

EDUCATION FOR ALL

THE
20TH
READING
ROCKET

THE

READING ROCKET



SCHOOL AND EDUCATION IN NORTHERN GHANA



VERDENSMÅL
for bæredygtig udvikling



OXFAM DANMARK

ABOUT THE COVER PHOTO
Sheilla is 8 years old and lives in Saboba. You can read more about her on page 10.



Oxfam Denmark works to ensure that Sustainable Global Goal number 4 is met, so that all children in the world receive quality education. You are part of this when you read this book.



THE READING ROCKET

Welcome to the Reading Rocket / **4**

Visit northern Ghana / **6**

LEVEL 1

Sheilla and the green school uniform / **8**

Ezekiel and the river / **20**

LEVEL 2

Bilengban - the boy with the wristwatch / **32**

Happy wants to decide for herself / **40**

Rafik and the scar on his forehead / **48**

Rahi's first match / **54**

WELCOME TO THE

READING

ROCKET



This year we visit Ghana in West Africa. Ghana is a beautiful country with white sandy beaches, large rivers, the capital Accra, and small villages. Many of the peoples of Ghana are known for their different cultures with art, crafts, music, and dance.

Ghana has become richer in the last 30 years. But not all people in the country have experienced this. In the southern part, many people can afford more. In the north, approximately half of the population is still living in poverty. Many families are unable to send all their children to school. One in three children never start in school here.

Therefore, Oxfam Denmark works primarily in the northern part of the country. Here, this book visits children, their families, schools, and teachers. Among others, we meet Bilengban. He goes to a school without walls and his plan is to become a doctor. We also visit Happy, who collects shea nuts and looks up to her cool female teacher. Ezekiel invites you to his Sunday School, while Rahi goes to a special school for girls and dreams of playing on the school's soccer team.

This Reading Rocket is number 20 in the series of books, where Oxfam Denmark invites Danish children and youth to meet children from around the world. Over the years, teachers and students have received more than two million Reading Rockets. We are happy that you read along.

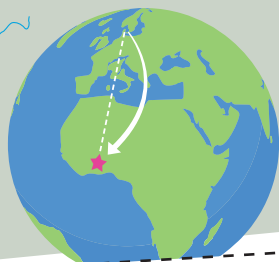


Enjoy your reading!

Line Gørup Trolle

Campaign manager, Education for All

VISIT NORTHERN GHANA



There are 5,700 kilometers in a straight line from Copenhagen to Accra, the capital of Ghana.

BURKINA FASO



SHELLA

LIVES IN SABOBA

LANGA
MOGLAA
TAMALE
NAWUNI

KITULANBONI
SABOBA
INAGNAMBONI

IVORY COAST



EZEKIEL

LIVES IN NAWUNI

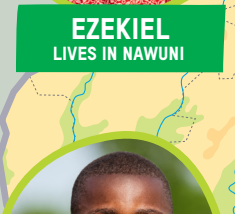


RAHI

LIVES IN MOGLAA

GHANA

TOGO



BILENGBAN

LIVES IN KITULANBONI

KUMASI



RAFIK

LIVES IN LANGA



HAPPY

LIVES IN INAGNAMBONI

ACCRA

Ghana is located in West Africa. About 32 million people live in the country. Ghana shares borders with Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, and Togo. On the coast to the south, the capital Accra is located on the Gulf of Guinea. The largest city in the northern part of the country is called Tamale.



Ghana has a long coastline to the south and rainforest to the west. In the north, the Volta rivers run through the savannah. The White and Black Volta rivers merge and continue into the great Volta Lake in the east. The water from the rivers and the lake is an important livelihood for many people in Ghana.



More than 70 different peoples live in Ghana. Many of them have their own language, however the common language is English. In northern Ghana, the largest group is the Dagomba people. They speak Dagbani. Other peoples are the Mamprusi, Gonja and Komkomba. Most people in the north are Muslims, but there are Christians too.



In Ghana, education is free. Still, not all children go to school. Families must buy school uniforms and schoolbooks themselves. In many schools there is a shortage of teachers - and especially teachers who speak the same language as the students. And some children still have to travel far to get to school.



A portrait of a young girl with a joyful expression, wearing a teal dress. A green circular graphic is overlaid on the lower left side of the image, containing the name 'SHEILLA' in white capital letters. The background is a soft, out-of-focus indoor setting.

SHEILLA

SHEILLA AND THE GREEN SCHOOL UNIFORM

 EMIL NIELSEN  HANS BACH

It is early morning. I walk with my older brother Shepherd. We are on our way to school. We walk along the city's main road. Motorcycles whizz past us. They smell of gasoline. Small stones and red dust fly into the air.



I run into the school yard. My friends have started sweeping. We sweep leaves out of the school yard. In class, we put the chairs in place and clean the blackboard.



