



**PAL NETWORK**  
People's Action for Learning

# ANNUAL REPORT 2025

## A DECADE OF IMPACT



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## Chairperson's Message: A Decade of Evidence, Action, and Accountability

“As we look toward our 2025–2030 strategy, our mission is clearer than ever: we must continue to put children’s learning at the centre of policy. The 2025 findings confirm that the learning crisis remains at a critical level. However, our collective ability to measure and analyse this crisis has never been stronger.”

Dr. Claudia Uribe Board Chair | Distinguished Professor of Education,  
Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico



### To our members, partners, and the global education community,

It is a profound honor to address you as the Board Chair of the PAL Network. As we reflect on the milestones of 2025, we celebrate a historic landmark: **PAL@10**. This tenth anniversary is not merely a chronological marker; it is a celebration of a movement that has fundamentally redefined educational accountability across the Global South.

Ten years ago, the PAL Network was formed to unify a growing collective of organizations dedicated to foundational learning. What began as localized efforts has evolved into a sophisticated global force. This trajectory has been defined by an unwavering commitment to the "whole child," ensuring that academic skills are intertwined with social and emotional well-being.

For too long, children in low-resource settings – particularly those out of school or in marginalized communities – remained invisible in official data systems. Our movement changed that. By conducting Citizen-Led Assessments (CLAs) directly in children’s homes, we have bridged the gap between data and reality. Through the launch of **The State of Foundational Learning in the Global South: 2025 Report**, we provided nationally representative evidence of learning outcomes across 11 countries. By mapping our **ICAN-ICAR** tools to the Global Proficiency Framework and aligning them with SDG 4.1.1(a) standards, we have contributed for the voices of the most marginalized to be recognized on the global stage as a high-quality metric for reporting.

As we look toward our 2025–2030 strategy, our mission is clearer than ever: we must continue to put children’s learning at the centre of policy. The 2025 findings confirm that the learning crisis remains at a critical level. However, our collective ability to measure and analyse this crisis has never been stronger.

Through enhanced collaboration, we are equipping governments and international decision-makers with the credible, comparable evidence needed for policy reform and targeted resource allocation. Our movement has transformed from informing the adoption of SDG 4 to shaping the global Call to Action to Transform Foundational Learning. We believe that every child can learn. By shifting the responsibility of education from the school alone to the entire society we are contributing for a world where every child attains the foundational skills required for lifelong success. Thank you for being part of this decade of impact. Together, we will ensure that no child is left behind.

## CEO's Message: A Decade of Care, Hope, and Shared Humanity

"As I conclude my address to you, I want to express my deepest gratitude to the children who inspire us, the parents who trust us, the volunteers who lead us, and our members, governments, donors, and partners who sustain us. The people's voice must be heard, and it is a voice that demands a better future for every child."

CEO's Message

Armando Ali CEO, PAL Network



There is a profound, quiet power in togetherness that transcends borders and languages. It is the power that moves a global movement to ensure that every child, regardless of their background, attains the foundation for lifelong learning. At the heart of the PAL Network is a simple yet radical belief: that the responsibility for a child's education belongs to all of us.

In 2025, as we celebrated PAL@10, I was reminded of the unique spirit of our Citizen-Led Assessments (CLAs). Our process is not defined by cold statistics, but by the rhythmic sound of feet hitting the ground as dedicated citizen volunteers knock on door after door in the furthest corners of Africa, Asia, and the Americas. I have seen the commitment of these volunteers firsthand – individuals who give their time to sit on a floor or a mat to understand if a child can truly read a simple sentence or perform basic math.

In these moments, there is often a palpable apprehension from parents and caretakers. They watch with bated breath, their hopes and anxieties mirrored in their eyes as they wait to see if their child can navigate the assessment. It is a vulnerable, human interaction that no traditional school exam can replicate. Apart from the families and the volunteers, it is also important to acknowledge the tireless dedication of the PAL Network leadership and staff of our 17 member organizations, and the PAL Networks Secretariat staff across all units, who work as one unified force.

The reach of the **ICAN-ICAR** tools has been unprecedented, generating nationally representative data across 11 countries to bridge the gap for children who have remained invisible to official systems for years. However, the results from the **2025 State of Foundational Learning Report** leave no room for comfort. We found that the learning crisis remains at a critical level, a stark reality that should shake us to our core. We cannot afford to be happy or settled when millions of children still struggle with the most basic reading and math skills. The skills that made us to be here today can not be denied to other children.

Whether you are a policymaker in a high-rise office, a researcher in a lab, or a donor across the ocean, you are also a parent or a caretaker. These are not just "data points"; they are our children. I call upon every one of you to move beyond professional detachment. We must treat this crisis with the same urgency we would if it were our own child unable to read a single word. Our shared humanity demands that we refuse to be comfortable until the "invisible" child is seen, taught, and valued.

Looking ahead, we reaffirm that the CLA movement is a vital complement to government efforts, not a replacement. We are here to provide credible, granular evidence that helps systems improve. We are deepening our commitment to inclusivity by adapting our tools for children with disabilities and those in emergency contexts. Furthermore, we will continue to drive change through the My Village project, addressing the global learning crisis one village at a time.

As I conclude my address to you, I want to express my deepest gratitude to the children who inspire us, the parents who trust us, the volunteers who lead us, and our members, governments, donors, and partners who sustain us. The people's voice must be heard, and it is a voice that demands a better future for every child.

With gratitude and renewed commitment to foundational learning to ALL children.

# Board of Directors



**Dr Claudia Uribe**  
Board Chair | Distinguished  
Professor of Education,  
Tecnológico de Monterrey, Mexico



**Dr. Kadiatou Baby Maiga**  
National Co-ordinator, IDB/EAA



**Dr. Daniel Mwaringa**  
Lecturer, Technical University  
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Institute for Global Change



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



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



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



**Rose Mwaura**  
CEO, Rockville Consulting  
Limited



**Armando Ali**  
CEO, PAL Network

# Advisory Group



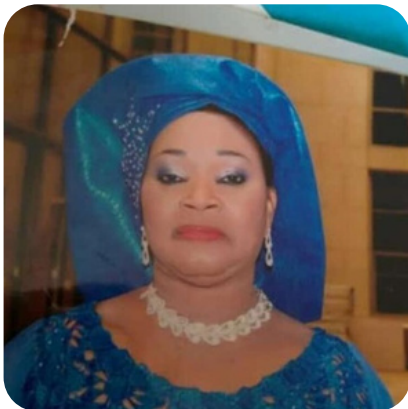
**Dr. Suman Bhattacharjea**  
Advisory Group Chair | Director of Research, Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) Centre



**David Njeng'ere**  
Chief Executive Officer, Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC)



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



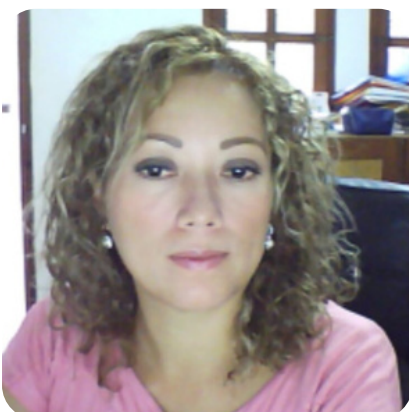
**Binta Rassouloula AW/SALL**  
Elementary Education Inspector, LARTES-IFAN



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



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



**Carla Yeneris Caballero Mondragón**  
ABACOenRed



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

### 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 organizations working to promote children’s foundational learning across Africa, Asia and America. PAL Network members conduct Citizen-Led Assessments (CLAs) and learning intervention programs (Action) aimed at improving learning outcomes.

