

#DataForFoundationalLearning

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024



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**REPORT**  
**2024**

# Creating a world where all children have a foundation for lifelong learning.

The People's Action for Learning (PAL) Network is a south-south partnership of 17 member organisations working to promote children's foundational learning across Africa, Asia, and America. PAL Network members conduct Citizen-Led Assessments (CLAs) and learning intervention programmes (action) aimed at improving learning outcomes.

## Our Principles

- 1.** We focus on foundational skills through assessing basic skills including reading and simple arithmetic. We use simple assessments to understand and track children's learning progress.
- 2.** We pay attention to each individual child. Pen and paper assessments assume that a child can already read. We do not make that assumption, therefore we assess children orally, one-on-one. We build on the learning level of each individual child to help them progress.
- 3.** We ensure that no child is left behind. The best place to find a representative sample of all children, whether in school or not, is in their home. We therefore assess all children in their homes, and ensure that all children are supported to acquire basic skills.

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# Chairperson's Message

**"As we look ahead to 2025 and beyond, I am confident that with our collective commitment, PAL Network will continue to drive transformative change in foundational literacy and numeracy."**

**Dr. Ariel Fiszbein**

Chairperson, PAL Network Board



As we reflect on 2024, I am filled with gratitude for the resilience, dedication, and collaboration that has defined PAL Network's journey. This year was significant, not only for the milestones we achieved but also for the challenges we navigated together. This report describes the programmatic achievements during this past year. I want to highlight a few key issues in the organizational journey we have taken together in 2024.

After serving for more than 5 years, our board members Dr. Sara Ruto and Dr. John Mugo transitioned from the board. We are very thankful for their dedication, wisdom and passion with which they guided our organization. Thanks to their contribution, we have the PAL Network we celebrate today. The transition of these two leaders opened doors to welcome two other board members. We were glad to have Dr. Daniel Mwaringa and Faith Gitonga join the PAL Network Board. Dr. Daniel Mwaringa brings extensive expertise in education, research, and stakeholder engagement as a seasoned academic and media studies lecturer. His past work with Uwezo Kenya in citizen-led assessments demonstrates his ability to contribute to data-driven advocacy, tool development, and evidence-based policy influence—aligning extremely well with PAL Network's mission. Faith Gitonga brings a wealth of expertise in digital transformation, strategic leadership, and governance. She has a strong background in fintech, banking, and public sector digitalization. Her leadership extends to multiple boards, where she contributes to technology-driven change and organizational strategy. Recognized among Africa's top women in digital transformation, we welcome Faith's expertise in corporate governance, innovation, and tech.

Unfortunately, as we grew the board, we also lost one valued board member who joined in 2024, Boureima Allaye Touré. Mr. Touré was a remarkable leader,

sociologist, and tireless advocate for social development in Mali. As the General Secretary of OMAES and a board member of the PAL Network, Mr. Touré's dedication to advancing foundational learning and promoting the well-being of children will remain an enduring legacy.

I would like to share with you that this is my last message as a board chair of the PAL Network. Both Fernanda Farinha and I are ending our tenures this April. For me, it was a privilege to serve the PAL Network board and make a contribution to establishing this vibrant global south movement. To all my colleagues at the board, to all PAL leaders and the Secretariat, I send my heart felt gratitude for the time we spent together and the milestones we achieved in the last six years.

As we look ahead to 2025 and beyond, I am confident that with our collective commitment, PAL Network will continue to drive transformative change in foundational literacy and numeracy globally. The new strategy document approved by the board in December 2024 sets the directions to that. On behalf of the board, I extend my sincere appreciation to our partners, donors, members, and the Secretariat for their unwavering dedication. I strongly believe that together, we will ensure that every child, regardless of circumstance, has access to quality education and the opportunity to thrive.

**Dr. Ariel Fiszbein**

Chairperson, PAL Network Board

# CEO's Message

**"With the 2025-2030 strategy driving us forward, we are assured to make an even greater difference. We will scale our assessment and action programs, strengthen research, and deepen advocacy to ensure every child has the foundational skills they need to succeed."**

**Armando Ali**  
CEO, PAL Network Secretariat



2024 has been a year of impact and learning. As we step into our next strategic phase, PAL Network remains steadfast in its mission to generate evidence through citizen-led assessments and actions to improve foundational learning. We are proud to launch our 2025-2030 Strategy, which will guide us in scaling assessments, driving action, enhancing research and deepening advocacy for improvement of foundational learning in the global south.

Among our major accomplishments was the successful completion of data collection for the PAL ELANA Assessment, evaluating foundational learning among 63,000 children in 12 countries. Additionally, My Village Project supported 1,774 children in Nepal and Tanzania, demonstrating the power of community-led learning interventions. I would like to use this opportunity to thank all PAL Network leaders, their technical teams, the PMTs, volunteers, parents, local authorities and children we interacted with, for their time and engagement.

In 2024 we deepened our advocacy efforts through a global campaign to safeguard SDG 4.1.1a, an indicator crucial to measuring literacy and numeracy outcomes in the early grades. The global SDG 4.1.1a campaign resulted in catalysing dialogue on how the indicator could be retained in the SDG framework and eventually restored to a Tier I indicator. Currently, the UNESCO Institute of Statistics has provided a roadmap and reporting criteria for all stakeholders to support the production of data on foundational learning. This campaign reaffirmed our role as a champion for foundational learning, giving us opportunities to engage with policymakers and education stakeholders globally. Our engagement at the Inaugural East African Community Regional Education Conference, the African Union Year of Education, and multiple international forums further solidified our role as a thought leader in

education policy and evidence generation.