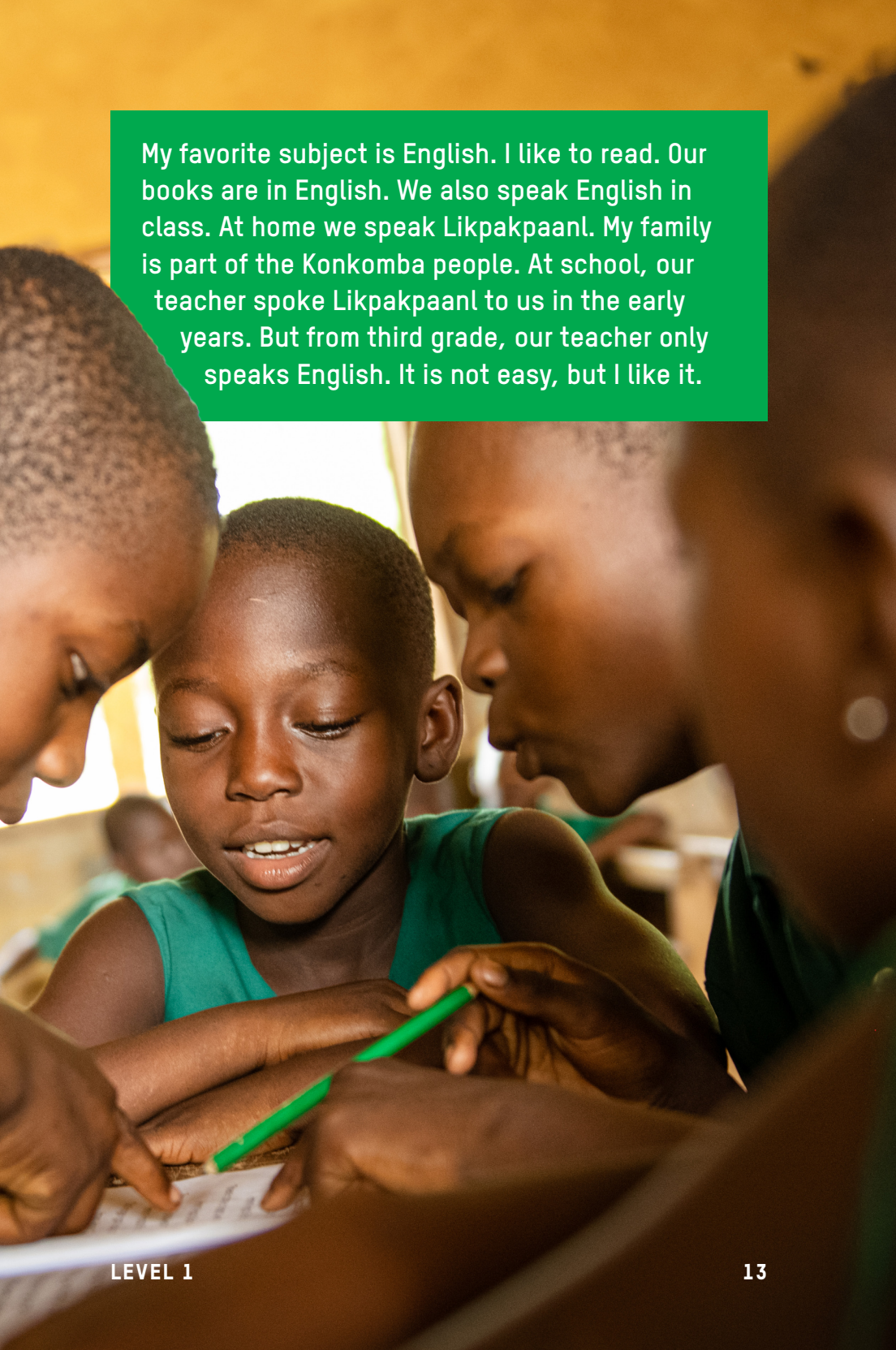


The bell rings. Phew, we made it all the way to the assembly grounds. Now we all line up in the schoolyard. We are wearing our green school uniforms. Green is the color of our school. We sing about Ghana and peace. Everyone sings in loud voices and claps along.

My name is Sheilla. I am 8 years old, and I am in 3rd grade.



In 2nd grade we had to sit on the floor. Now I share a table with three friends. We do not have electricity at school. The sun comes in through the windows. It is our light. We can also hear the other classes.




My favorite subject is English. I like to read. Our books are in English. We also speak English in class. At home we speak Likpakpaanl. My family is part of the Konkomba people. At school, our teacher spoke Likpakpaanl to us in the early years. But from third grade, our teacher only speaks English. It is not easy, but I like it.

When school is over, Shepherd and I walk home together. We live in Saboba five minutes from the school. Our house has a big yard with a mango tree in the middle. When the sun is at its hottest, I sit in the shade under the tree and read. I want to be a doctor. I often talk to my mother about that. She helps me with my homework. She finds school important.





I play with my best friend, Felicity. She is my neighbor. We like to play hopscotch and ampe. In ampe you clap and guess which foot the other one will put forward when she jumps.

A person is cooking in a traditional outdoor kitchen. They are using a large metal pot over a fire. The person is wearing a white shirt and is stirring the contents of the pot with a wooden spoon. The background is a rustic, stone or brick wall. The scene is lit with warm, natural light, suggesting an outdoor setting.

I live with my mother Mercy, father Zephaniah, and two of my brothers Shepherd and Kingsford. They are nine and thirteen years old.

Now we must start cooking. I always help, even when my mother has guests. She often does. They talk about school. My mother and the other adults want to make our school better. I like listening to their talk.

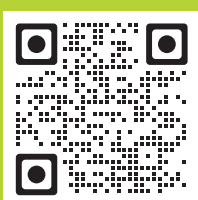


Today we cook banku and peanut soup. Banku is a boiled bun. It is made from corn and cassava flour. It sticks to the fingers, and it is perfect for scooping up soup. It tastes very good too.



Now I have finally finished eating and doing the dishes.

Today is market day. I think I can make it. I run all the way. Some stalls are about to close. I wonder if I can find spaghetti. It is my favorite dish. Quickly, I look around. Over there! It is worth the whole trip.



Take part in morning
assembly at Sheilla's
school.