### Our Principles

Assessment Principles	Action Principles
<b>We focus on foundational skills...</b>	
<p>We assess basic skills including reading and simple arithmetic.</p> <p>If children cannot read, they cannot move ahead -either in school or in life.</p>	<p>We use simple assessment to understand and track children’s learning progress.</p> <p>Understanding children’s learning progress is impossible without regular assessment to tailor teaching to the appropriate level.</p>
<b>...Paying attention to each individual child...</b>	
<p>We assess children orally, one-on-one.</p> <p>Pen and paper assessments assume that a child can already read. We do not make that assumption.</p>	<p>We build on the learning level of each individual child to help them progress.</p> <p>We do not assume that children of the same age are at the same level and learn at the same pace.</p>
<b>...Ensuring that no child is left behind.</b>	
<p>We assess children in their homes.</p> <p>The best place to find a representative sample of all children, whether in school or not, is in their home.</p>	<p>We ensure that all children are supported to acquire basic skills.</p> <p>We believe that every child can learn, so we develop and apply teaching methods that are adapted to the level and needs of each child.</p>

## Ten Years of Growth and Change

The PAL Network was officially formed with a dedicated secretariat established to unify members, amplify the network's collective voice, and showcase its work globally.

2015

The Research Fellowship program was launched, alongside the publication of the first major research papers utilizing multi-country data to provide a southern-led perspective on education.

2016

The Assessment to Action publication was released, showcasing 17 case studies of intervention programs implemented by members and officially setting a new frontier in delivering evidence-driven solutions to address low learning outcomes, reaching over 200,000 children to date.

2017

The International Common Assessment of Numeracy (ICAN) tool and report were launched globally, providing a robust, multi-language numeracy assessment that generates comparable numeracy data across countries.

2020

A series of Policy Dialogues was initiated to examine how current education reforms address geographical, gender, and quality-based exclusion in the Global South.

2019

The network launched the PAL Network Data Quality Standards Framework to ensure rigorous, peer-monitored data across all members.

2018

The network published its first book, *Ensuring All Children Learn*, which was launched at the second network conference, *Building Better*, bringing together participants from 40 countries to discuss learning continuity.

2021

The My Village learning intervention was launched as a network-wide project, reaching over 39,000 children across 300 villages in its first phase with the aim of combatting the global learning crisis, one Village at a time.

2022

The PAL Network's International Common Assessment of Numeracy (ICAN) was honored as a WISE Award winner for its innovative, citizen-led approach to providing reliable, comparable data across 13 countries to tackle learning poverty and align with global SDG4 standards.

2023

2025

The first Large-Scale Learning Assessment was conducted across 11 countries using the ICAN ICAR tools to provide rigorous and nationally representative evidence of learning outcomes across PAL Network member countries. This culminated with the launch of the *State of Foundational Learning in the Global South* report during the Evidence for Action Forum held in Nairobi.

2024

PAL Network played a central role in the inaugural EAC Regional Education Conference and launched the global Measure Early, Measure All, Measure Well campaign to safeguard the SDG 4.1.1(a) indicator.





# Key Highlights

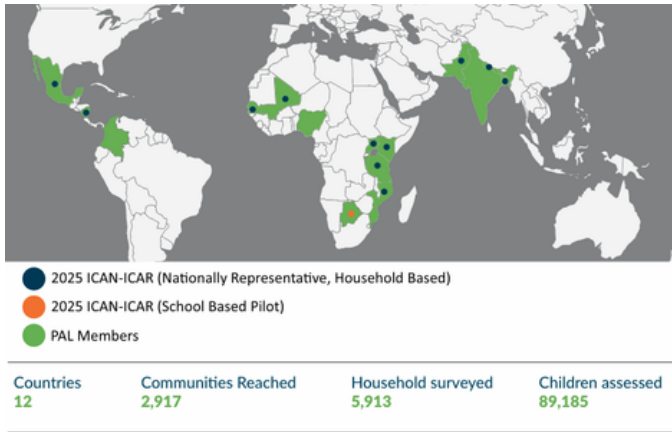


Table 2.2: Sample Description

Countries	Enumeration Areas (n)	Household surveyed (n)	Children Surveyed (n)	Children Assessed (n)
Bangladesh	275	5,499	6,664	6,479
Kenya	222	4,459	7,076	6,669
Mali	200	3,882	10,091	9,588
Mexico	334	5,480	8,351	8,150
Mozambique	255	5,082	8,255	8,022
Nepal	191	3,820	4,801	4,694
Nicaragua	361	6,731	7,310	6,230
Pakistan	283	6,318	10,510	9,202
Senegal	202	4,059	9,117	8,098
Tanzania	372	7,220	14,796	13,167
Uganda	222	4,363	9,531	8,886

### The State of Foundational Learning in the Global South Report

Children in low-resource settings particularly those who are out of school or living in marginalized communities have remained “invisible” in official data systems for years. Through ICAN-ICAR data, the PAL Network has helped bridge this gap by ensuring that citizen-led evidence collected in children’s homes across Africa, Asia, and the Americas is recognized as a high-quality metric for global reporting. The launch of *The State of Foundational Learning in the Global South: 2025 Report* in November 2025, this milestone further establishes the PAL Network as a global benchmark for evidence-based advocacy and action. Implemented at an unprecedented scale across 11 countries, generating nationally representative data on children’s foundational learning levels in reading and mathematics.

To ensure this data carries weight on the global stage, the ICAN-ICAR tools have been mapped to the *Global Proficiency Framework (GPF)* and aligned with the Criteria for use of an assessment to report on SDG 4.1.1(a) published by the UNESCO Institute for Statistics. By meeting rigorous international standards for comparability, reliability, and construct validity, the PAL Network provides a robust and granular view of foundational learning.

While the 2025 findings confirm that the learning crisis remains at a critical level, our collective ability to measure and analyze it has strengthened significantly. Through enhanced collaboration across the Global South, the PAL Network is not only identifying learning gaps but also equipping governments and international decision-makers with credible, comparable evidence to inform policy reform and targeted resource allocation.

**PAL NETWORK**  
People's Action for Learning

## The State of Foundational Learning in the Global South: 2025 Report

Data for Action on SDG 4.1.1(a) using ICAN-ICAR Tools

Partners: ASER (India, Pakistan, Kenya), Bejjunko, Kujawoo, ITPC, USAWA, Kwezo, Youth Impact, Vida.