With the 2025-2030 strategy driving us forward towards strong governance, sustainable funding, and a growing network of partners, we are assured to make an even greater difference. We will scale our assessment and action programs, strengthen research, and deepen advocacy to ensure every child has the foundational skills needed to succeed.

At the PAL Network secretariat, we are moving from the way of dedicated dreamers to focused and joyful Olympic marathoners. Which means that we recognize that we have been driven by our dream of reaching to more and more children, without necessarily considering the required resources and time to reach there. As dedicated joyful Olympic marathoners, as long as we tune in to our needs, acknowledge our limitations, and consistently follow our training routines, we will be among the best athletes in the world. This is the spirit that will guide our planning, management and partnerships, as we move forward.

To our board, partners, funders, and dedicated team—thank you for your unwavering support. Together, we are shaping a future where no child is left behind.

**Armando Ali**  
CEO, PAL Network Secretariat



# Board of Directors



**Dr. Ariel Fiszbein**  
Board Chair | Director,  
Inter-American Dialogue



**Baela Raza Jamil**  
CEO, Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi and  
ASER Pakistan



**Dr. Daniel Mwaringa**  
Lecturer, Technical University of  
Mombasa, Kenya



**Faith Gitonga**  
Head of Tech and Digital  
Transformation, Tony Blair Institute  
for Global Change



**Fernanda Farinha**  
Consultant and Evaluator



**Dr. Radhika Iyengar**  
Director of Education and Research  
Scholar at Earth Institute, Columbia  
University.



**Rose Mwaura**  
CEO, Rockville Consulting Limited

# Advisory Group



**Dr. Suman Bhattacharjea**  
Advisory Group Chair | Director of  
Research, Annual Status of  
Education Report (ASER) Centre



**Binta Rassouloula AW/SALL**  
Elementary Education Inspector,  
LARTES- IFAN



**Carla Yeneris Caballero  
Mondragón**  
ABACOenRed



**Dr. David Njengere (MBS)**  
Chief Executive Officer, Kenya  
National Examinations Council  
(KNEC)



**Noam Angrist**  
Executive Director and Co-Founder,  
Youth Impact



**Dr. Nguyan Shaku Feese**  
Senior Strategic Advisor, Teacher  
Development Programme



**Rajib Timalisina**  
Director, Annual Status of Education  
Report (ASER) Nepal



**Sylvia Schmelkes**  
Educational Researcher,  
Universidad Iberoamericana,  
Mexico City



**Zaida Mgalla**  
Former Executive Director, Uwezo  
Tanzania



# Key Highlights

# Key Milestones

## The Journey to a New Strategic Plan

PAL Network set out to create its third strategic plan which will guide its activities from 2025 to 2030. 2030 is significant as it marks the deadline for achieving the SDGs. Over the next 6 years, the Network's focus will be on producing data and evidence through citizen-led assessments and actions to inform and influence conversations about the status of learning, and what can be done to improve it. The strategy therefore outlines two central focus areas (Assessment and Action) and two cross-cutting focus areas (Research, and Communication & Advocacy). To support the focus areas, the strategy has six enablers that will allow the Network to achieve its key objectives: (i) effective governance, (ii) adequate financial resources, (iii) efficient financial management, (iv) engaged and active members, (v) highly skilled Secretariat, and (vi) effective Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, and Sharing (MELS).

PAL Network members played a key role in the creation of the new 2025 – 2030 PAL Network strategy. Through a physical meeting held in April during the AGM and various forums that were convened at the four hubs to discuss the strategy, members had an opportunity to share their views on identified areas/issues. This collaborative effort helped steer the strategic focus of the Network.

With millions of children in the Global South out of school and many in school not learning, PAL Network is committed to accelerating efforts to ensure all children build a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

Figure1: PAL Network Focus Areas for 2025-2030 strategic plan



## PAL Network Set for Commencement of ICAN/ICAR Common Assessment

PAL Network collaborated with the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) to review and align the ICAN and ICAR assessment tools with the Global Proficiency Framework (GPF) and the global criteria for reporting under Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.1.1. Following the review, PAL Network undertook a rigorous process to revise and refine the tools. This involved enhancing item coverage to align with the GPF and global reporting requirements, adjusting the assessment design to ensure alignment with the Minimum Proficiency Levels (MPLs), and simplifying and recalibrating items for greater accessibility and relevance at Grade 2 and Grade 3.

ICAN now strongly aligns with all criteria, including adequate coverage of number and operations at Grade 2. Similarly, ICAR now strongly aligns with all criteria, demonstrating substantial improvements in reading comprehension coverage at Grade 2. Based on the ACER review and subsequent revisions, the assessment blueprint has been updated to reflect the full scope of the ICAN and ICAR assessments, including item coverage, alignment to global criteria, and methodologies employed to meet the highest standards for reporting. With the tools set for data collection, the assessment will be carried out and the report released in 2025.