**FIND VIDEOS AND PICTURES AT
[HELEVERDENISKOLE.DK/SHEILLA](https://heleverdeniskole.dk/sheilla)**





EZEKIEL

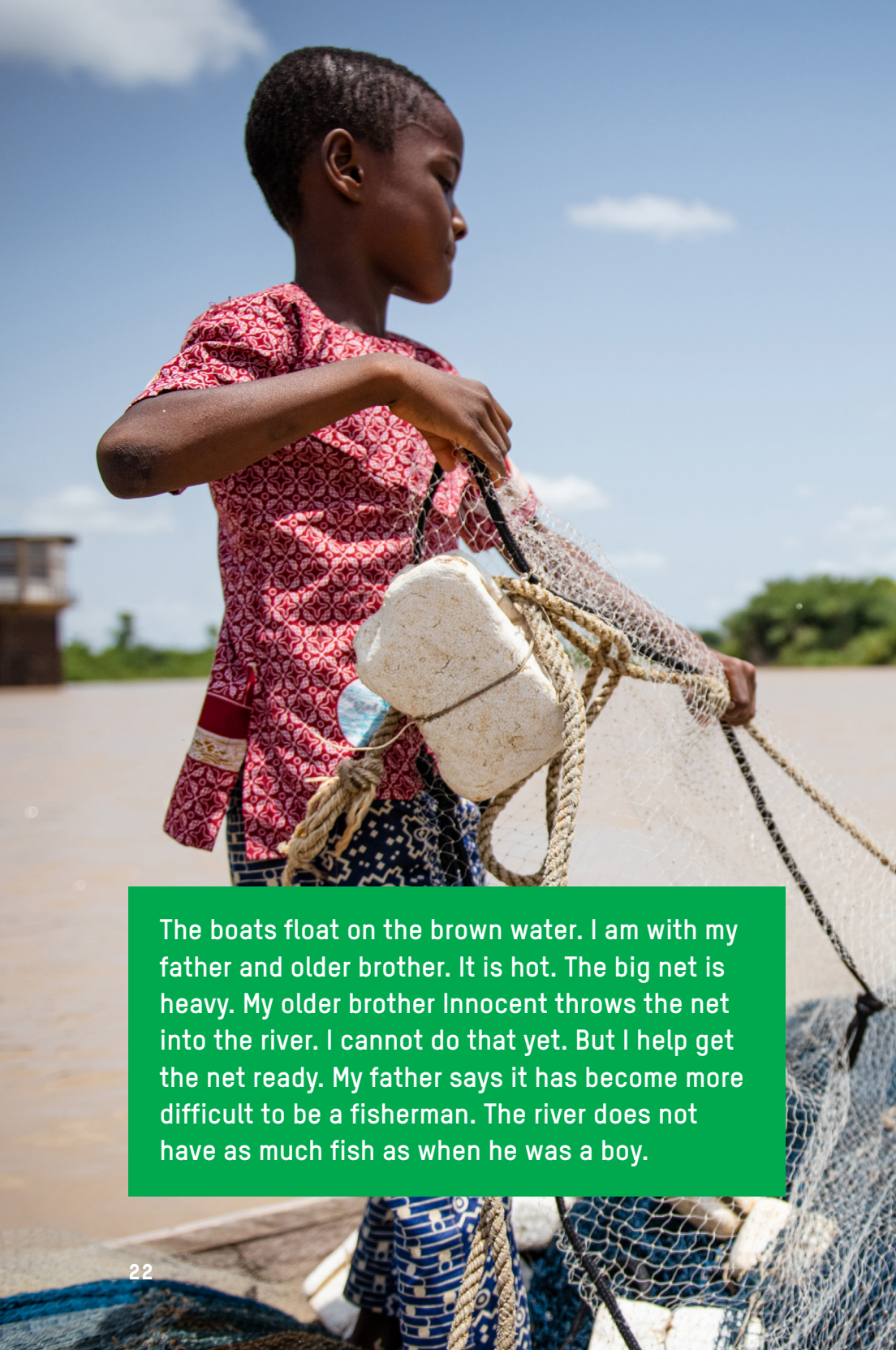
EZEKIEL AND THE RIVER

EMIL NIELSEN HANS BACH

The road by my village goes down to a river. If you want to continue your journey, you must cross by boat. I like helping on the boat. People must bring food, animals, and motorcycles. Cars cannot cross. They must drive another way.



My name is Ezekiel, and I am 8 years old. I live in Nawuni. The village is located by the White Volta River. My family lives off the river. We catch fish and fetch water. Almost everyone here is fishing in the river.



