Kathmandu Declaration

INTRODUCTION

The People's Action for Learning Network (PAL Network) is a south-south partnership whose member organisations work across three continents to assess the basic reading and numeracy competencies of children through citizen-led assessments, providing **inclusive and equitable data** to inform citizen-led action to improve **learning for all** children.

THE CONFERENCE

The PAL Network held a two-day conference in Kathmandu, Nepal on 5th and 6th November 2019, entitled 'Ensuring All Children Learn: Lessons on **Equity and Inclusion** from the South'. Attended by over 160 participants from 22 countries, the conference sought to explore evidence-based and contextually relevant solutions to ensure that no child is left behind. Providing an active learning forum that connected researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and civil society actors to catalyse learning, sharing and knowledge exchange, the conference:

- Explored **data gaps and under-researched equity and inclusion issues for the hardest-to-reach** children across the global South, building a stronger evidence base exploring the magnitude of the challenge;
- Shared data-driven implementation programs and initiatives that promote **equity-oriented pedagogical solutions** to ensure all children are in school and learning; and
- Resolved to undertake a **new common assessment** across the PAL Network, with items that are comparable and measurable for lower primary level (SDG target 4.1.1 a), starting with the **Citizen-Led Assessment of Numeracy (CLAN) in 2019**.

The Kathmandu Declaration articulates the **position of the PAL Network in committing to ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting life-long learning opportunities for all,** aligned with Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4).

PREAMBLE

The Sustainable Development Goals adopted by 193 member countries in September 2015 represent a renewed focus for **inclusive, lifelong and equitable education.** Since its inception in 2015, the PAL Network has advocated for the inclusion of an early grade indicator in the new set of global goals. In the wake of the World Education Forum 2015, the PAL Network released a public statement to the Technical Cooperation Group on Sustainable Development Goal 4 demonstrating the suitability of citizen-led assessments to **track the progress of all children** achieving **foundational skills** in the lower primary grades. This was followed by an Open Letter to the Inter-Agency and Expert Group (IAEG) on SDG Indicators in March 2016 with an urgent appeal to retain the draft indicator. The network's collective insistence on the need for early grade indicators in the post-2015 framework, along with other key stakeholders, ensured that SDG Indicator 4.1.1 included **inclusive and equitable data** on the percentage of children at Grades 2/3 who have learned the basics.

Data from the PAL Network's citizen-led assessments have contributed to the indicator being progressively upgraded by the IAEG from a Tier III Indicator (meaning it lacks an internationally established methodology) to a Tier II indicator (meaning there is a clear methodology in place but a lack of adequate data) in November 2018; with the indicator upgraded again from a Tier II to a Tier I indicator (meaning there is an internationally established methodology with regular data produced) in October 2019. The inclusion of citizen-led assessment data in measuring progress against SDG indicator 4.1.1 ensures that the **hardest-to-reach children remain visible in education data** at the sub-national, national and global levels. This includes data collected on: **out-of-school children, by socio-economic status, gender, age, language, and disability.**

SDG 4.1.1: The proportion of children and young people (a) in Grades 2/3 (b) at the end of primary school; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics.

OUR POSITION

We, the **People's Action for Learning Network,** cognizant of the 260 million children worldwide who are failing to learn basic skills, despite having spent at least four years in school:

1 Acknowledge the efforts of the international education community in drawing attention to the need for equitable and inclusive data on learning for the hardest-to-reach children.

2 Endorse citizen-led, household-based assessments as an inclusive mechanism to track the learning progress for *all* children, regardless of their age, gender or schooling status.

3 Commit to measuring progress against Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) and specifically Indicator 4.1.1a (the proportion of children and young people in Grades 2/3 achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in reading and mathematics) to ensure that no child is left behind.

4 Motivated by the call to produce internationally comparable data, are compelled to strengthen the comparability of common dimensions of equity through the design and implementation of a new comparable Citizen-Led Assessment of Numeracy (CLAN) in 2019.

5 Believe that the CLAN assessment is a vital first step in producing internationally comparable data on the acquisition of foundational skills across the global South in a process to hold national and global-level institutions accountable for delivering on the promises that are enshrined in SDG 4.

6 Stand by all endeavours, at local, national, regional and global levels to further the learning agenda and its tracking to inform policy and practice.

7 Advocate for the continued expansion and diversification of data to measure learning progress early on, in order for timely corrective measures to be taken to ensure better learning gains and successful transitions.

8 Pledge our active partnership with citizens, civil society alliances, governments, industry and development partners to accelerate the actualization of SDG 4 by 2030.

ASER PAKISTAN

PAL NETWORK
People's Action for Learning

ASER NEPAL

ENSURING ALL CHILDREN LEARN:
LESSONS ON INCLUSION AND EQUITY FROM THE SOUTH

November 5th-6th, 2019 | Kathmandu, Nepal

ASER Evidence for Action

ASER BANGLADESH

Beekunko

JÀNGANDOO

TPC Moçambique

LEARNigeria

MIA MEDICIÓN INDEPENDIENTE de Aprendizajes

uwezo

VIdA Valoración Interactiva del Aprender

Young 1ove
Connecting youth with life-saving information

zizi

palnetwork.org/conference

palnetworkHQ