## PAL ELANA Final Data Collection

PAL - ELANA (Early Language, Literacy and Numeracy Assessment) is a literacy and numeracy assessment that covers pre-primary and early primary grade competencies for children aged 4-10 years. In 2024, PAL Network collected data from 42,000 households, assessing 63,000 children aged 4-10 years from 12 countries across Africa, Asia, and the Americas. This was following the completion of the PAL ELANA field trial which was completed in 15 villages in each of the 12 countries that participated in the assessment.

Following the data collection, careful checks were done to ensure accuracy and reliability. This included removing test data, fixing inconsistencies within villages and districts, and manually reviewing information when needed. Data from children aged 4 to 10 was carefully selected, ensuring completeness and correctness.

Data was analysed using advanced statistical methods to understand children's early literacy and numeracy skills across different countries. The analysis involved checking for any biases and exploring how personal and contextual factors influenced learning. The process also included reviewing how the assessment was carried out. This rigorous approach was employed to ensure the reliability of the PAL ELANA project's findings and will inform future educational policies and practices. The final report will be published in early 2025.

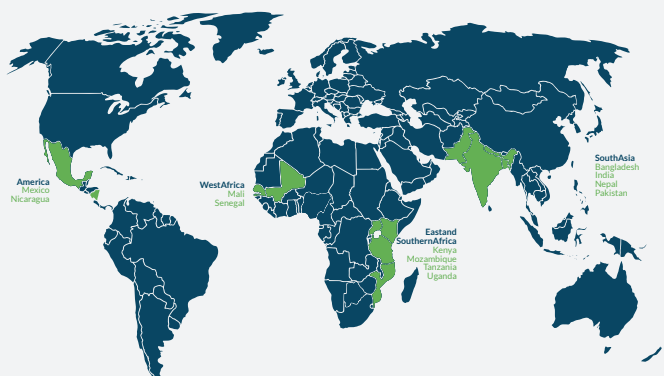


Figure 2: Countries participating in PAL ELANA assessment

Children Assessed

**63,000**

Households Sampled

**42,000**

No. of villages

**180**

## Advancing Community-Led Learning through My Village Project

My Village is an ambitious learning intervention project aimed at supporting at least one million children to read and do basic math in the next five years through community participation. My Village Phase I implementation report was finalised in 2024. This gave way to the implementation of My Village Phase II, which was completed in 35 villages (15 in Nepal and 20 in Tanzania). In this second phase of the project, a total of 1,774 (1,052 TZ and 722 NP) children were reached in both countries. In Tanzania, children took part in 30 sessions consisting of 3 camps of 10 days each, while in Nepal, children took part in a total of 105 sessions consisting of 7 camps of 15 days each. All four components (learning camps, community libraries, life skills, and SMS) were conducted to facilitate acquisition of basic literacy and numeracy skills, as well as life skills.

To further strengthen data collection and reliability, PAL Network engaged research partnerships, notably with the REAL Centre on cost-effectiveness analysis and Youth Impact on A/B testing. For the cost-effectiveness project, research design, data management, and impact evaluation of My Village I learning camps were done. Lessons from this work informed improvements in My Village II, particularly in data recording and management. Support was also provided to country members on data accuracy and backend system functionality.

Designs of the A/B testing process for the My Village project in Tanzania and Nepal were completed. The designs included an integration of peer tutoring elements into the learning camps, tailoring training materials and sessions, and support for teacher volunteers throughout the project. These efforts ensured that the A/B testing process was robust and systematically executed, enabling a thorough evaluation of the impact of peer tutoring on children's foundational learning outcomes.

Data was uploaded on Survey CTO, and thorough data cleaning and analysis was done, resulting in the My Village II baseline report. This report serves as a critical resource for understanding the project's starting conditions and guiding subsequent project interventions and decision-making processes. The endline assessment process began in December in Tanzania after completion of the assessment tool development, training manuals, and preparation of the data capture system through SurveyCTO. Nepal's endline assessment is scheduled for January 2025. In Tanzania, district education officials expressed interest in expanding the project to 10 more schools. PAL Network looks forward to strengthening more partnerships to scale up the project in the coming years.



## PAL Network Leads Efforts to Safeguard SDG 4.1.1a

In December 2023, it came to PAL Network's attention that SDG 4.1.1a, the only indicator that measures foundational learning in the early years, had been demoted from Tier I to Tier II. It was also at risk of complete removal from the SDG reporting framework. As part of its global advocacy strategy, PAL Network is working to ensure its assessment tools are compliant with the global proficiency framework and the data can subsequently be used to report progress against SDG 4.1.1a indicator. The demotion/removal of the indicator would therefore have had negative effects on advocacy activities linked to sharing of findings of the PAL Network's large scale common assessment.

In collaboration with the global coalition for foundational learning, PAL Network initiated an advocacy campaign with the motto: Measure Early, Measure All, Measure Well: Safeguard Data for the Future of Foundational Learning. The main aim of the campaign was to ensure SDG 4.1.1a was reinstated as a Tier I indicator given the salience of keeping foundational literacy and numeracy on the global 2030 agenda. 42 Civil Society Organizations from different parts of the world showed their support for the safeguarding of the indicator by signing a Civil Society Organization (CSO) petition. They included National organizations, international organizations and Multi-Regional Networks. The campaign also gathered 400 signatures from members of the public. Every voice counts as we collectively amplify the urgent need for robust data on learning outcomes to drive educational policies and investments, ensuring that no child is left behind in the pursuit of quality education.