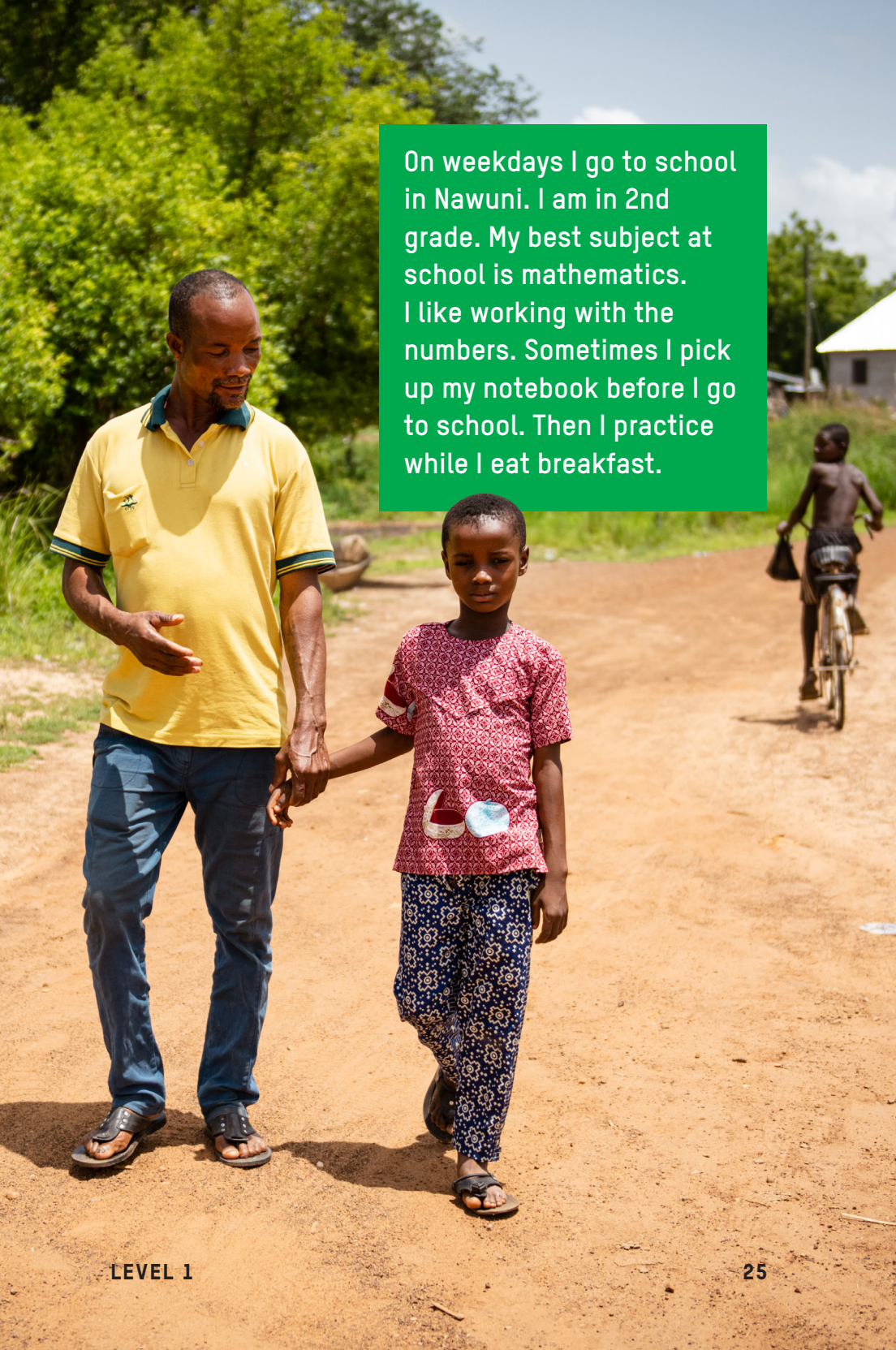
The boats float on the brown water. I am with my father and older brother. It is hot. The big net is heavy. My older brother Innocent throws the net into the river. I cannot do that yet. But I help get the net ready. My father says it has become more difficult to be a fisherman. The river does not have as much fish as when he was a boy.

My mother cleans the fish. She dries them and sells them at the market. We help carry the boxes. We use the money to pay for the school fees and other household needs. Sometimes we run out of money. Then I must help with fishing instead of going to school. Although the school is free, we must buy books, booklets, and school uniform ourselves.