**Celebrating A Movement: Redefining Global Education Accountability**

The year 2025 marked a historic milestone for the PAL Network: the celebration of PAL@10 as a global network and a reflection on a movement that has redefined educational accountability across the Global South. Before the PAL Network was consolidated, organizations pioneered a shift in the global discourse, successfully bringing the quality of learning to the center of the education agenda. From informing the adoption of SDG 4 to shaping the Call to Action to Transform

Foundational Learning outcomes, the movement has transformed grassroots activism into a sophisticated global force. This evolution culminated into the development of robust, comparable tools, ICAN and ICAR, which have moved the needle from localized data collection to monitoring global proficiency standards.



The richness of the movement was demonstrated at the Evidence for Action Forum, which served as the global stage for the launch of the State of Foundational Learning in the Global South: 2025 Report.

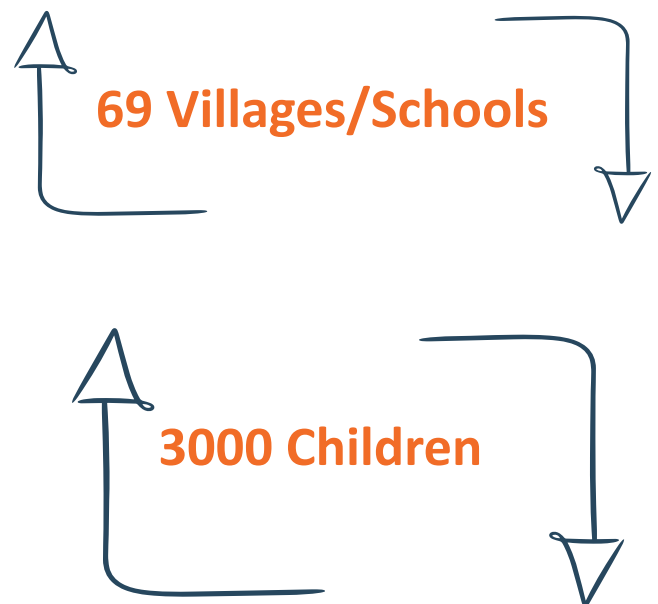


### Transforming Foundational Learning through the My Village

My Village project continues to serve as a cornerstone of the PAL Network’s community-driven learning intervention. The third phase of the project was implemented in 69 Villages (18 in Nepal and 51 in Tanzania) with the aim of addressing the learning crisis through a multi-faceted approach that includes assessments, learning camps, parental involvement, and local libraries. In Tanzania, the Ludewa District Education Office extended its support to 10 local schools. 123 volunteers (39 Nepal and 84 Tanzania) were involved reaching over 3000 children.

The **impact evaluations** from Phase 2 in Tanzania and Nepal have provided compelling evidence of the program's effectiveness, particularly for the most marginalized learners. After participating in learning camps, over 90% of the lowest-performing children improved by at least one proficiency level in literacy or numeracy. The program also closed wealth-based learning gaps and challenged traditional gender disparities. In Tanzania, findings revealed that girls consistently outperformed boys in advanced tasks, while in Nepal, the progress remained balanced across genders. The data highlighted the out-of-school children in Tanzania, who demonstrated strong results in advanced tasks when provided with inclusive, community-supported environments.

The project also underscored the critical role of the home environment in sustaining educational success. Baseline findings identified maternal education and household wealth as key predictors of learning, yet they also highlighted the profound impact of paternal engagement. Fathers’ involvement in their children's learning emerged as a transformative factor, emphasizing the need for shared caregiving and stronger household engagement. By integrating life skills sessions and SMS-based parental support, My Village highlighted the importance of shifting the responsibility of education from the school alone to the entire community. These outcomes prove that with inclusive strategies and collective effort, it is possible to create a world where every child, regardless of their background or schooling status, attains the foundational skills required for life-long learning.

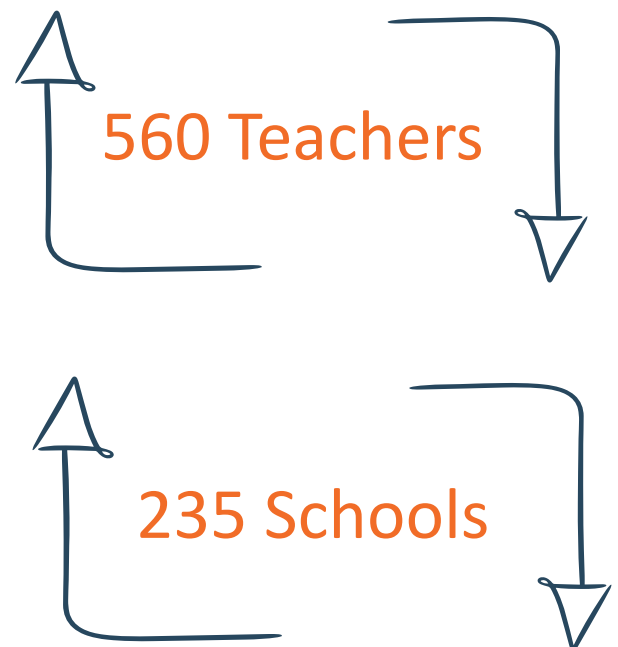
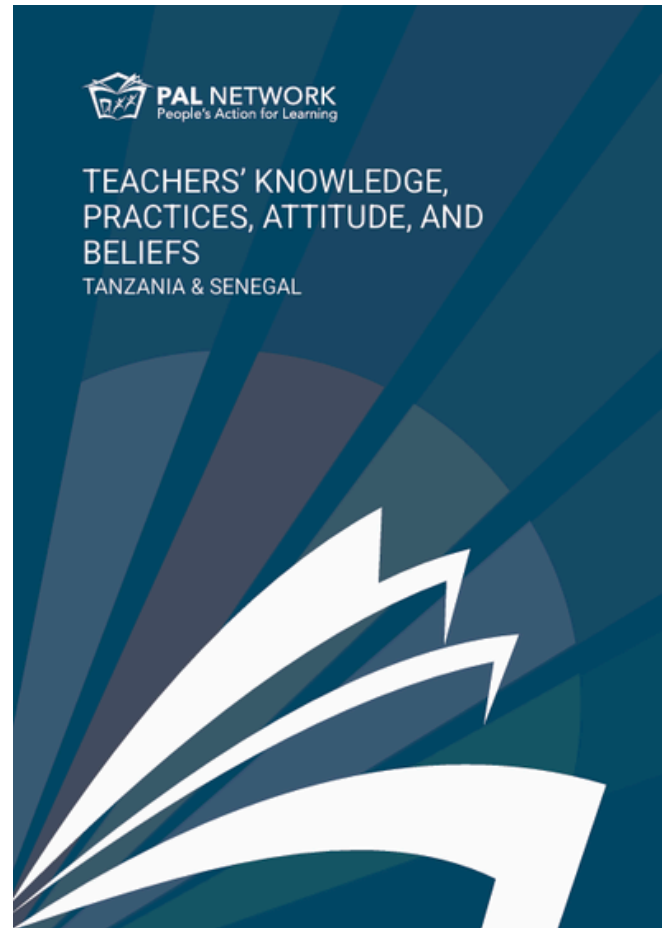


**From Belief to Practice: Insights from the Multi-Country KAPB Study**

The multi-country study examining the Knowledge, Attitudes, Practices, and Beliefs (KAPB) of early grade teachers engaged in structured pedagogy programs, specifically My Village in Tanzania and Ndaw Wune in Senegal was concluded. With coordination from Uwezo Tanzania and LARTES Senegal, the research engaged over 560 teachers across 235 schools using a mixed-methods approach of data collection that included surveys, focus groups, and classroom observations. By comparing Tanzania, where training occurred a year prior, with Senegal, where it concluded just two months earlier, the study provided critical evidence on how pedagogical shifts take root and sustain over time.