Overall, the campaign achieved its target as it contributed significant momentum towards the key goal to preserve the indicator and restore it to tier I status. The UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) provided a road map for the safeguarding and potential restoration of the indicator to a Tier I indicator. However, there is still a lot to be done to ensure this happens.

The campaign gave PAL Network significant traction on social media using two major hashtags: #EducationForAll and #DataForFoundational-Learning. Coupled with other online engagements and content related to programs and achievements, PAL Network reached a wide range of audiences online ensuring key messages were disseminated widely. Overall, total new followers of PAL Network social media channels were 4,122 by the end of December. The total number of social media accounts on whose feeds our content appeared were 6,633,435. Out of these, the PAL Network social media channels reported 15, 519,093 engagements with our content including page visits, link clicks, mentions, profile visits and re-posting of the Network's content.

As the year went by, the SDG 4.1.1a campaign expanded beyond the indicator to focus on the broader topic of Data for Foundational Learning. This provides an opportunity for PAL Network to build on the campaign's momentum to raise visibility of its Citizen-Led Assessments and Actions, while strengthening its role as a thought leader in evidence generation and improving learning outcomes in the Global South.

#DataForFoundationalLearning

#EducationForAll



Social Media Engagements

**15,519,093**

New Followers

**4,122**



## Engaging with the East African Community to Increase Salience of Foundational Learning

The African Union (AU) declared 2024 as the Africa Year of Education focusing on the theme: Educating an African fit for the 21st Century through building resilient education systems for increased access to inclusive, lifelong, quality, and relevant learning. PAL Network took the opportunity to deepen its engagement with the East African Community (EAC) and other partners to increase the salience of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy in the region. This was done through the inaugural EAC Regional Education Conference that was held to commemorate the AU Year of Education and advocate for holistic learning for all children in the EAC region. The conference was attended by a daily average of 400 participants, including high level delegates from the 8 EAC partner states and various CSOs and partners in the education ecosystem. A total of 167 organizations were represented in the conference.

The conference discussions reiterated that advancing 21st-century competencies for each child is crucial for addressing the demographic, economic, and social challenges in East Africa. Ensuring that students are prepared for the demands of a modern economy requires addressing low foundational learning in the early grades, and integrating contextualized life skills, social emotional learning, digital literacy and effective instruction in student's language of preference. Recommended strategies to address educational disparities to reach children left farthest behind included implementing gender-responsive pedagogies and providing

targeted support such as school feeding programs and safe learning environments. Challenges in implementing the competency-based curriculum (CBC) were also highlighted, particularly the lack of teacher readiness due to insufficient training and support, as well as underfunding that limits access to essential resources. To address these issues, participants emphasized the need for comprehensive teacher development, strategic resource allocation, use of education technology and multi-stakeholder collaboration to ensure effective and equitable CBC implementation.

PAL Network secured a sub-theme specific to the issue of data for foundational learning dubbed Data and Accountability for SDG 4.1.1a. Key issues discussed included gaps in data collection, such as an overemphasis on exam results, limited assessment of socio-emotional and psychomotor skills, and insufficient data on Early Childhood Education and foundational learning. This lack of comprehensive data hampers evidence-based decision-making, advocacy, and targeted investments in education. Recommendations focused on strengthening data governance, improving data collection systems, integrating citizen-generated data, enhancing digital assessment tools, increasing research funding, and fostering regional collaboration for better comparability and accountability.





## Teachers' Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices and Beliefs (KAPB) Study Underway

The Teachers' Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices, and Beliefs (KAPB) project made substantial progress across multiple fronts. The research design was finalized, laying the foundation for a robust study framework. Coordination with implementing partners in Senegal and Tanzania, as well as other key stakeholders, was actively maintained to ensure alignment and smooth execution. Additionally, all necessary permits and approvals for fieldwork in Tanzania were successfully secured. Comprehensive training manuals were created to prepare field teams for effective data collection and engagement. With data collection underway, the KAPB report will be released in 2025 and aims to influence policy and practice in building the capacity of teachers to improve foundational learning outcomes.

## Deepening Inclusivity in PAL Network's Work

Leveraging established ICAN and ICAR assessment tools, PAL Network is working to expand its assessments into crisis-affected areas and integrate Social Emotional Learning (SEL) into the assessments. This will offer a more comprehensive understanding of children's needs, promoting their holistic development, and provide much-needed data to inform interventions and policies, ensuring no child is left behind. Grant proposals with Porticus and Education Cannot Wait (ECW) were successfully finalized and approved, securing funding for the project. A tri-partite collaboration between PAL Network, ECW, and Porticus was officially launched through a kick-off meeting, marking the beginning of a coordinated effort to implement the project. Additionally, the governance structure for the initiative was drafted, providing a clear framework for collaboration, decision-making, and accountability among the partners.

To strengthen inclusion of children with disability in PAL Network's assessments, discussions were held with Sight Savers to advance the development of disability-inclusive assessment modules. These efforts will support the tailoring of PAL Network's assessments to measure Social Emotional Learning, measure learning outcomes in emergency contexts,

and enhance the inclusivity of PAL's assessment tools.