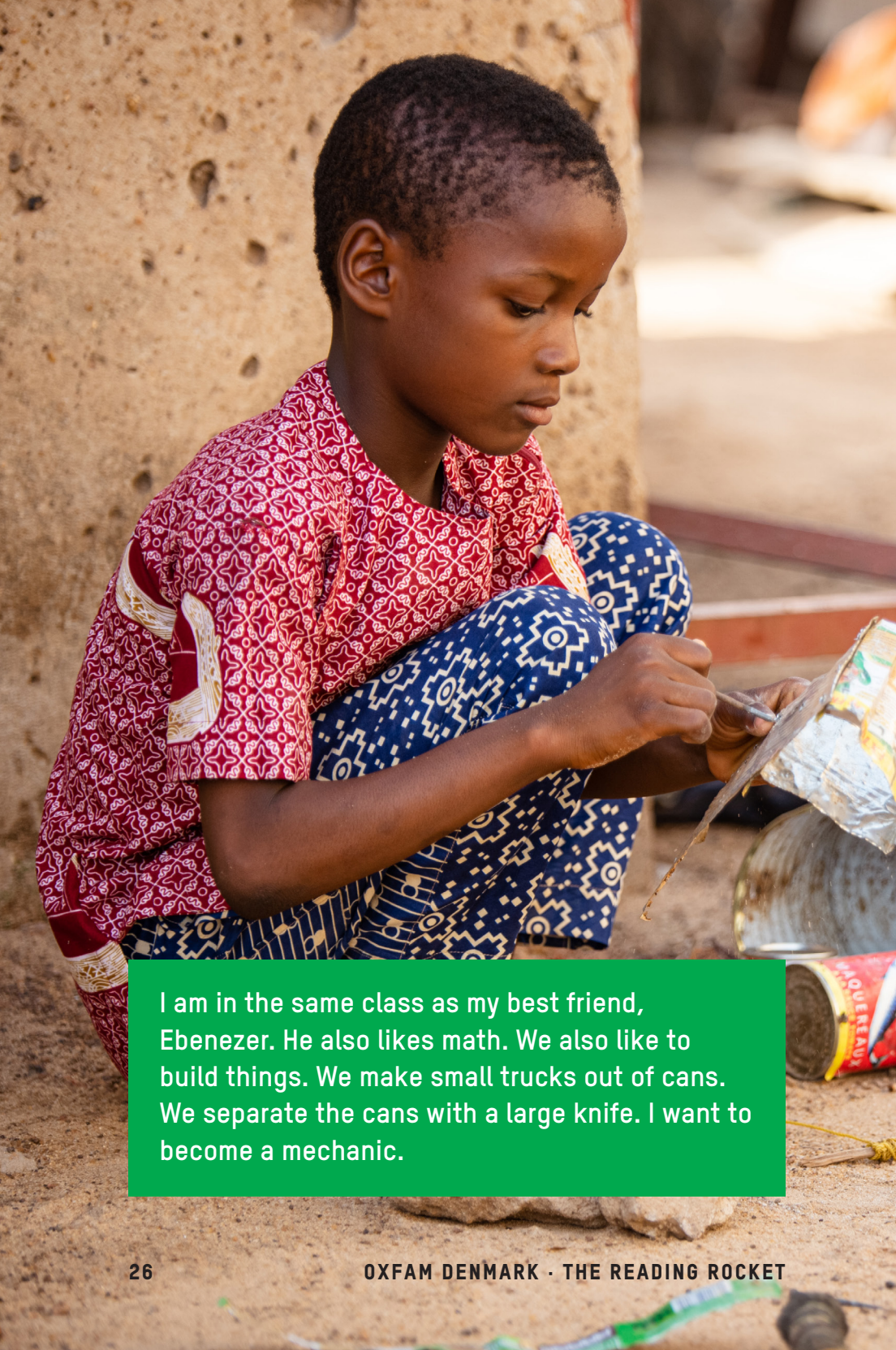




Every Sunday loud singing and music fill the church. I go to Sunday School. We dance and clap. Everyone sings along. The songs are about the body, nature, and the Bible. The priest will be teaching. Afterwards, my parents go to church.



On weekdays I go to school in Nawuni. I am in 2nd grade. My best subject at school is mathematics. I like working with the numbers. Sometimes I pick up my notebook before I go to school. Then I practice while I eat breakfast.



I am in the same class as my best friend, Ebenezer. He also likes math. We also like to build things. We make small trucks out of cans. We separate the cans with a large knife. I want to become a mechanic.





In my family, we live together with my uncles, aunts, and cousins. Between our houses there are passages and courtyards. They are built like a labyrinth or maze.

We fetch water at the river. It is important that we take care of it. The river must not dry up or become polluted.



But the weather has changed. Sometimes there is almost no water. Other times there is far too much. During the rainy season, we have flooding. Once the water got all the way into our house. You can still see the marks on the wall. We rushed out of the house. We had to stay somewhere else for several days.



Now something is happening. Loud music is heard throughout the city. It is my uncle playing. His name is DJ Smart and he has a great sound system.



When he plays music, everyone comes running. I am dancing. Fast and slow movements with the entire body. I enjoy dancing. The rest of the family dances along. Even the very small ones. We laugh and party until the evening comes.



360°



Take a walk around
Nawuni.

**FIND VIDEOS AND PICTURES AT
[HELEVERDENISKOLE.DK/EZEKIEL](https://heleverdeniskole.dk/ezekiel)**





BILENGBAN

BILENGBAN - THE BOY WITH THE WATCH

 CASPAR HAARLØV  HANS BACH

Bilengban looks at his watch. The other children are late. The schoolyard must be swept. The classrooms must be cleaned and made ready. Why are they always late?

Now the first ones arrive. Bilengban points at his watch. But the other children shake their heads. Bilengban is the only child in the village who has a watch. How are the others supposed to know what time it is?

The school without walls

If Bilengban was principal of the school, he would make sure that everyone was on time. The place should be nice and clean when the teachers arrived. He also wanted to make sure the walls of the school were repaired. He hands brooms to the other students. As usual, Bilengban does most of the work.





Bilengban's school has no toilet or water. Many students go home and eat during breaks. Those, who live far away, must wait until the school day is over.

Anyone knowing Bilengban knows that he has a plan for his life. He always does his homework. He helps at home without anyone having to ask him. He helps his father in the field. He helps his mother in the house. He fetches water for the family. Bilengban's plan is to become a doctor. Nobody in the village has a long education. But everyone believes that Bilengban will succeed.

The school is located a little outside the village. It was built 15 years ago. There are two long buildings. The roof is held up by thin iron bars. The walls are made of clay. The rain has made the walls lower. You can see the fields and hear the pupils in the other classrooms from Bilengban's class.

Bilengban is 11 years old and in 5th grade. His best friend is called Muki. They are in the same class. His favorite subject is mathematics. Actually, he likes all subjects. At least he cannot think of a subject he does not like.

The dog and the rabbit

Bilengban lives in Kitulanboni. The village is named after a large baobab tree in the middle of the city. Bilengban's father has two wives. His mother has six children. His father's other wife has four children. Bilengban considers them all as his siblings. They live together and help each other.

After school, Bilengban goes through the village. He can hear the women from the village singing. They often help each other with larger tasks. They sing while working. His mother is there too.

Bilengban has a dog named Ujor. It means fool. They walk together towards his father's field. Ujor runs between the trees. Suddenly it comes back with a rabbit in its mouth. Bilengban picks up the small animal with the soft fur. He strokes it and tries to hear if it is breathing. It is dead. He praises the dog.


Bilengban lives with his mother and father, called Bilandem and Bibon. His sister is called Ntagnan, and his three brothers are called Alberfam, Mugnallbor and Hjonaan.



Now Bilengban can see his father. He walks among the mounds of earth in the yams field, removing weeds. Bilengban helps. When goats come, he runs after them. He fences with a stick and shouts to scare the goats away from the field. Otherwise, they just eat all the plants.

Footprints by the river

When Bilengban comes back home, his mother is cooking. He shows her the rabbit. She gets happy and says she will cook it for dinner. They just need some water.



Yams grow under each earth mound. Cassava grows on top.





Bilengban carries the empty bucket down to the river. His mother carries the full bucket home.

Bilengban walks towards the river with his mother. They walk through the village - past the big baobab tree - and down a small path with tall grass on both sides. It is almost a kilometer each way. Bilengban carries his mother's large water bucket on his head. It is heavy, and he falls behind.

Near the river he sees a footprint in the dried mud. There are several cows in the field. But a cow does not have claws. Bilengban can clearly see that the footprint is from a heavy animal that has penetrated well into the mud with its four long claws. It can only mean one thing. It is the crocodile.