The findings revealed a profound "belief-to-practice gap." While targeted training successfully shifted mindsets leading to a 22% increase in active student-centered behaviors in Senegal and a reinvigorated belief in Tanzania that every child can learn, this optimism often faced significant "friction" when translated to daily classroom reality. The study found that while teachers successfully adopted visible routines, such as grouping students by ability and utilizing new teaching aids, more complex adaptive practices like differentiated feedback remained challenging. Teachers reported that their newfound motivation was frequently tested by systemic barriers, including overcrowded classrooms, a lack of consistent materials, and a lack of alignment with school leadership.

The KAPB study underscores a vital lesson for the network's 2025–2030 strategy: effective pedagogical change is not a one-off event but a longitudinal process. To turn belief into action, the report advocates for institutional investments, such as ongoing coaching, peer learning networks, and head-teacher engagement, to bridge the gap between what teachers know and what they are empowered to do.



### Pioneering Inclusivity through Adaptive Assessment Framework: Social-Emotional Learning

During the year, the PAL Network expanded the scope of its measurement tools to capture the whole child, recognizing that foundational literacy and numeracy are deeply intertwined with a child's social and emotional well-being. 2025 saw the launch of a major initiative to integrate Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) into PAL's assessment frameworks, ensuring that we measure not only academic skills but also the core competencies such as resilience, empathy, and self-regulation essential for lifelong success. This is particularly vital for the most marginalized learners, including children in crisis-affected regions and those currently out of school, whose educational journeys are often shaped by severe social and emotional stressors. The tools will be piloted in Bangladesh and Uganda in the coming year.

To ensure these new tools are culturally grounded and contextually relevant, a workshop was held involving participants from 15 member countries to identify priority SEL domains tailored to local realities across the Global South. These insights are now being synthesized into a shared yet adaptable framework that respects local diversity while allowing for global learning. Simultaneously, the network has focused on enhancing the inclusivity of its existing ICAN and ICAR tools. This includes developing specialized adaptations for Education in Emergencies (EiE) and creating accessible formats for children with disabilities, such as those with visual or hearing impairments.

### Nurturing Global Talent Through the PAL Network Research Fellowship

In a major step toward strengthening the evidence base for foundational learning, the PAL Network implemented its 2025 Research Fellowship Program. The initiative, designed to foster a new generation of researchers from the Global South, attracted significant interest, with a total of 60 proposals received from across our member countries. Four exceptional fellows were selected and embedded within the Network's core Assessment, Action, and Research units.

The fellows delivered the following outputs; first, they established a comprehensive documentation framework and conducted a desk review to verify and consolidate all network action programs; second, provided technical support for data analysis, management, and reporting for network projects including the ICAN-ICAR assessments the PAL-ELANA project and the My Village project and third, supported in the development of specialized assessment modules for Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), Education in Emergencies, and Disability Inclusion.

### Amplifying the Voice of the Network

PAL Network expanded its advocacy and communication efforts, leveraging multimedia storytelling to bring the data-driven insights of our members to a global audience. These initiatives were designed to bridge the gap between data and the human stories of hope and resilience that define the work of the network across the Global South.

All Children Learning: the [PAL Network Documentary](#) tells the story of a global movement of citizens dedicated to ensuring no child is left behind. By following volunteers into households across various countries, the documentary captures the rigorous process of conducting citizen-led assessments (CLAs) and the profound interactions with families that follow. It highlights the systemic challenges children face in accessing quality education while showcasing the transformative power of collective action and community involvement in identifying and addressing learning gaps.

The [Evidence Compass Podcast Series](#) aimed to deepen the global dialogue on educational equity. The six-part series amplifies the voices of PAL member organizations across 15 countries, providing a platform for practitioners to share their localized strategies for closing foundational learning gaps. By documenting two decades of community-led progress, the podcast serves as an archive of how citizens are generating the necessary data to hold systems accountable and advocate for every child's right to a foundation for lifelong learning.



Evidence Compass  
PAL Network Podcast



Documentary: All Children Learning



### Strengthening Organizational Resilience Through Robust Governance for the 2025–2030 Strategy

Robust governance structures were put in place to oversee the implementation of 2025-2030 strategic plan. Central to this transformation was the appointment of new board members and a new Board Chair, bringing fresh expertise and diverse regional perspectives to the network's highest level of oversight. To ensure seamless integration and high-level performance, the Board underwent comprehensive governance training and rigorous evaluations, reinforcing a culture of transparency, accountability, and strategic leadership.

Following board approval, the 2025–2030 Strategy was presented to members at the 7th AGM in April 2025. To deliver the strategy, a revised organogram was also approved, optimizing staff alignment and capacity, ensuring that the Secretariat is fully equipped to facilitate the implementation of its mission across three continents.

### Expanding Global Alliances Through Partnerships

PAL Network deepened its academic and technical collaborations by formalizing a new tier of academic collaboration. The network established strategic engagements with three research institutions: DataFirst at the University of Cape Town, York University, and the Institute of Development and Economic Alternatives (IDEAS) in Pakistan. These partnerships are designed to move beyond traditional data collection, focusing instead on the co-creation of knowledge and the rigorous secondary analysis of our multi-country datasets.

A centerpiece of this expansion was the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with DataFirst, a partnership specifically dedicated to advancing open data practices. This collaboration ensures that our Citizen-Led Assessment (CLA) data is managed with the highest technical standards, making it more accessible for deeper analysis by researchers worldwide. The network has advanced discussions with York University to formalize an agreement and continues to engage with IDEAS to identify concrete collaborative areas. These partnerships will ensure that the evidence generated at the community level is translated into the high-level policy insights needed to drive systemic change in foundational literacy and numeracy.



### Diversifying the Funding Landscape: Strategic Resource Mobilization and an Expanded Donor Pool

During the year, the PAL Network bolstered its financial sustainability by cultivating a more diverse donor ecosystem. A highlight of the year was the Donor Roundtable, hosted during the PAL Evidence for Action Forum in Nairobi. This convening brought together existing and prospective partners, providing a platform for donors to reaffirm their confidence in the network's mission.

