: 2024-05-26.

1.2.2 ALEF office employees

Markus Ask, Secretary General of ALEF, Adult Learning and Empowerment Facilitators from 1 September 2024 with an employment rate of 100%. Markus has overall responsibility for ALEF's operational activities and leads the daily work of the office.

Hélène Boëthius, Hélène Boëthius, Head of Operations for ALEF, Adult Learning and Empowerment Facilitators until 31 August 2024 with an employment rate of 70% until May and 40% June-August. Hélène had overall responsibility for ALEF's operational activities and led the daily work of the office.

Ebba Mörk, Project Manager with an employment rate of 100%.

Ebba

handles the primary contact with partner organizations in the field and is responsible for applications for project grants from foundations and funds, as well as the relationship with ForumCiv.

Adam Bott, Education Coordinator with a 100% employment rate. Adam is responsible for the development and revision of learning materials, pedagogical training, contact with researchers and participation in professional networks.

Annica Levenrot, Accounting Economist at Ekeskog Konsult AB, was hired on an hourly basis for the association's financial management.

Annette Melin was employed hourly for about 6 hours a week to handle donor services and other administrative tasks.

Silje Overvåg, consultant, worked with coach training in DR Congo.

1.2.3 Advisory Board

ALEF's advisory board is a group of expert advisors who will keep ALEF informed about global trends in mother tongue-based adult education, as well as contribute to the spread of knowledge about and interest in the ALEF method. The council consists of:

Katy Newell-Jones, consultant in global education and development cooperation. Holds a PhD in Ecology and Development from the University of East Anglia and previously served as chair of the British Association for Literacy in Development, BALID.

Carol Benson, education expert specializing in multilingualism and minority languages. PhD in Social Work and Comparative Education from the University of California, Los Angeles.

Barbara Trudell, Director SIL Africa Learning & Development. PhD in International Education from the University of Edinburgh.

1.2.4 Members

At the end of the year, ALEF had 237 members (225 at the end of 2023). The majority of these are members by making regular monthly donations via direct debit or bank transfer.

2 | Major events during and after the financial year

2.1 Significant changes in operations this year

Staff

Thanking Hélène Boëthius as Head of Operations.

Appointment of Markus Ask as Secretary General.

D.R. Congo, South Kivu

A new coach, Marie-Claire Cibicabene Bahizire, was hired.

The supplementary reading books created in 2023 have been printed and distributed. ACDC reports that the new books have been well received and have generated great interest among participants and their families.

Togo

2024 was a "break year" where enrolled participants continued at levels 2 and 3, but where no new study groups started level 1. The focus was instead on creating new course materials and capacity-building efforts in preparation for scaling up in 2025.

ALEF's founder, Hélène Boëthius, led an on-site seminar in Atakpamé during January-February to create a completely new level 1 course, as the previous material, created before ALEF took over the partnership, did not follow the ALEF method. Education Coordinator Adam Bott led a three-week distance learning seminar in September where level 3 was expanded with new content on human rights and agricultural cooperatives.

In November, the newly appointed Secretary General, Markus Ask, visited the project together with the Education Coordinator. The visit included project follow-up, in-service training for new coaches, and a number of meetings with governmental and non-governmental actors in adult education in Togo.

The competency requirements for coaches in the project have been raised. Three new coaches were recruited in November. Our local partner Acatbli's project manager Komi Attivi left his position in October. A new project manager, Fousséni Ayedjo, will take over from the beginning of 2025.

Uganda

ALEF's new digital follow-up system, tested in 2023 in D.R. Congo, was also implemented in Uganda this year.

The Education Coordinator led a training session for the coaches in January with a focus on follow-up and evaluation.

The curriculum and teaching materials for level three were revised remotely between September and November.

D.R. Congo, Congo Central

This project is run by the ECC Church in Congo in collaboration with the Equmenia Church in Sweden. The project was scaled up with 1,000 participants distributed across 40 different locations. ALEF's Education Coordinator, together with intern Silje Overvåg, led a week of training for new coaches on site in Kimpese during a week in February.