PAL Network committed to advancing gender integration across its operations and programs. Since its inception, PAL Network has been acutely aware of the distinct challenges faced by girls and boys in the educational process, striving to design programs that effectively address the unique needs of each gender. Our efforts have centred around a gender-responsive approach, which acknowledges and aims to overcome gender barriers to education. This approach recognizes how deeply gender norms and inequalities affect educational disparities, especially by limiting girls' access to quality education compared to boys. Our citizen-led assessments include gender-disaggregated indicators to precisely evaluate the comparative learning outcomes of girls and boys.

Looking forward, PAL Network is working on a strategy to intensify its focus on gender intentionality. This strategic shift involves systematically monitoring gender-related outcomes and impacts, enhancing our team's capacity for gender integration, and embedding gender considerations within our results framework and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) strategies. We are also dedicated to equipping our implementing teams with the skills necessary for effective gender analysis and integration, thereby enhancing our ability to tackle gender-specific challenges and foster inclusivity within our programs.

## **PAL Network Publishes Training Modules on Citizen Led Assessments**

In collaboration with the What Works Hub on Global Education (WWHGE), PAL Network designed a technical training module on Citizen-Led Assessments (CLAs), the signature assessment of the PAL Network, for the capacity building of governments, practitioners and stakeholders. This technical training module introduces and explains in detail what the CLA model is and provides a guide on how to conduct CLAs. It consists of four micro-modules, with each micro-module being a video of 20 minutes in length that explains (i) the history and relevance of CLAs, (ii) how to design and contextualise CLAs, (iii) how to conduct CLAs in practice, and (iv) introduction to common assessments, a special form of CLAs. Each micro-module is supported with relevant documentation, including learning outcomes, further reading and resources, and a few questions to check understanding. All resources under this module are available under open-access and on PAL Network's You Tube channel and website.

## **Deepening Partnerships to Secure Funding**

Throughout the year, PAL Network focused on relationship-based fundraising which included engaging potential donors in a co-creation process for proposal development. This approach has proven far more effective than the traditional approach of responding to solicited/ unsolicited calls for proposals because it not only fosters engagement and alignment with our donors but also enhances both the impact and sustainability of funding.

Notably, these fundraising efforts secured funding from Hempel Foundation to support PAL Network large scale assessments, advocacy and organizational development, with a focus on strengthening PAL Network's research efforts. Echidna Giving also renewed its funding to PAL Network to enhance organizational development and incorporate a gender lens into PAL Network's operations. This partnership will support PAL Network's assessments and research, with a focus on the integration of a Social Emotional Learning module to the assessment tools. Overall, PAL Network mobilized USD 2,850,000 in 2024.

## **Strengthening PAL Network Governance**

The PAL Network Board underwent significant changes in the past year. After serving for more than 5 years, our board members Dr. Sara Ruto and Dr. John Mugo transitioned from the board. We appreciate their dedication in shaping our organization into what it is today. We were glad to

have Dr. Daniel Mwaringa and Faith Gitonga join the PAL Network Board. Dr. Daniel Mwaringa brings extensive expertise in education, research, and stakeholder engagement to the PAL Board as a seasoned academic and media studies lecturer. Faith Gitonga brings a wealth of expertise in digital transformation, strategic leadership, and governance to the PAL Board. We welcome their expertise and are glad to have them join the team.

To further strengthen governance, management initiated a board development process, including a board evaluation and refresher on governance, with a consulting firm engaged to facilitate this in 2025. The board also convened for a physical meeting in Nepal, which included a field visit to five villages in Sarlahi District to observe My Village project in action. Members engaged with community members, volunteers, and children, gaining firsthand insights into the project's impact. They also participated in a reflection session with implementing countries and South Asia Hub members, fostering deeper collaboration and shared learning.

# Member Highlights

## ASER Nepal's Citizen-Led Assessments and FLN Interventions

ASER Nepal partnered with the Collaborative School Network (CSN) and SAHAS Nepal to improve learning through citizen-led, assessment-based evaluations and foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) interventions. With CSN, ASER Nepal conducted six assessments across 12 schools as part of a four-year randomized controlled trial (RCT) using ASER Nepal tools. These evaluations, following two annual assessments, tracked student progress in control and treatment schools, identifying learning gaps and informing teaching strategies. ASER Nepal also led the fifth and sixth rounds of this RCT, assessing 1,340 children to measure intervention effectiveness and refine data-driven instruction. Additionally, ASER Nepal supported SAHAS Nepal with baseline and end-line evaluations in Ramechhap district schools, including developing assessment tools, designing training, and supporting tailored lesson plans. Crucially, ASER Nepal built capacity by training SAHAS Nepal's project team, volunteers, and over 30 learning camp facilitators on creating engaging learning environments to enhance FLN skills.



## ASER Centre's 2024 Report Gives Insights on Learning and Digital Access

The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2024 was released on January 28, 2025, in New Delhi, India. Since its publication, ASER 2024 findings have been widely discussed, with more than 150 news articles, op-eds, and editorials in major national dailies. The ASER 2024 survey reached over 649,491 children across 605 districts in 29 states and Union Territories in India. It retains the core elements of the ASER architecture: it is a sample-based rural household survey done by local organizations and institutions, conducted one-on-one with each sampled child using simple and easy-to-administer tools and formats.