This year also marked the formalization of critical partnerships with three prominent global foundations, each bringing unique expertise to our mission:

**Hempel Foundation:** This partnership focuses on deepening regional impact, by supporting our work in the Large-Scale assessments ensuring that local evidence leads to localized action. This collaboration supports our advocacy efforts in ensuring that PAL Network data and interventions are directly aligned with local and global educational priorities.

**Porticus Foundation:** The partnership with Porticus focuses on the development of specialized assessment modules. This collaboration aims to refine how researchers measure the "whole child," including social and emotional competencies alongside foundational learning, with attention to all children in the margins.

**Education Cannot Wait (ECW):** Our engagement with ECW has been instrumental in adapting PAL Network tools for Education in Emergencies (EiE). In addition to technical alignment, this partnership has strengthened our institutional safeguards, with the network successfully implementing comprehensive Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) reporting frameworks and awareness campaigns across our digital platforms.

### Strategic Advancement of Gender Intentionality and Inclusion

The network made significant strides in the development of its Gender Strategy; a roadmap designed to transform the network from a gender-sensitive into a gender-intentional organization. Building on the network's recognition of the distinct structural barriers faced by girls and boys, Phase One was concluded through a comprehensive mapping exercise. This included a desk review of global trends, bilateral consultations with the Secretariat, and an online survey of the 17 member organizations to identify existing best practices and resource gaps.

An in-person workshop held during the April AGM allowed members to validate the [survey report](#) and thereafter, a [workshop report](#) was put together providing the foundational insights used to co-create the strategy's vision and mission. In Phase Two, a draft strategy that aligns with the broader 2025–2030 Strategic Plan was finalized incorporating a detailed gender roadmap and intersectional "gender scorecards" to monitor disparities in educational access and performance.





# Member's Updates

**ASER Nepal: Building Learning Ecosystems**



ASER Nepal implemented My Village, a community-based program designed to address the persistent gap in basic reading and math skills among children aged 5–16, despite school enrollment. The program currently operates in 15 villages in Sarlahi district, reaching 1,800+ children with the support of 30 dedicated local volunteers.

A key feature of the initiative is the Accelerated Learning Camps (ALCs), which deliver 60-day intensive literacy and numeracy sessions for struggling, marginalized, and out-of-school children. The program also employs community mobile libraries, weekly SMS and phone mentoring for caregivers, and life skills sessions for adolescents.

These interventions have produced measurable outcomes: the percentage of children unable to recognize alphabets has fallen to below 1%, while those unable to identify single-digit numbers decreased to 1.29%. By empowering local youth and volunteers as facilitators, ASER Nepal is fostering sustainable community learning ecosystems, where parents and community representatives actively participate in supporting children’s educational progress.

Through My Village, ASER Nepal continues to demonstrate that locally led, inclusive, and targeted interventions can significantly improve foundational learning outcomes and build a culture of education ownership within communities.



**ASER Pakistan Addressing the Education Emergency**



ASER Pakistan continued to spearhead the monitoring of foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) for children aged 5–16, revealing critical trends in the nation's learning journey. Longitudinal data from 2012 to 2025 indicates a positive trajectory in English literacy, with achievement reaching a peak of 54% for males and 49% for females who can read at least words in recent cycles. Similarly, numeracy skills have shown a promising recovery following previous decline; currently, approximately 49% of males and 45% of females demonstrate the ability to solve two-digit subtraction. Despite these gains, 2025 efforts remain heavily focused on bridging the gender gap in schooling, as recent data highlights ongoing regional disparities with male enrollment at 58% compared to 42% for females in government schools.

ASER Pakistan has also strengthened its engagement with global learning measurement efforts by linking locally generated citizen-led assessment data with international conversations on foundational learning. Furthermore, through collaborative engagement with the government and international partners, Pakistan is advancing its participation in global learning metrics under SDG 4.1.1a.



## TEP Centre Empowering Teachers



TEP Centre advanced its mission across Sub-Saharan Africa by bridging the gap between learning assessments and classroom instruction through targeted teacher professional development. Building on three pilot interventions; the Integrated Teacher Capacity Development Project (ITCDP), the Assessment-Informed Instruction (A-I-I) Project, and the Using Assessment for Learning (Error Analysis) to Enhance Numeracy Instruction Project, the organisation focused on equipping educators with the skills to interpret formative classroom data and move decisively away from uniform, one-size-fits-all teaching models.

These initiatives have successfully transformed how teachers address foundational learning gaps. By utilising data-informed lesson planning and participatory pedagogy, educators achieved measurable gains in learner engagement and skill. A key outcome in 2025 was the increased confidence among teachers in diagnosing specific learner errors, allowing them to use mistakes as personalised instruction opportunities.

This shift in pedagogical approach has had a tangible impact on learning outcomes. Teachers are now better equipped to tailor their instruction to the distinct needs of individual learners, ensuring that those struggling with foundational concepts receive targeted support rather than being left behind by pace-driven curricula. By closing the gap between assessment data and classroom practice, TEP Centre is building a generation of educators who are not only more skilled but also more confident in their ability to drive meaningful, measurable learning gains for every child.



## IID Promoting Youth-Led Accountability



In 2025, the Institute of Informatics and Development (IID) continued its work to support more accountable and inclusive education systems in Bangladesh through citizen-led evidence, youth engagement, and policy dialogue. In partnership with the PAL Network, IID implemented the International Common Assessment of Numeracy and Reading (ICAN-ICAR), contributing to one of the country's broadest community-based snapshots of foundational learning. The assessment covered all 8 divisions, 64 districts, and 275 villages, surveying 5,499 households and assessing 6,479 children. IID also brought these findings into national policy conversations, engaging government representatives, policymakers, Members of Parliament, and education stakeholders to help keep foundational learning and classroom realities visible in ongoing reform discussions. IID also worked with young people on issues of rights, inclusion, and accountability through initiatives such as the Policy Hackathon and the Policy Action Grant. These processes engaged 500+ youth, contributing to the development of 13 locally grounded solutions and 15 co-created action plans. Several initiatives supported practical community-level changes, including the formation of anti-harassment committees in 21 schools, support for reconnecting more than 300 Indigenous students with their mother tongues, and education support reaching over 400 children living in urban slums.

The Youth Manifesto provided a platform for young people to collectively articulate priorities for a more inclusive and just society, drawing on youth expressions that emerged during the July 2024 movement.

Alongside its programme work, IID also began an internal Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) audit in late 2025 to strengthen inclusion within the organisation and across its work.



**Usawa Agenda Championing Educational Justice**



In 2025, Usawa Agenda conducted its 2nd Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (FLANA), a citizen-led assessment designed to measure literacy and numeracy skills among children aged 10-15 years, as well as children in Grades 3 to 9 up to age 17. The assessment covered all 47 counties in Kenya reaching 41,156 households and assessing over 49,835 children from 1,527 primary schools, making it one of the most comprehensive independent learning assessments in country.