Guinea

After positive response from the first pilot year in 2023, the project was expanded with 15 new groups at level 1 in 2024. An independent NGO has been formed in Kankan to run the project, which was previously under the auspices of the EADG church.

Evaluation of the ALEF method

In 2024, the research and evaluation firm MLE international conducted a comprehensive evaluation of

the ALEF method. In April, MLE delivered its first interim report, based on over 400 participant stories collected by our partners in D.R. Congo, Togo, and Uganda, confirming "positive changes in health, income generation, agricultural practices, self-confidence, and

women's empowerment" attributed to the ALEF program. The final report on MLE's second study—a broader evaluation of joint projects in Congo and Uganda based on field visits, interviews, and collected statistics—was received in early April 2025.

2.2 Results Tables

	Groups	Participants	Women	Approved:
Acatbli, Togo				
Level 2	10	248	69%	90%
Level 3	10	201	79%	90%
Total Acatbli	20	449	73%	90%
ACDC, D.R. Congo				
Level 1	20	539	99%	81%
Level 2	20	422	99%	85%
Level 3	15	270	99%	81%
Total ACDC	55	1 231	99%	82%
ASBL ¹ Level 1	15	405	97%	-
ASBL Level 2	19	353	98%	-
ASBL Level 3	11	193	97%	-
Total ASBL	45	951	98%	-³
Total ACDC+ASBL	100	2,182	99%	-
CACI, Uganda				
Level 1	30	770	87%	80%
CBO ⁴ Level 1	13	325	89%	94%
Level 2	30	673	80%	81%
Level 3	22	489	83%	83%
CBO Level 3	9	180	82%	88%
Total CACI + CBO	104	2,437	84%	83%
All Partners				
Level 1	78	2,039	92%	83%
Level 2	79	1,696	87%	84%
Level 3	67	1,333	87%	85%
Total	224	5,068	89%	84%

NOTES

- 1) "Approved" = the percentage of enrolled participants who completed the course *and* passed the final exam.
- 2) "ASBL" = association sans but lucratif (non-profit organization): organizations that run their own study groups. ACDC provides learning materials, group leader training, and some follow-up.
- 3) Test results for a number of ASBL groups are missing for 2024.
- 4) "CBO" = community based organization: organizations that run their own study groups. CACI provides learning materials, group leader training and some follow-up.

2.3 Significant events after the end of the financial year

At the beginning of 2025, there has been an escalation of the conflict in the DR Congo, where the Rwandan-backed armed group M23 has taken over both the city of Goma and the city of Bukavu. Bukavu is the place where our local partner ACDC

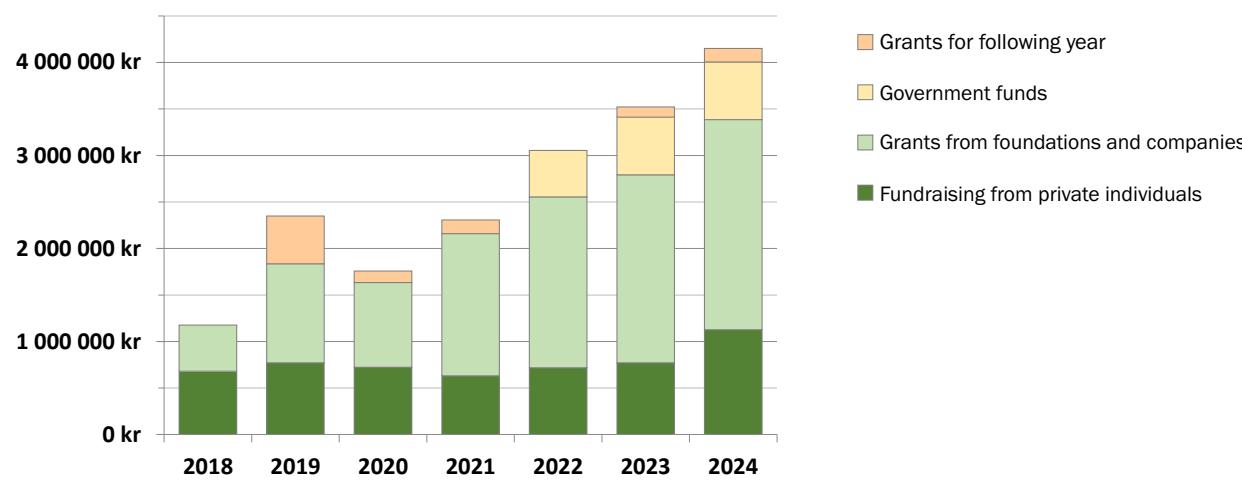
has its office and the surrounding areas, where the conflict has spread, are the places where the ALEF courses are intended to be carried out. This escalation therefore brings some uncertainty regarding the implementation of the project in 2025.