ASER 2024 presents key findings on three age groups: pre-primary (ages 3 to 5), elementary (ages 6 to 14), and older children (ages 15 to 16). The report captures enrolment levels and patterns for all three age groups and provides estimates on basic reading and arithmetic abilities of 5-16-year-olds. For the first time, ASER also offers national and state-level representative data on digital access and skills among older children in the 14 to 16 age group.

## Facilidade ICDS Using SMS to Improve Teacher Attendance

In Mozambique, the "Participem para que eles aprendam" project implemented the SMS Alert system in 40 schools across Cabo Delgado and Nampula provinces to monitor teacher attendance. School council members check teacher presence, sending SMS alerts to local education authorities and the Facilidade ICDS Facility – positive reports when all are present, and reports of absences with teacher names and details. Quarterly review meetings with all stakeholders assessed the system's effectiveness. In 2024, these meetings confirmed the system was running smoothly, reducing absenteeism, and playing a vital role in improving teacher presence, with participants expressing satisfaction.







### FUPECG Strengthening Education Through Genuine Cooperation

Fundación Pedagógica Cooperación Genuina (FUPECG), through its VIdA project, actively promoted “genuine cooperation” as a central tenet of transformative education. FUPECG also shared their VIdA experience in learning management and discussed the evolving role of university professors within this framework at the Centro Universitario Regional Litoral Pacífico (UNAH-CURLP) Book Week in Honduras. This knowledge-sharing even in Nicaragua, organized by Índice Education Magazine, highlighted lessons learned from assessing basic skills in childhood, using the Estelí experience as a case study. Furthermore, a member of the FUPECG team will be undertaking doctoral research in 2025 focusing on the connection between family participation in citizen-led assessments and the development of children's reading skills, drawing directly from the data and insights gained through VIdA's learning assessments.

### GLOT Promoting Literacy with Multilingual Books and Literacy Kits

GLOT engaged in a variety of impactful activities focused on literacy and learning over the last year. A key highlight was hosting the PAL network Secretariat in Medellín, Colombia. This visit allowed for a firsthand look at the impact of GLOT's Literacy+ Kit, with teachers and students sharing their experiences. GLOT continued its work with the multilingual book "Chomp the Dragon and the Lost Dream," launching activities in Tanzania and Colombia that promoted reflection on dreams and diversity, supported by a multilingual digital guide for children, parents, and educators. Strengthening its network within Colombia, GLOT joined the Colombia se Escribe Leyendo alliance, further solidifying its dedication to advancing early literacy education nationwide. Finally, GLOT launched the LiteracyPaz Kit, building upon the success of the Literacy+ Kit.



### IID Empowering Bangladesh's Next Generation of Leaders

The Institute of Informatics and Development (IID) held its landmark Youth Policy Summit in Dhaka, Bangladesh, in December 2024, following the historic July Uprising. The summit, attended by 400 young changemakers, provided a platform for youth engagement in policy discourse and advocacy. It featured six issue-based policy debates, two interactive panel discussions with policymakers and experts on inclusive education and economic systems, discussions on institutionalizing political and legal rights, and two intergenerational dialogues fostering exchanges between youth and experienced leaders. The summit emphasized practical advocacy skills, anti-discrimination, and inclusion. Beyond the core program, the summit included an Anti-Discrimination Graffiti Photography Exhibition showcasing youth-created art from the uprising, a Policy Action Award recognizing six organizations for education reform, and a volunteer recognition program for the Youth for Policy initiative.



## ITA's Data-Driven Advocacy and Impact in Education

ITA's key education initiatives included the release and dissemination of the ASER 2023 Survey, notable for its expanded urban coverage and resulting in a comprehensive national report (rural and urban). Dissemination efforts included 45+ advocacy sessions and the launch of the ASER FLN app for real-time assessments. ITA also began a longitudinal study across eight constituencies, focusing on equity and learning challenges, with baseline assessments completed and midline/endline evaluations planned for 2026 and 2028. This study aims to link education data with policy action and hold parliamentarians accountable. Other 2024 highlights include the completion of constituency report cards, the upcoming release of the full ASER report in March 2025, and celebrations marking ITA's 25th anniversary, including a commemorative book and a webinar on foundational learning and assessment. Overall, ITA's work emphasizes data-driven advocacy, community engagement, and long-term accountability for improved education outcomes in Pakistan.



## MIA A.C. Promoting Gender Equality and Human Rights Among Children and Youth

MIA A.C.'s "Check Your WhatsApp Project" was among the winners of the 2024 National Program to Promote Women's Participation. This initiative promotes human rights and democratic values among children and youth to advance gender equality. Through in-person workshops and WhatsApp-based learning reinforcement, secondary and high school students are trained and later replicate their knowledge in primary schools via school fairs. The project benefits 180 young people across three marginalised communities, and insights from the project will inform the development of a manual for broader application. By integrating social media and leveraging adolescents' interest in mobile devices, the initiative fosters community engagement and active participation.

## MIA Empowering Children Through Targeted Educational Interventions

MIA's work became a beacon of hope for thousands of Mexican children throughout the last year. Through the "Learning Recovery" and "MIA Bats'i k'op (Tsotsil) Camps" projects, MIA crafted culturally and linguistically relevant tools that applied the transformative "Teaching at the Right Level" approach. MIA demonstrated that educational equity is not a distant ideal, but an achievable reality. The significant learning gains, quantified by impressive effect sizes in the camps speak to a holistic learning impact that includes the restoration of confidence, the rekindling of curiosity, and the empowering of children to reclaim their educational journeys.