The assessment examined how school factors and household factors shape learning outcomes across the basic education sector. Findings reveal that Kenya continues to face learning challenges: only 4 in 10 Grade 5 learners can read and comprehend a Grade 3-level English story, with performance falling to 2 in 10 learners in marginalised regions such as North Eastern Kenya. Usawa Agenda spotlighted a critical STEM teacher shortage, with 79% of junior school teachers trained in humanities, leaving 35% of these schools without a single science teacher.

These findings underscore the urgent need for sustained policy action and investment to advance education justice, ensuring that every child in Kenya, regardless of location, background, or school type acquires the foundational skills necessary to thrive.



**Uwezo Tanzania Closing the Wealth Gap**



Uwezo Tanzania implemented "My Village" (Kijiji Changu) project, which utilized the Teaching at the Right Level inspired approach, a learner-centered pedagogy that groups children by proficiency rather than grade level.

Results from 2024–2025 cycles showed that 30 days of targeted, play-based instruction led to a 24-percentage point gain in numeracy and a 25-percentage point gain in literacy across participants. Deeper analysis from the data showed that the intervention bridged equity gaps, with 86% of children from the poorest households advancing by at least one proficiency level.



**(Inter) National Conference on What Works in Girls' Education: "Breaking Barriers, Building Futures: Evidence & Action for Girls' Education"**



In October 2025, Uwezo Uganda hosted the inaugural National Conference on What Works in Girls' Education in Kampala, Uganda, in partnership with **Kyambogo University's** School of Education, the University of Cambridge's Research for Equitable Access and Learning (**REAL**) Centre, and the Uganda Chapter of the Regional Education Learning Initiative Africa (**RELI-Africa**), launched by Uganda's Minister of State for Primary Education and concluded by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Sports, the conference brought together 237 participants from 22 countries and 111 organisations. Over 100 presentations showcased evidence and innovative strategies to improve education outcomes, especially for girls. The conference **communique** and full report are available [here](#).



**Mizizi Elimu Measuring Life skills and Values**



Mizizi Elimu Afrika advanced the ALIVE (Action for Life Skills and Values in East Africa) initiative, moving from regional assessment to systemic integration across Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. A central achievement of this period was the establishment of formal partnerships with national curriculum and teacher-training institutions, embedding life skills and values directly into official national frameworks.

The initiative’s impact has been widespread, with over 1,039 system actors trained to design and utilize high-quality life-skills assessments. This capacity-building effort is supported by the ALIVE Academy and an open-source platform that has already seen global interest. Furthermore, Mizizi has fostered deep community ownership by engaging over 17,000 parents and 30,000 head teachers in advocacy, bridging the gap between policy and classroom practice.



**ASER Centre Measuring Digital Skills**



ASER Centre released the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2024, conducted across 29 states and union territories in India. This included 605 districts and 17,997 villages, assessing nearly 650,000 children to provide critical insights into post-COVID learning recovery. A key highlight of the 2024 report is the clear recovery in reading and strong gains in arithmetic among Grade III students compared to 2022 levels.

ASER 2024 included smartphone-based tasks to assess digital skills among youth aged 14–16. This module revealed that a significant majority of youth can successfully perform digital tasks, such as finding instructional videos or browsing for information.



**MIA A.C. Breaking the Cycle of Violence**



MIA A.C. Mexico made significant strides in fostering gender equality and human rights to eradicate school violence through its innovative methodological proposal. Recognizing that while official curricula include socio-emotional skills, teachers often lack clear implementation tools, MIA A.C. developed accessible materials and strategies for educational centers to bridge this gap.

The program’s progress was highlighted by several key achievements, starting with its methodological impact. The initiative successfully transitioned from assessment to action by training secondary and high school students to serve as facilitators, who then led school fairs and workshops in local primary schools. This approach drove accelerated participation, with engagement exceeding expectations as the number of participants increased by nearly 300%.

The program delivered proven learning gains; comparative evaluations showed a marked shift in knowledge, where the majority of participants who initially answered only four questions correctly in the pre-test reached seven or eight correct answers in the post-test. Digital innovation also played a crucial role, as social media—specifically WhatsApp—was successfully integrated as a tool for delivering educational activities to children and adolescents.



**MIA's global excellence in preventing learning loss and recovering basic learning skills**



Medición Independiente de Aprendizajes (MIA) Mexico has made progress in its mission to reduce learning gaps and poverty in basic education through its innovative “MIA Learning Camps” initiative, reaching a significant milestone by being recognized as one of the sixteen best educational initiatives worldwide. Following a successful expansion between 2020 and 2024, during which reading and math proficiency increased by 9% and 13%, respectively, among 318,266 children (in terms of the magnitude of the effect on performance, they advanced approximately one academic year in reading and a year and a half in math over a three-month period), by 2025–2026 the program will serve more than 61,270 students in the states of Veracruz, Chihuahua, and Guerrero.

To promote the inclusion of indigenous children and adolescents, MIA launched Learning Camps in the Tsotsil language (bats'i k'op), using culturally relevant teaching methods to help reduce educational inequality and improve basic learning skills.

MIA also underwent a significant strategic shift toward systemic integration by transferring the technical capabilities of its methodology to the formal education system. This effort is supported by the Ministry of Public Education (SEP) and the Unit for the Teacher Career System (USICAMM). To help with this change, the initiative has trained over 70,170 educators through the México X virtual platform, more than 4,945 via the Learning Management System, and over 7,720 in face-to-face and synchronous settings. This allows teachers to earn points toward their professional development while mastering the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach, ensuring the program's long-term impact within the formal school system.



**GLOT Promoting Literacy for Peace** 

GLOT Colombia has made significant progress in advancing its initiative “LiteracyPaz Kit: Playing for Peace, Writing the Future,” which evolved from the original Literacy+ Kit prototype developed in 2020. This student-centered methodology promotes the right to education by teaching reading through play, incorporating a pedagogical approach oriented toward peacebuilding. The kit integrates historical memory, a gender perspective, peace and reconciliation, as well as territorial approaches that respond to the realities and needs of the Colombian context.

During the year, GLOT continued strengthening partnerships with key actors at national and international levels, and participated in various training and exchange spaces in Mexico, Chile, and Brazil, promoting cooperation and shared learning with strategic partners across the region. Additionally, GLOT has been working on the development of its Literacy Research Center, aimed at generating evidence, strengthening pedagogical innovation, and contributing to the advancement of inclusive and context-based literacy practices.



**OMAES' Community libraries as drivers of learning in Mali**



In response to the learning crisis in Mali, OMAES has expanded its innovative 'Yeelenkènè' initiative, a network of community libraries transformed into dynamic and accessible learning spaces for children. Previous assessments have highlighted a worrying reality: many pupils, particularly those in Year 2, were unable to read a simple sentence. The Yeelenkènè initiative was designed to address this challenge by creating accessible learning environments where children can strengthen their basic reading skills outside the school setting.