Even if it would be possible to carry out project activities locally, there is also a difficulty regarding the possibility of transferring funds to ACDC, as the bank that is usually used for transferring project funds has been closed indefinitely. As part of this, ALEF is trying to find an alternative payment method, where the goal is to be able to transfer funds in a safe and

safely way and thereby enable project activities to be implemented in 2025. Two other important events taking place in 2025 are that ALEF is both applying for EU funds via AMIF, for a proposed Sweden project, and in addition, also applying for a three-year project to Sida for operations in our African countries.

3 | Financial results and position

Revenue 2018–2024

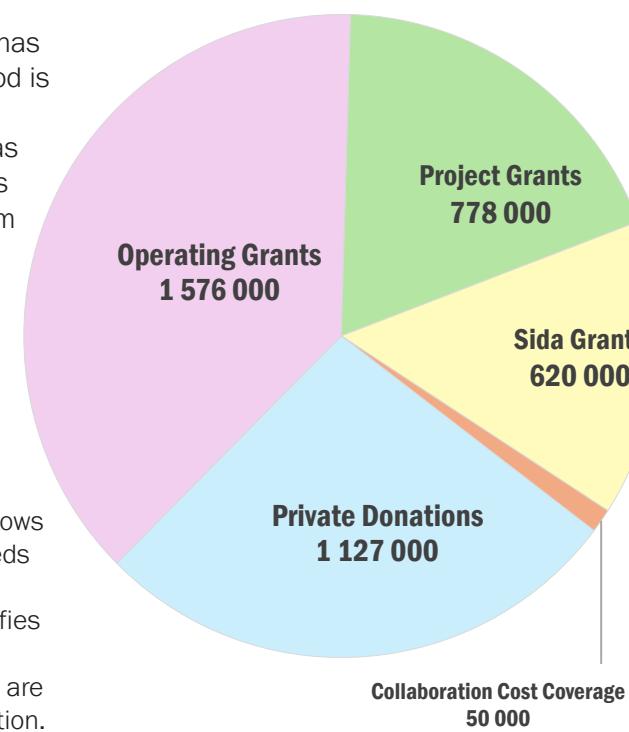


The diagram above shows the association's revenue development during the years 2018–2024. The form of revenue that has increased the most over the entire period is contributions from foundations and companies. The form of revenue that has increased the most over the past year is fundraising from private individuals, from SEK 772 thousand in 2023 to SEK 1.1 million in 2024, which is an increase of 46% (see section *Communication and fundraising*).

Grants from foundations and companies can be divided into three categories:

- **Operating Grants**, where the donor allows ALEF to allocate the funds based on needs according to the budget.
- **Project Grants**, where the donor specifies for which project the funds will be used.
- **Cost Coverage** from organizations that are the main financier in a project collaboration.