Bilengban runs after his mother, who is already down by the river. The water is brown and cloudy. A crocodile could easily be hiding. He yells for her to be careful. But his mother just laughs.



The family has no electricity. It gets dark at seven o'clock in Ghana. Bilengban must turn on a flashlight when he wants to read.

The sacred crocodiles

At home, he talks about the footprint. The others seem perfectly calm. His father says that it is very rare for crocodiles to eat people. He also says that there once was a woman who was bitten by the crocodile by the river side. She lost her leg and later died of her wounds. They could not do anything about it. Crocodiles are sacred animals to the Konkomba people. Bilengban's family and most of the village people are Konkomba. Therefore, they never kill crocodiles.

Bilengban thinks about when he becomes a doctor. Then he can help people in the village. He can make bandages and give medicine. Then no one will die from being bitten any more.

It has become dark. Bilengban and his brother lay out sleeping mats. Bilengban takes off his watch and turns on a flashlight. He must do his homework. His brother wants to turn the lights off so he can sleep. But Bilengban would like to read a little more. He wants to become a doctor. It is important to the village. He has to do well in school. The brother turns round on the other side. Of course, Bilengban is allowed to read at night.

360°



Join Bilengban
in his school.



**FIND VIDEOS AND PICTURES AT
[HELEVERDENISKOLE.DK/BILENGBAN](https://heleverdeniskole.dk/bilengban)**





HAPPY

HAPPY WANTS TO DECIDE FOR HERSELF

 CASPAR HAARLØV  HANS BACH

It is afternoon at the beginning of the rainy season. Happy looks out over the landscape. Everything is green. Trees cast shadows over the fields. Nearby some men are working and preparing the ground. In a few months from now, all this will be covered by water. At that time, you can only reach the village by boat.


Happy walks with her mother from tree to tree collecting shea nuts. They eat the outer part. At home, they will make the seeds into shea butter, which will be sold at the market. They sweat and take a break.

A herd of white cows with long horns is led across the road in front of them. Happy waves to the shepherds. They do not wave back. Happy notices that the shepherds are children. Her mother explains that boys from the Fulani people look after the cows. Many of them live as nomads. They come from other countries to the north and do not live permanently anywhere.



Happy's family belongs to the Konkomba people. The family lives in the village of Inagnamboni and cultivates the land. For the past 10 years, the village has had its own school. Happy's father helped build the school.

Before, children had to walk 10 kilometers back and forth - therefore, very few children went to school. Today, more children are in school. When the school year is about to start, teachers walk around town reminding parents to register their children. Happy's father always talks about how important education is. Happy likes her school. She is 10 years old and she is in 4th grade. Every day, the entire school has a morning assembly outside. They stand in a big circle and sing songs.



Today, at the morning assembly in school, the song is about how to act as a good friend.



Happy's mother picks shea nuts. The shea tree grows wild and can become 400 years old.

The school day is over. Miss Arimiyaw drives home.



The teacher on a motorbike

Happy and her mother hear engine noises. A red figure approaches. Dust swirls up from the dusty road and the cows are startled. It is Miss Arimiyaw, Happy's teacher. She is on her way home on her motorbike. Miss Arimiyaw is wearing a big red scarf and happily waves at Happy. She is the only female teacher at the school. She stops the engine.

Happy gives her some shea nuts. Miss Arimiyaw quickly pulls off the pulp and spits out the large seeds in her hand. She is looking forward to buying shea butter when they are done, she says. Happy's mother says she will give Miss Arimiyaw an entire jar of shea butter, if she promises not to move. They speak English together. Miss Arimiyaw laughs and says thank you. She grew up in the capital Accra, which is at the other end of the country. So, she doesn't speak Likpakpaanl. She starts the engine and drives on.



Happy and her friends play ampe. They also like to play skipping rope.

The other teachers from the school live in a small collection of huts outside the village. But Miss Arimiyaw lives in the neighboring town. It is so big that there are lampposts on the main street. Happy has been there once when she was smaller and had to go to the doctor.

Happy's father is a chief

Happy's mother puts the basket with all the shea nuts on top of her head. They walk home across the fields. Soon they can hear that they are approaching the village again. The sound of pigeons and chickens and goats walking freely between the houses. Children laughing. Adults talking.

Happy meets some of her friends from school. They play a game where you jump into the air and try to guess which foot the other puts first. It is called ampe.

Happy's mother calls her. They must go home now. They live on the outskirts of the village close to the church and school. Their house is called the palace because Happy's father is the village chief. He is the one the other families go to if they disagree about something. They also ask him for advice. He helps decide who can build houses and where fields can be made.

The palace consists of two oblong houses and three small cottages. They form a square yard. Happy's father has three wives. They are more than 20 people in the palace. Happy likes her family, but she also likes being alone. Happy starts crushing the shea nuts. Afterwards, they will be boiled and made into shea butter.



Happy crushes the shea nuts, before she removes the shells.



Happy is sweeping the yard so the family can cook dinner.



Happy's mother and father did not go to school

The three women are working. They sweep the yard. They collect garbage. They feed the animals. They prepare the food. Tonight, they will have shinkaafa for dinner. It is a dish with rice. They fetch firewood from a large stack. It is Happy's job to sweep the ground, light the fire, and wash the dishes.

Happy knows that her mother was brought up in a different way than she is. When her mother was a child, there was no school in the area. Neither her mother nor father has gone to school. They divide the work between them in the same way as all the other families in the village. The man works in the field and gets food. The woman makes shea butter and looks after the house. Happy's mother has taught her all the things she knows herself.

Happy wants to be a teacher just like Miss Arimiyaw. Maybe she wants to get married too, but first she wants to be a teacher. Happy is sure that it is possible. Because both her father and mother have said many times: "When you get an education, you can decide for yourself what you want to do with your life."