### OMAES Expanding Educational Access and Quality

Through the ambitious USAID Doniya Taabolo program, targeting 1,000 schools across 11 educational districts, OMAES embarked on a profound mission to reshape Mali's educational landscape, demonstrating that strategic intervention can ignite lasting change. Simultaneously, the training of 329 members from 47 communal education commissions underscored a commitment to participatory governance, embedding sustainable educational practices at the local level. The creation of culturally relevant learning materials, coupled with capacity-building for elected officials, signalled a holistic approach, recognizing that true progress hinges on both pedagogical innovation and robust community engagement.

### TEP Centre Using Error Analysis to Improve Numeracy Instruction

TEP Centre conducted a Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation-funded project exploring Error Analysis in instruction to improve numeracy outcomes in Nigeria. The project is also implemented by partners in Kenya, and South Africa. Building on prior work in Nigeria that revealed teachers lacked tools to identify specific student misconceptions, this project trained teachers to systematically analyse student errors, understand the reasoning behind them, and adjust teaching methods accordingly. The project developed an instructional guide and toolkit, including training on identifying and classifying errors, data-informed lesson planning, using low-cost teaching aids, and performance journaling. Results showed that teachers using error analysis became more effective at identifying learning gaps and adapting instruction. The project emphasised using mistakes as diagnostic tools and the importance of locally available materials for sustainable implementation, promoting a more responsive, student-centered approach to numeracy instruction.



### Usawa Agenda Promoting Equitable Foundational Learning

In the last year, Usawa Agenda focused on promoting equitable access to quality foundational learning in Kenya. Key achievements included: 1) launching the 2023 Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment Report (FLANA) nationally and regionally, providing crucial data on learning outcomes and inequities; 2) launching its first-ever Gender Report, highlighting disparities in foundational learning between boys and girls and promoting gender-responsive education; and 3) advocating for equitable university funding, leading to its Executive Director's appointment to the National Committee on the Review of the New University Education Funding Model. Usawa Agenda's work emphasized research, stakeholder engagement, and systems change for improved foundational learning outcomes for all children.



## Uwezo Tanzania Building Confidence and Skills in Classrooms

Uwezo Tanzania implemented “Jifunze” teaching methods, particularly through its “My Village Project”. Teachers reported significant improvements in their teaching abilities, leading to increased student engagement, mastery of literacy and numeracy skills, and even personal career advancement. Students, including those who had previously struggled or been out of school, demonstrated remarkable progress in reading, writing, and mathematics, with newfound confidence and enthusiasm for learning. Parents expressed gratitude for the program's effectiveness and its positive impact on their children's education, emphasizing the program's role in addressing fundamental learning challenges and fostering a supportive educational environment.



## Uwezo Uganda Assessing Learning, Empowering Research, and Informing Policy

Uwezo Uganda conducted a national learning assessment reaching 21,057 children in 29 districts. This was a follow-up to the 2021 assessment whose aim was to track post-pandemic learning outcomes. Uwezo Uganda also conducted the PAL-ELANA assessment in three districts, contributing to PAL Network's common assessment framework for foundational literacy and numeracy. Furthermore, Uwezo Uganda supported approximately 30 researchers in using their data, conducting academic writing workshops that resulted in six published articles. Finally, Uwezo Uganda co-authored and co-launched a spotlight report with UNESCO GEMR and ADEA on basic education completion and foundational learning, focusing on curriculum alignment and early grade mathematics.

## LARTES-IFAN Surveying Women's Health and Education in Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire

LARTES-IFAN conducted a survey on women's health and education in Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire. The survey included 10,000 women in Senegal and 10,000 in Côte d'Ivoire. In each country, the study also involved 1,000 men.

LARTES-IFAN also mobilised a team of ten researchers and conducted a study in Côte d'Ivoire in partnership with the Laboratory of Economic Sociology and Anthropology of Symbolic Belongings (LAASSE) at Félix Houphouët-Boigny University in Abidjan Cocody.





## Youth Impact's 10 Years of Evidence and Collaboration

In March 2024, Youth Impact celebrated its 10th anniversary. Over the past decade, 250,000 young people have been served by three programs, 1 million people impacted across 25 countries, 2 million lessons delivered in 32 languages, 53 rapid, rigorous, randomized trials conducted, and over 100 partnerships launched. In addition to measuring their impact so far, Youth Impact joined forces with partners to look forward and plan for their second decade of global evidence-based expansion. They hosted a high-level learning summit in June 2024 in Botswana, where they had productive dialogues with senior partners from four national governments, academia, International and National Non-Governmental Organizations. Youth Impact strengthened their relationships ready for significant scaling expected in 2025, particularly in the Philippines, Namibia and South Africa.