Breakdown of revenues 2024



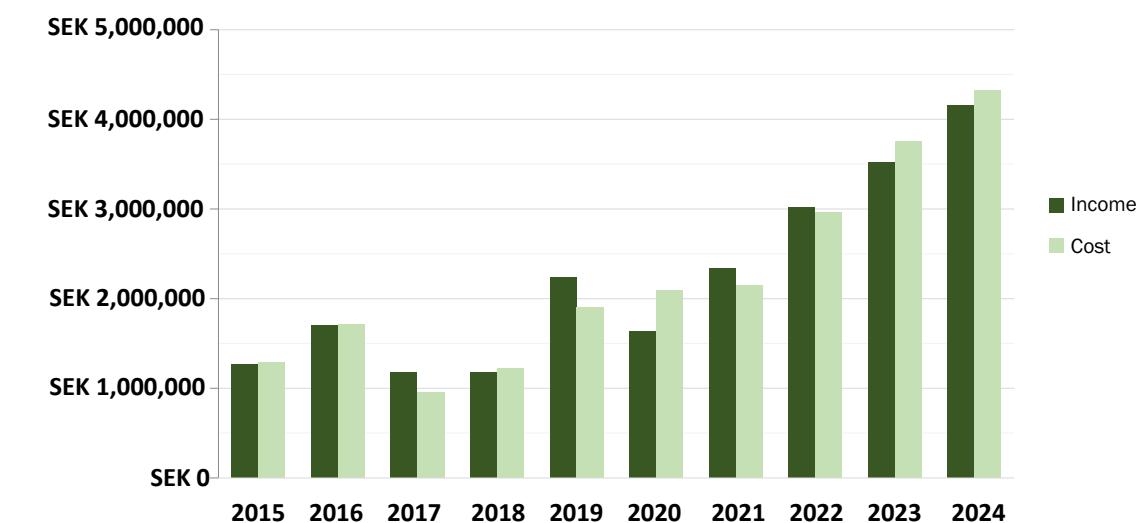
Breakdown of donations from individuals (tkr)

	2024	2023
Donations via Plusgiro, Swish	427	311
Donations via Direct Debit*	491	387
Membership Fees	2	2
Sales	-	6
Memorial gifts, greeting cards, holiday cards	198	44
Crowdfunding/Facebook fundraisers	9	22
Total funds from the public	1,127	772

* Direct debit donations for December 2023 were received in January 2024 due to holidays at the end of December.

3

Development of income and costs over the past 10 years



As shown in the balance sheet, the association has a slightly negative equity at the end of the financial year. The management is

aware of this situation and is actively working to improve the financial results.

Development in figures over the last 5 years (thousands of SEK)

	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Operating income	1,633	2,335	3,054	3,521	4,151
Operating costs	2,090	2,141	3,000	3,754	4,322

Costs for self-financed projects in SEK thousands (2023 figures in parentheses)

Project	Cost
Togo	388 (277)
D.R. Congo South Kivu *	848 (990)
Uganda	835 (831)

* SEK 278,000 raised by ALEF, SEK 570,000 Sida-funded via ForumCiv.

4 | Income Statement

Income Statement by function			
	Note	2024-01-01 - 2024-12-31	2023-01-01 - 2023-12-31
Operating income	1		
Donations and grants		3 531 691	2 901 528
Grants from government agencies		619 704	619 704
Total operating income		4 151 395	3 521 232
Operating costs	2		
Purpose-related costs		2 264 122	2 178 932
Staff costs (purpose-related)		1 376 848	1 168 017
Administration costs		229 131	149 561
Fundraising costs		87 474	105 892
Staff costs (administration and fundraising)		364 509	151 755
Total operating costs		4,322,084	3,754,157
Operating result		-170,689	-232,925
Financial Items			
Interest income		10,476	2,565
Interest costs		0	0
Result after financial items		-160,213	-230,360
ANNUAL RESULT		-160,213	-230,360