To address this challenge, OMAES has developed an approach that places the community at the heart of improving the quality of education. Through Yeelenkènè, community libraries are transformed into learning centres run by local volunteers and supported by school management committees. This model fosters local ownership and encourages the involvement of parents and community leaders in supporting children's learning, including outside the traditional school setting.

The results observed over the past year are encouraging, particularly in the area of accelerated learning. After just one year of the programme, children participating in Yeelenkènè activities showed significant progress in basic reading: 59.1% of children had acquired letter or sound recognition, compared to 53.1% among those without access to the initiative.

One of the programme's strengths lies in its child-centred educational approach. Thanks to educational kits comprising storybooks, educational games and learning materials adapted to the local context, children learn through interactive and fun activities. The Yeelenkènè experience demonstrates that when communities are engaged and learning becomes participatory, rapid and sustainable progress is possible.



**Facilidade-ICDS Reducing Absenteeism**



FACILIDADE – ICDS in Mozambique made significant progress in 2025 in improving the quality of educational outcomes, engaging citizens in reducing absenteeism among teachers and school managers through its innovative 'SMS-Alerta' monitoring system. Operating in Nampula province, the initiative strengthens the capacity of school councils to monitor the attendance and punctuality of teachers and school managers, communicating the data in real time to government authorities, including the District Services for Education, Youth and Technology (SDEJT) and the Provincial Directorate of Education (DPE).

Data from 2024–2025 show a transformative impact: teacher absenteeism fell by 50% in just one year of implementation at specific sites, such as Metocheria Primary School – Círculo, in the district of Monapo. Comparative results between the end of 2023 and 2024 show that monthly absenteeism levels fell from 100% to approximately 60%. By promoting evidence-based dialogue between citizens and decision-makers, FACILIDADE – ICDS is increasing transparency and strengthening the accountability of all stakeholders in the education and learning system.



**LARTES-IFAN Applying a Multilingual Approach**



LARTES-IFAN has reached a significant milestone in Senegal by establishing a continuous assessment system that tracks pupils’ progress from nursery school through to primary school. As part of the 2025 ICAN/ICARe national assessment, conducted among 4,000 households across the country’s 14 regions, one of the key innovations was the integration of a bilingual assessment protocol covering French and six national languages: Wolof, Pulaar, Seereer, Soninké, Mandinka and Diola.

The data revealed that when given the choice, 39% of the more than 8,000 children assessed as part of the ICAN/ICARe chose to be tested in a national language rather than in French. This result is largely attributable to the gradual introduction of teaching in national languages in Senegalese primary schools over the past eight years, with particularly widespread adoption in the regions of Diourbel, Louga and Matam.

This assessment provides a unique empirical basis for monitoring SDG 4.1.1(a) and directly informs national policy on bilingual education.



**The VidA programme expands nationwide thanks to Genuine Cooperation**



The VidA program, managed by the Pedagogical Foundation "Genuine Cooperation" (FUPECG) and implemented through Learnings Based on Genuine Cooperation (ÁBACOenRed), expanded its scope in 2025 by completing its first large-scale national evaluation using the international ICAN–ICAR tools. Initially developed as a pilot experience in Estelí, the process was extended nationwide, reaching 6,227 children from 6,725 households. This progress is based on the philosophy of Genuine Cooperation, which integrates valuation, innovation and educational articulation.

A key factor in the achievements of this process was the cooperation of the Ministry of Education (MINED), through the Directorate of Teacher Training and the eight public Normal Schools of Higher Education in the country. This articulation allowed the participation of 439 volunteer student teachers and 115 professional educators, who carried out the learning assessments in the homes. It also had the support of 361 leaders of the communities visited.

The data generated by ICAR–ICAN 2025 will contribute to the dialogue on education policies and practices at local, national and global levels, and will contribute relevant information to the international minimum proficiency benchmarks set out in SDG 4.1.1(a).



**Youth Impact: Scaling Evidence-Based Foundational Learning with Governments** 

In 2025, Youth Impact advanced evidence-based foundational literacy and numeracy programs in partnership with governments across five countries. Its work is guided by three pillars: youth, evidence, and scaling through government systems.

In Botswana, Youth Impact reached its tenth of ten regions and is now on a path to national scale. Under its agreement with the Government of Botswana, Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) is being integrated into every primary school nationwide. In Namibia, Youth Impact supported the expansion of TaRL from five to nine regions in 2025, marking progress toward national coverage. Youth Impact is also scaling TaRL and/or ConnectEd—a phone-based targeted instruction program—in the Philippines, South Africa, and India through government partnerships. In Karnataka state, India, more than 50,000 teachers were trained in 2025 to deliver phone-based targeted instruction as part of a statewide rollout. The organization also successfully implemented pilots in Ethiopia and Afghanistan.

In 2025, Youth Impact continued rigorous evaluation and experimentation across its programs. A recent analysis demonstrated the “TaRL effect,” showing the program quadruples learning rates: in just 20 days, students gained an average of 1.2 learning levels, compared to 0.28 under standard schooling. Youth Impact also conducted termly A/B tests to optimize its FLN programming, supported partners to carry out A/B testing, and contributed to PAL’s ICAN/ICAR multi-country assessment through a report on the state of learning in Botswana.





# Donor Spotlight



A key partner in institutional growth, Echidna Giving supports our organizational effectiveness, the rigorous implementation of the ICAN and ICAR large-scale assessments, and the development of the network's first comprehensive gender strategy.



Focusing on advocacy and regional impact, the Hempel Foundation supports our work in assessments ensuring that local evidence leads to localized action. The foundation supports capacity development at the secretariat level to leverage the collective voice of the PAL Network members.



A champion of holistic development of every child, Porticus supports the integration of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) into our frameworks, ensuring that our assessments capture the "whole child." They champion our agenda on inclusion when it comes to foundational learning assessment.



Our partnership with ECW focuses on Education in Emergencies (EiE), helping us adapt our tools to reach children in crisis-affected areas and ensuring the highest standards of protection and safeguarding.



Based at the University of Oxford, the Hub collaborates with us on research initiatives, utilizing PAL Network data to identify the most effective and cost-efficient interventions for improving foundational learning.

## Gates Foundation

Their support is central to our advocacy and partnership efforts, with a specific focus on organizational effectiveness, positioning CLA in global platforms and strengthening the capacity of member countries across Africa to analyse their data and communicate the evidence.



Providing critical general organizational support, Wellspring enables the Secretariat to maintain a stable and flexible foundation, ensuring PAL Network can respond quickly to emerging challenges and opportunities. It enabled a comprehensive leadership training for the management team.



Through the PAL-ELANA (Early Learning and Numeracy Assessment) initiative, IDRC supports our research into foundational learning assessment tools development, helping the creation of ICAR tool used in the large-scale assessment in 12 countries.