360°



Visit Happy's
school.

**FIND VIDEOS AND PICTURES AT
[HELEVERDENISKOLE.DK/HAPPY](https://heleverdeniskole.dk/happy)**





RAFIK

RAFIK AND THE SCAR ON HIS FOREHEAD

 CASPAR HAARLØV  HANS BACH

Rafik is left-handed. But he eats with his right hand, that is how to do it in Ghana. He prays five times a day. He takes care of his school and his duties. But he does not want to be like everyone else. He wants to be a military doctor. He wants to see the world. And he wants the television to work so he can follow the football.

Rafik is 11 years old and lives in Langa, north of the big city of Tamale. He has a brother Faisal and a sister Shikuriya. His sister lives with an aunt in another city to help around the house there.

The fun English lessons

It is early morning. Rafik has Arabic with the other Muslim children in his class. He has almost learned the entire alphabet. They read the Koran in Arabic with the teacher. Most people in Langa are Muslims. A few are Christians. But there is no church here. The Christians go to church in the neighboring town.

The rest of the day the class is taught in English. None of the children in the class speak Arabic or English at home. They belong to the Dagomba people and speak Dagbani. In the first years, the teachers speak Dagbani in class. But now they only speak English.

In some of the lessons it is difficult to understand everything. The school lacks books. The classroom smells of insect poison.

And it is very hot. There is an electric fan in the ceiling, but it does not work. When the school's roof was being repaired, the wires were stolen. They have not had power in the school buildings since then. But in English lessons, Rafik forgets all about that. They learn English by playing and singing. The teacher throws them a ball and asks questions in English. All the children walk around in a circle while singing, dancing, and laughing loudly. During breaks they play football. Rafik is almost always on the same team as his best friend, Sadat.

After school he helps his father and uncle in the fields. The family grows peanuts. His father is still waiting for rain. If the rains do not come soon, they will have a bad harvest this year.

On his way home, Rafik visits the mosque with his father. Afterwards he does his homework. His father leaves for work as a security guard in the city. Rafik asks if he can watch soccer on TV. His mother says no. The TV does not work.

Rafik and Sadat are in 5th grade. Rafik's favorite subject is English.





Rafik and his father pray in the mosque every day. It is close to their house.



Rafik goes out to play. There are many children living in the village and there is always someone to play with. They are playing catch. They get tired and sit down on a pile of firewood.

The story about the scar

Sadat reminds Rafik that it was here that Rafik got his scar on his forehead. Rafik nods. Some of the other boys want to hear the story. Rafik tells:

Once, we played catch here after it got dark. I wanted to hide on a pile of firewood. But I fell and got a piece of wood on my head. I was bleeding. But I did not cry. I went home. My father was at work. Instead, I got on my uncle's motorcycle. We drove through the pitch-black village. The engine pounded through the machine. There smelled of blood, sweat and gasoline. I could feel every rock and pothole in the road. Finally, we reached the barracks. The entrance to the military hospital was lit up by yellow lightbulbs. We entered a yard with a large tree in the middle. A soldier told us to sit on some chairs and wait. The backs of the chairs were



Rafik's mother
cooks TZ for dinner.
You eat it with your
hands.

shaped like “Gye Nyame” - the Ghanaian sign that means “God is great”. I began to pray for myself. I hoped that God would save me and that I would not upset my parents. The doctor wore a uniform and spoke English. We entered a room that was clean and cold. It hurt a little to get the wound washed. The doctor gave me a syringe in my forehead. Then the pain disappeared, and the doctor stitched the wound together.

Rafik's story is over, and it is getting dark.

Rafik wishes to become a doctor himself

When Rafik gets home, he washes himself and goes to his room to pray. His mother has made TZ. Or tuo zaafi, as it is also called. It is prepared from dry corn and cassava flour and a soup made from okra plants. Rafik tells his mother that some children wanted to hear the story about his scar again. His mother laughs. She thinks it is because Rafik looks cool with his scar.

Sometimes the doctors from the barracks come to visit Langa. Then the children can visit the doctor for free. Rafik touches his scar on the forehead. He also wants to be able to help others. Rafik says he wants to be a military doctor when he grows up. Then he wants to wear a uniform. His mother thinks this is a good plan. She says that if you want to be a doctor, you should do your homework. But Rafik has already finished his homework. He asks if he can watch football now. He can. If he can fix the television.



360°



Play catch with Rafik.

**FIND VIDEOS AND PICTURES AT
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RAHI

RAHI'S FIRST MATCH

 CASPAR HAARLØV  HANS BACH

It's four o'clock and Rahi wakes up. It's still dark. The thatched roof rustles. Grandma snores. Far away, Rahi can hear a kid goat calling for its mother. Rahi wakes up her two younger cousins, Prosper and Peace. They find their t-shirts in the dark and go out into the yard between the gray, clay-clad houses.

They can hardly see anything. A hen sits and sleeps on a water tank. The youngest of the cousins accidentally pushes the hen down. It screeches and flaps its wings. Rahi rushes over and holds her hand over the hen's eyes so that she falls asleep again. They must not wake uncle and aunt.

The girls each take a bucket on top of their heads and go out together through the gate. Rahi is the oldest. It is her job to lead the girls through the dark village. But she cannot help but tease her cousins. She stops so that the little ones walk into each other. Then suddenly she walks fast, and they cannot keep up. And without them knowing why, she walks three times around a cow lying in the middle of the street and sleeping. The little ones follow and laugh. Rahi whispers that they need to be quiet. There are people sleeping in all the cabins. It is hard to be quiet when Rahi is making fun.

At the pump, they say good morning to the other children, and drink from the fresh water. At home, they put down the water for the rest of the family. And Rahi feeds the guinea fowl chicks.