5 | Balance Sheet

Assets			
	Note	2024-12-31	2023-12-31
Current assets	3		
Short-Term Receivables			
Other Receivables		36	166
Prepaid costs and accrued income		6,569	24,900
Total short-term receivables		6,605	25,066
Cash and bank		260,011	313,682
Total current assets		266,616	338,748
TOTAL ASSETS		266,616	338,748
Equity and liabilities			
	Note	2024-12-31	2023-12-31
Equity	4		
Earmarked funds			
Retained earnings		-42,790	117,442
Total equity		-42,790	117,442
Current liabilities			
Accounts payable		0	0
Liabilities for received but unused grants	5	131,500	110,000
Other liabilities		75,044	45,625
Accrued costs and prepaid income	6	102,862	65,681
Total current liabilities		309,406	221,306
TOTAL EQUITY AND LIABILITIES		266,616	338,748

Notes

Notes

Note 1. Accounting and valuation principles

The association's accounting and valuation principles comply with the Annual Accounts Act, BFNAR 2012:10 Annual Report and Consolidated Accounts (K3). Assets, liabilities, and provisions are valued at acquisition cost unless otherwise stated below.

The accounting principles remain unchanged from the previous year.

Income Statement

Operating income

Only the inflow of economic benefits that ALEF has received or will receive for its own account is recognized as revenue. Revenue is measured, unless otherwise stated below, at the fair value of what has been received or will be received.

Donations and grants

A transaction in which ALEF receives an asset or a service that has a value without giving back an equivalent value in exchange is a gift or a contribution received. Gifts are generally recognized as revenue when received.

If the asset or service is received because ALEF has fulfilled or will fulfill certain conditions and if ALEF has an obligation to repay the counterparty if the conditions are not met, it is a contribution received.

8% of all purpose-related gifts and contributions over SEK 1,000 from foundations, companies and associations have been recorded under cost center 11, "Purpose, not country-specific", except in cases where the donor has specified that the entire gift/donation should go to the project in question. This cost center is used primarily for project administration costs, as well as for project audits and travel insurance.

Grants from authorities

Funds received with a repayment obligation from authorities because ALEF has fulfilled or will fulfill certain conditions and where ALEF has an obligation to repay the counterparty if the conditions are not met include, for example, Sida or Radiohjälpen. In 2024, as in 2023, ALEF received a grant from Sida of SEK 619,704 mediated by ForumCIV. Of this grant, 8% constituted an administrative grant which was booked under cost center 11 "Purpose, not country-specific".

Operating Costs

Operating costs are divided into the following functions: Purpose costs, fundraising costs and administration costs, as well as purpose-related salary costs and salary costs for administration and fundraising.

Purpose-related costs

Purpose-related costs consist of costs that can be attributed to the organization's mission according to the statutes:

- Expert support to partners in the field;
- Funding of projects, learning materials, and training;
- Advocacy work towards authorities, organizations, international institutions and NGOs.

Staff costs (purpose-related)

consists of salary costs for purpose-related work carried out by ALEF's employees such as project follow-up, material development, advocacy work.

Administration costs

consists of costs such as rent, office supplies, equipment, internet, telephone, bank fees, audit, fee for 90 account.

Fundraising costs

consists of costs incurred by the organization to raise donations, such as printing information materials, advertising in newspapers and on Facebook, printing and distributing greeting cards/Christmas cards (gift certificates), and sending thank-you letters to donors.

Staff costs (administration and fundraising)

consists of salary costs for administrative work and fundraising work carried out by ALEF's employees.

Remuneration of employees

Current compensation to employees in the form of salaries and social security contributions is expensed as the employees perform services, and under the respective cost type and cost center (purpose-related, fundraising, administration).

Balance Sheet

Earmarked Funds

No earmarked funds are available for 2024.

NOTES TO THE INCOME STATEMENT

Note 2. Average number of employees, staff costs

Average Number of Employees

2024		2023	
Total	of which men	Total	of which men
4	1.5	2.25	1

Gender distribution in board leadership

2024		2023	
Percentage of women, board	66 %	Percentage of women, board	66 %

Salaries, other compensation, and social costs

	2024	2023
Executive Chair and Secretary General	381,299	187,281
Other Employees	895,416	817,183
Total salaries and compensations	1,275,468	1,004,464
Social Costs	378,805	292,569
(of which pension costs, excluding payroll tax)	46,999	15,120
Total	1,710,617	856,509

NOTES TO THE BALANCE SHEET

Note 3. Current Assets

Current assets include bank balances, prepaid expenses, accrued income, and other short-term receivables.