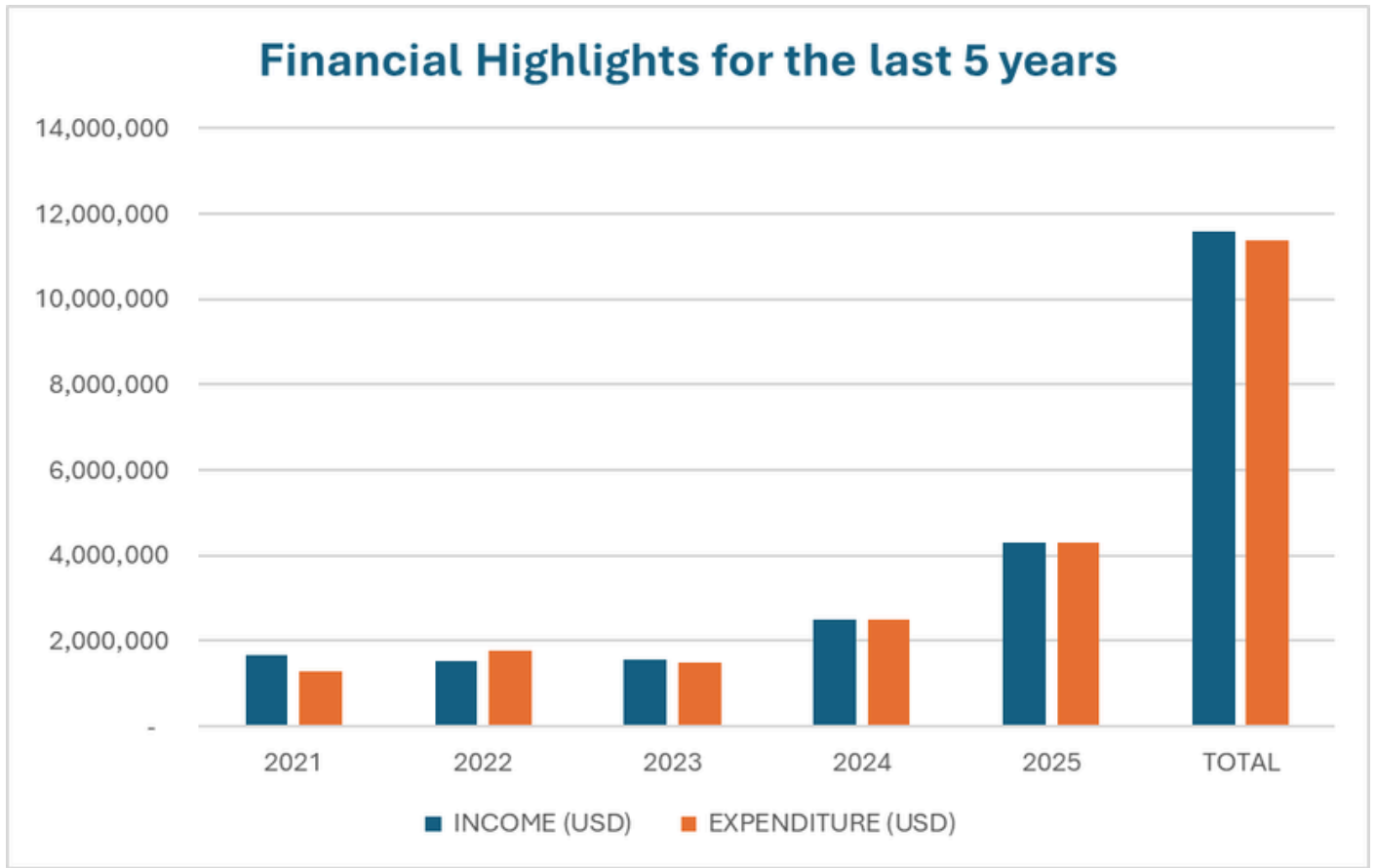
Foreign, Commonwealth  
& Development Office

FCDO provides essential organizational support and is a primary backer of the ICAN and ICAR large-scale assessments, ensuring our tools meet the highest global standards for data reliability. It supported our efforts in positioning CLAs has trusted tools to monitor SDG 4.1.1a



# Financial Highlights

INCOME	FY 2025 (USD)	FY 2024 (USD)
Grant Receipts	4,205,823	2,350,191
Other Incomes	97,909	160,571
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>4,303,732</b>	<b>2,510,762</b>
EXPENDITURE	FY 2025 (USD)	FY 2024 (USD)
<b>PROGRAM COSTS</b>		
<b>Focus Areas</b>		
Assessment: Reliable and inclusive disaggregated data on the status of foundational learning is regularly produced and analysed through CLAs.	2,458,145	831,523
Action: The network's efforts to improve foundational learning through piloting and scaling citizen-led actions are documented, compared, and strengthened.	150,185	176,845
<b>Sub-Total Focus Areas</b>	<b>2,608,330</b>	<b>1,008,368</b>
<b>Focus Areas (Cross-Cutting)</b>		
Research: Data from CLAs and citizen-led actions result in additional reports and publications that contribute to the global evidence base on the status of, and what works to improve, foundational learning.	405,315	324,771
Communication & Advocacy: Data and insights from CLAs and citizen-led actions are regularly published and widely communicated to advocate for change in policy and practice at regional and global levels.	284,353	128,161
<b>Sub-Total Focus Areas (Cross-Cutting)</b>	<b>689,668</b>	<b>452,932</b>
<b>Enablers</b>		
Effective Governance	141,609	164,898
Adequate Financial Resources	9,225	10,855
Efficient Financial Management	9,879	0
Engaged and Active Members	39,025	40,462
Highly Skilled Secretariat	2,605	0
Effective Monitoring, Evaluation, Learning and Sharing (MELS)	1,152	4,247
<b>Sub-Total Enablers</b>	<b>203,495</b>	<b>220,462</b>
<b>TOTAL PROGRAM COSTS</b>	<b>3,501,493</b>	<b>1,681,762</b>
<b>Personnel and Administration</b>		
Personnel - Right personnel put in place to deliver programs outputs and outcomes,	731,907	720,584
Admin - Operational, admin and other other indirect costs procured and paid on time	70,332	108,416
<b>TOTAL PERSONNEL AND OPERATIONAL COST</b>	<b>802, 239</b>	<b>829,000</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>4,303,732</b>	<b>2,510,762</b>
Fund Surplus for the year	0	0
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION	FY 2025 (USD)	FY 2024 (USD)
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Non-Current Assets	17,339	23,110
Cash and cash equivalents	1,824,224	1,118,531
Current Assets	138,350	139,580
<b>Sub-Total Assets</b>	<b>1,979,913</b>	<b>1,281,221</b>
<b>Liabilities</b>		
Less: Account Payable	251,102	79,536
Less: Deferred Income	778,704	343,536
<b>Sub-Total Liabilities</b>	<b>1,029,806</b>	<b>423,072</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<b>950,108</b>	<b>858,150</b>
REPRESENTED BY	FY 2025 (USD)	FY 2024 (USD)
General Fund Balance	439,540	628,597
Unrestricted Organisation Funds	510,568	229,553
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>950,108</b>	<b>858,150</b>







# ANNUAL REPORT 2025



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