*Partners Summit in Maun, Botswana - June 2024*



## Zizi Afrique Foundation Assessing and Addressing Numeracy Errors

In September 2024, Zizi Afrique Foundation (ZAF) partnered with the Centre for Mathematics, Science and Technology Education in Africa (CEMASTEA) to conduct a study on foundational numeracy outcomes in lower grades. The aim of the study was to identify common errors in numeracy for early grades with the aim of providing actionable strategies for addressing such errors. A total of 405 learners from grades 2 and 3 were assessed in five schools in Bungoma West. The study revealed that overall, factual errors were the most common errors with 84% of the learners recording this error. This indicates that most learners lacked the basics of numeracy (that is, numbers and operations). When categorized by gender, factual errors remained pronounced with slightly more boys than girls recording this error at 86% and 83% respectively. Currently, the two institutions are working together to develop practical strategies that can be adopted by teachers to enhance learners' mental computation of numeracy tasks for improved numeracy outcomes.



# Donor Spotlight

## Echidna Giving

Support from Echidna Giving has continued to strengthen the PAL Network's initiatives, ensuring sustained impact in foundational learning. Echidna Giving provided critical support for organizational effectiveness, enabling PAL Network to develop its 2025-2030 strategy, supporting assessment and action, strengthen Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning, and Sharing (MELS) systems, improve finance and operations, and begin the process of integrating gender mainstreaming across programs. Their investment played a crucial role in enhancing operational efficiency and sustain efforts in addressing the learning crisis in the Global South.

## Gates Foundation

In 2024, support from The Gates Foundation enabled PAL Network to advance advocacy, research, and data strengthening for Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) in Sub-Saharan Africa. Through support from The Gates Foundation, PAL Network ran the SDG 4.1.1a campaign, influencing UNESCO's stance on retaining the indicator in the SDG framework. Regionally, PAL Network co-led the EAC Regional Education Conference, the first conference of its kind that was convened to mark the AU Year of Education. The foundation also supported a study on Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) in Senegal and Botswana to enhance teacher training strategies. Additionally, through their support, PAL Network refined large-scale assessments (ICAN & ICAR), advanced Minimum Proficiency Level (MPL) benchmarking for SDG 4.1.1a, strengthened quality assurance protocols, and expanded its data team. These efforts ensure PAL Network continues to generate high-quality evidence that informs education policies at all levels.

## Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCDO)

FCDO's multi-year grant has been instrumental in expanding foundational learning assessments across 15 countries in the Global South, providing critical data on children's numeracy and literacy skills. In

2024, FCDO's support enabled PAL Network to strengthen data quality, align assessments with SDG 4.1.1a global benchmarks, and enhance sampling and quality assurance frameworks. This funding also facilitated national data collection planning, technical capacity building for country teams, and improved assessment tools in collaboration with ACER. These efforts ensure that high-quality, globally recognized data continues to inform evidence-based education policies and progress tracking toward SDG 4.

## IDRC-CRDI

IDRC's four-year investment in the PAL-ELANA project concluded in 2024 with the successful completion of data collection across PAL Network member countries. This funding played a critical role in developing a digitally adaptive, common assessment tool for pre-primary and early primary learners, helping to identify and address gaps in early literacy and numeracy. IDRC's support has been instrumental in advancing evidence-based approaches to strengthen foundational learning across the Global South.

## Wellspring

Wellspring Philanthropic Fund continues to be a key enabler of PAL Network's growth, supporting innovation, learning, and systemic change. In 2024, their investment strengthened organizational capacity, providing crucial support for leadership development, fundraising, and strategic planning. Their long-term commitment has also allowed PAL Network to enhance its evidence-based learning programs, ensuring greater impact in foundational literacy and numeracy across the Global South.



# Financial Highlights

# Financial Highlights

INCOME	FY 2024 (USD)	FY 2023 (USD)
Grant Receipts	2,382,948	1,407,962
Other Incomes	159,578	152,719
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>2,542,526</b>	<b>1,560,681</b>

## EXPENDITURE

### PROGRAM EXPENSES

PAL Network capacity to generate data of good quality improved	776,658	239,901
Network strengthened to position itself to inform global monitoring efforts	334,934	382,271
Actions taken by members to improve learning outcomes understood and ideas	78,704	57,933
Network strengthened bolstered by responsive governance and diversified fund	35,593	39,577
Organisational competence growth and learning, monitoring and evaluation	55,063	143,458
EAC-REC Conference	268,825	-
Program personnel Costs	678,795	550,230
Program administration cost	244,174	81,164
	<b>2,472,746</b>	<b>1,494,534</b>

### OTHER EXPENDITURE

Other indirect operational expenditure	33,883	4,684
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<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>2,506,629</b>	<b>1,499,218</b>
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Fund Surplus for the year	35,897	61,463
Add: Balance Brought forward	1,422,935	1,363,455
Prior Year Adjustments	(258,338)	(1,983)
Balance Carried Forward to the Year 2025	1,200,494	1,422,935

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

ASSETS	FY 2024 (USD)	FY 2023 (USD)
Non-Current Assets	21,921	9,749
Current Assets	1,258,111	998,568
	<b>1,280,032</b>	<b>1,008,317</b>
Less: Current -Liabilities	79,536	43,339
<b>NET ASSEST</b>	<b>1,200,496</b>	<b>964,978</b>

## REPRESENTED BY

Fund Balance	964,977	964,977
Increase in Fund Balance	35,899	-
Prior year adjustment	199,620	-
	<b>1,200,496</b>	<b>964,977</b>





# Notes





# ANNUAL REPORT 2024



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People's Action for Learning



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