Note 4. Equity

Changes in equity

	Balanced result	Total equity
Opening Balance	117 442	117 442
Utilization		
Annual result	-160 232	- 160 232
Closing Balance	- 42 790	- 42 790

Note 5. Liabilities for received, unused grants

Funds received for the following financial year are booked continuously for each project (cost center). If the funds are conditional on repayment, they are booked as a current liability until the condition is met.

In 2024, the following funds received in 2023 were used:

Payer	Amount (SEK)	Purpose
Helene Hjärpes Foundation	40,000	Congo
Swedish Salvation Army	50,000	Togo
Olga Åhlund's Foundation	20,000	Uganda
	110,000	

In 2024, the following funds were received for projects planned in 2025:

Payer	Amount (SEK)	Purpose
Olga Åhlund's Foundation	20,000	Congo
Swedish Salvation Army	50,000	Togo
Tornspiran Foundation	61,500	Evaluation /Research
	131,500	

Note 6. Accrued costs and prepaid income

	2024	2023
Accounting fee	3,000	3,000
Audit fee Sweden	30 000	20,000
Accrued vacation pay liability	54 239	33,925
Accrued ERS on vacation pay	15 623	8,756
Total	102 862	65,681

SIGNATURES

Stockholm, on the date indicated by each executive's electronic signature.

Hélène Boëthius, Chair

Lena Insulander, Vice Chair

Bertil Forsberg, Board Member

Nikolas Jerkedal, Board Member

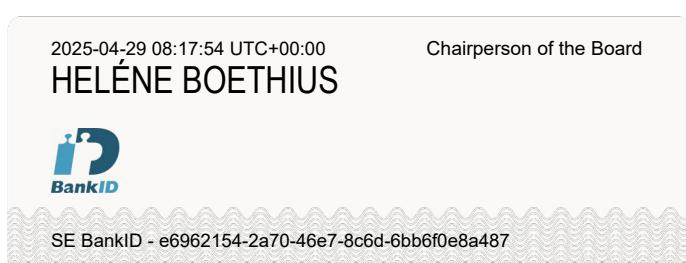
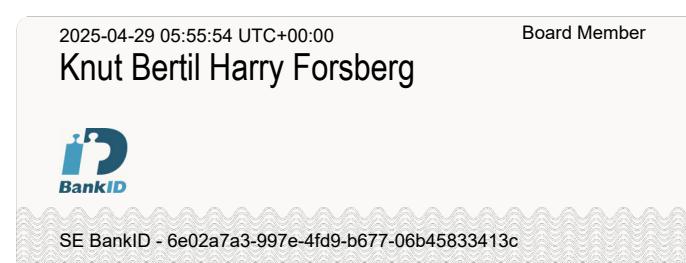
Isa-Lei Moberg, Board Member

Elisabeth Sandlund, Board Member

Markus Ask, Secretary General

My audit report has been submitted on the date shown by my electronic signature.

Leif Göransson
Authorized Public Accountant
Höglundets Revisionsbyrå AB



Auditor's Report

To the Annual Meeting of ALEF, Adult Learning and Empowerment Facilitators
 Org. No. 802452-4681

Report on the Annual Accounts

Statement

I have conducted an audit of the annual accounts of ALEF, Adult Learning and Empowerment Facilitators for the financial year 2024.

In my opinion, the annual accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Annual Accounts Act and give a true and fair view, in all material respects, of the financial position of ALEF, Adult Learning and Empowerment Facilitators as of 31 December 2024 and of its financial results for the year then ended in accordance with the Annual Accounts Act. The administration report is consistent with the other parts of the annual accounts.