When the road to school is long

She changes into her school uniform. She eats a bowl of fried rice from last night's dinner and slings her bag over the shoulder and on her back. Grandma, uncle, and aunt are still sleeping. The two little ones go to bed again.

It takes Rahi an hour to bike to school. As she bikes, the sun rises. The mist lifts between the trees, the animals start to move, and the landscape takes on color. All the gray and slightly creepy turns into green leaves, red dusty road, and yellowish sky. Firstly, she attends extra lessons in mathematics. Then she and the others make the school ready. They fetch water from the pump in the school, sweep the yard, and clean up the classrooms. Then there are classes until two o'clock. Finally, there are more extra lessons.



In the schoolyard, there is a pump where students can fetch drinking water.





Rahi had to pass an exam to enter the girls' school. She lives with her uncle and aunt, Noah and Sarah.



Rahi is in 7th grade even though she is 14 years old. There was no school in the village where she lived with her parents. Now she has got a chance. She has entered a special school only for girls. And she has been allowed to live with her uncle and aunt, who live closer to the school. She misses her mother and father. But Rahi wants to go to school. She wants to become a nurse. Then she can travel home to her parents and help people there.

Many of the girls also come from poor families who live far away. Several have fallen behind with school. That is why they have extra lessons every day. Rahi knows that there are girls who are not allowed to come to school. There are still girls in Ghana who are married early. Or not coming to school because they have to work at home. Therefore, she and the other girls help each other.



The girls' school is a new school from 2016. There is a maximum of 38 students in each class. Their school uniform is white and purple.

The school also helps. If a girl does not come to school for several days, the school inspector talks to the family. Some of the school's teachers have visited families' homes to prevent girls from dropping out. Many of the school's teachers are women. They want the girls to be active. They must join the classes, raise their hand, and have their say. And it can be a little easier when there are only girls in the class. It helps the girls to believe in themselves. Rahi thinks so too.

But right now, Rahi does not think about all that. All she thinks about is football. Today, she has been allowed to play on one of the school's two teams.

The soccer match

Rahi is handed the orange jersey for the first time. She puts it on immediately. Finally, she gets to play with the girls on her own age. It is a test match. She does not know if she will be allowed

to stay on the team. But she is looking forward to playing. The sun is high in the sky. It is very hot. There are branches on the field and the grass is tall. The ball is given up. The first time Rahi gets the ball, there are immediately four girls from the other team trying to take it from her. She delivers. Drops the sandal. Runs in position. They lose the ball, and the others score. Some of the girls complain that there are thistles in the grass, which get stuck on their legs and on their clothes. But Rahi does not notice it. She just does not want to lose. The battle will soon be over. The others attack. Rahi goes in to tackle. She wins the ball. The orange team run counter - and they score!

The score is equal. The match must be decided by penalty kicks. Rahi stands in a circle with the girls from her team. When the others finally burn the decisive penalty kick, all the oranges throw themselves at each other and cheer. Rahi can feel the joy bubbling inside her.

Rahi also likes to watch football on television. Her favorite team is Ghana's national team, the Black Stars.





During the lunch break, Rahi buys a bowl of rice and eats with the soccer girls in the shade under a tree. They relax, talk about the match, and help each other remove thistles from their clothes.

Rahi misses her family

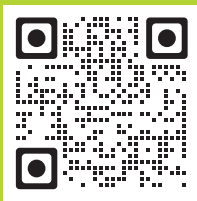
After school Rahi rush home. She must help prepare dinner. To-day she also needs to prepare shea nuts in the yard. Other days, she works in the field and help with the work there.

When they have eaten, Rahi does her homework in the light of a flashlight. The little ones are already asleep. Grandma snores. The thatched roof rustles. In the dark, she thinks about her family. If only she can see her mother and father again soon. If she is accepted into the school football team, she will ask her aunt if she can borrow the phone and call her parents and tell them. She has not spoken to her mother, father, or siblings since Christmas. Now it is already May. She turns off the flashlight and lies down on the thin mattress on the floor next to her cousins.

Far away she can hear a baby goat calling for its mother.



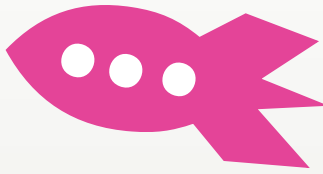
360°



Take part in sorting shea nuts with Rahi.

**FIND VIDEOS AND PICTURES AT
[HELEVERDENISKOLE.DK/RAHI](https://heleverdeniskole.dk/rahi)**





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Read more about the authors and illustrators:

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THIS YEAR, THE READING ROCKET INVITES YOU TO THE NORTHERN PART OF GHANA

We visit West Africa's oldest democracy. Here the Volta rivers meander through the hot savannah. The country is rich in gold, cocoa, and oil, but the wealth is unevenly distributed. In the northern part of the country, poverty is great, and many children do not go to school.

In the Reading Rocket you can meet children from northern Ghana. We visit 8-year-old Sheilla, who sings during morning assembly in her school early every morning. Ezekiel fishes on the Volta River and builds cars out of old cans. Bilengban has a plan for his life and is the only child in the village with a wristwatch. You can meet Happy, who collects shea nuts with her mother and dreams of becoming a teacher. Rafik wants to become a doctor and see the world. And Rahi lives far from her mother and father to be able to go to school. All the children tell about their everyday lives, and their hopes and dreams for the future.

With the UN's 17 global goals for sustainable development, we are going to change the world together. Goal number 4 tell that all children have the right to a good education. But there are 67 million children in the world who do not receive an education. In northern Ghana, one in three children do not go to school.

When you read in the Reading Rocket, you are part of raising awareness on the right of all children to get a quality education.

Please enjoy your time with the Reading Rocket!