Basis for Opinion

I conducted the audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISA) and generally accepted auditing standards in Sweden. My responsibilities under these standards are further described in the Auditor's Responsibilities section. I am independent of the association in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards in Sweden and have otherwise fulfilled my professional ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Responsibilities of the Board and Secretary General

The Board of Directors and the Secretary General are responsible for the preparation of the annual accounts and for their fair presentation in accordance with the Annual Accounts Act. The Board of Directors and the Secretary General are also responsible for such internal control as they determine is necessary to enable the preparation of annual accounts that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the annual accounts, the Board of Directors and the Secretary General are responsible for assessing the Association's ability to continue as a going concern. They disclose, as applicable, any conditions that may affect the Association's ability to continue as a going concern and use the going concern basis of accounting. However, the going concern basis of accounting is not applied if the Board of Directors and the Secretary General either intend to liquidate ALEF, Adult Learning and Empowerment Facilitators, cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's Responsibilities

My objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the annual accounts as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes my opinions. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs and generally accepted auditing standards in Sweden will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these annual accounts.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs, I exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. In addition:

2 (3)

3 (3)



- identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the annual accounts, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for a material misstatement resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentation or the override of internal control.
- obtain an understanding of the internal control of ALEF, Adult Learning and Empowerment Facilitators that is relevant to my audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of internal control.
- assess the appropriateness of the accounting policies applied and the reasonableness of the estimates made by the Board of Directors and the Secretary General in the accounts and related disclosures.
- conclude on the appropriateness of the Board of Directors and Secretary General's use of the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the annual accounts. I also conclude, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the association's ability to continue as a going concern. If I conclude that a material uncertainty exists, I am required to draw attention in my auditor's report to the disclosures in the annual accounts related to the material uncertainty or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify my opinion on the annual accounts. My conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of the auditor's report. However, future events or circumstances may affect the association's ability to continue operations.
- evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the annual accounts, including the disclosures, and whether the annual accounts represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that gives a fair view.

I am required to inform the Board and the Secretary General about, among other things, the planned scope, direction and timing of the audit. I must also inform them of significant findings during the audit, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I have identified.

Report on additional legal and regulatory requirements

Opinion

In addition to auditing the annual financial statements, I have also reviewed the management of the board for ALEF, Adult Learning and Empowerment Facilitators for the fiscal year 2024. I recommend that the annual meeting grants the board members discharge from liability for the fiscal year.

Basis for Opinion

I have conducted the audit in accordance with Swedish auditing standards. My responsibilities under these standards are described in more detail in the section Auditor's Responsibilities. I am independent of ALEF, Adult Learning and Empowerment Facilitators in accordance with generally accepted auditing practices in Sweden and have otherwise fulfilled my professional ethical obligations under these requirements.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Board's Responsibilities

The board is responsible for the management of the organization.



Auditor's Responsibility

My objective regarding the audit of the administration, and thus my statement of discharge from liability, is to obtain audit evidence in order to assess with a reasonable degree of certainty whether any board member has taken any action or been guilty of any negligence in any material respect that may give rise to liability to the association.

Reasonable assurance is a high degree of certainty, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards in Sweden will always detect actions or omissions that may give rise to liability to ALEF, Adult Learning and Empowerment Facilitators.

As part of an audit conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards in Sweden, I exercise professional judgment and maintain a professionally skeptical attitude throughout the audit. The review of management is primarily based on the audit of the accounts. The additional audit procedures performed are based on my professional judgment based on risk and materiality. This means that I focus the review on such actions, areas and conditions that are material to the operations and where deviations and violations would have particular significance for ALEF, Adult Learning and Empowerment Facilitators' situation. I review and test decisions made, decision bases, actions taken and other conditions that are relevant to my statement on discharge from liability.

Vetlanda on the date shown in my electronic signature

Leif Göransson
Authorized Public Accountant
Höglandets Revisionsbyrå AB





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