



My Village

Project Report

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Background

In the past decade and a half, the PAL Network has assessed the reading and math competencies of over 9 million children to provide reliable estimates of children's foundational learning in PAL countries. This evidence has shown that schooling does not equal learning. Many children go through multiple years of formal education without learning the basics of reading and math. Before COVID-19, 617 million children worldwide did not possess foundational skills of reading and basic math of which 202 million were from Sub-Saharan Africa. Assessments by PAL members, such as Uwezo assessments, have shown that almost 50% of school-aged children are unable to read and comprehend a simple sentence.

COVID-19 and prolonged school closures through 2020 and 2021 have deepened this global crisis. In Sub-Saharan Africa, children have accumulated more than 2.8 years of long-term learning loss (Angrist. N et al., 2021). Therefore, we see negative impacts on children's cognitive development, life skills and mindsets. In this context, community-based interventions has proven to be an effective way for teaching children the basics of reading and math and develop their socio-emotional skills.

My Village is the common response of PAL Network and member organizations to end the learning crisis in the Global South, one village at a time. It responds to this learning crisis by supporting ALL children of primary school age in a village to be able to read and do basic math. The community intervention intends to leave no child behind- children learn to read if they do not know how to read, they read to learn if they have mastered reading. Starting in June 2022, the project was piloted in 304 villages across Kenya, Nepal, and Tanzania.

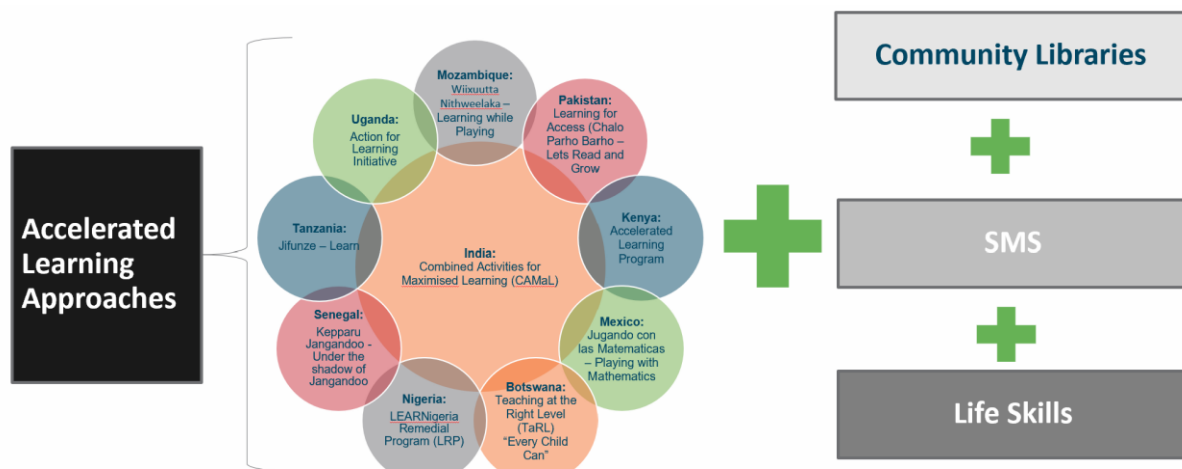


Exhibit 1: Components of My Village approach

The four components of the My Village approach, as provided in Exhibit 1, include-

- (1) Accelerated Learning Camps (ALC):** My village learning camps follow Accelerated Learning Pedagogy (ALP), focusing on individualized learning based on learners' levels, regardless of age or grade. Children undergo assessments to determine their learning levels, enabling appropriate grouping and facilitating level-appropriate activities. Periodic assessments track progress and guide regrouping.

- (2) **Short Messaging Service (SMS):** This component complements face-to-face sessions and promotes community participation. Weekly messages include learning exercises and activity instructions, based on camp themes and children's exposure.
- (3) **Community Libraries:** In selected villages, children are supported to access reading materials through community libraries to help children cultivate a reading culture and sustain learning gains.
- (4) **Life Skills Sessions:** The life skill sessions are conducted in select villages with children in the age group of 12-17 years. The conceptual framework of life skills for the project is focused on three pillars: i) Communication; ii) Problem-solving; and iii) Collaboration. Further, an assessment tool was prepared to assess children across these three pillars.

Assessment Approach

To be able to evaluate the impact of the project, a comprehensive assessment approach was employed that included baseline, mid-line assessments during the learning camps, and endline assessments. These assessments were tailored to each country's context and language in order to ensure the accuracy and relevance of the data collected.

Baseline Assessment

Prior to project implementation, a baseline assessment was conducted for all children of primary school going age, regardless of whether they were in school or not, in the sampled villages. The primary objective of the baseline assessment was to establish the learning levels of the children in each village. Contextual questionnaires were employed to gather information about the villages where the project was to be implemented as well as details about the households, parents, and children. The contextual questions facilitated a deeper understanding of the socio-economic and cultural factors influencing learning outcomes. The assessment tool utilized was adapted from the PAL Network ICAN and ICARe tools, that ensured consistency and comparability across the three countries. The assessment tool was translated into the local languages of each country to facilitate understanding and ensure inclusivity.

Mid-line Assessments

During the implementation of the project, assessments were conducted after every 10 days of learning camp cycle implementation. These assessments were aimed at tracking the learning progress of the children as they participated in the various learning activities. Unlike the baseline assessment, the tools used during the camps were citizen-led assessment tools specific to each country. The periodic assessments were key in regrouping learners during each camp cycle, and also provided insights on the effectiveness of the learning intervention allowing for adjustments to be made to ensure that the children were able to progress from one level to the next.

Endline Assessment

At the end of the project implementation, an endline assessment was conducted to evaluate the overall impact of the project on the learning levels of the children. Similar to the baseline assessment, the endline assessment utilized the adapted tools from the PAL Network ICAN and ICARe, translated into the local languages of each country. The contextual questionnaire was employed at the endline assessment in cases where the child had not been assessed during the baseline assessment since the endline assessment targeted all children in the village and not only those enrolled in the learning camps. Using the same assessment tools during baseline and endline allowed for comparable data providing more information on the impact of the project in the learning outcomes of children in the

villages where implementation was done. This also provided valuable insights for the next phase of My Village.

Project Components

Accelerated Learning Camps

The implementation of Accelerated Learning Camps (ALCs) within the My Village project encompassed a comprehensive strategy tailored to enhance literacy and numeracy competencies among children across diverse contexts. Through contextualization, adaptation and training, coupled with robust community engagement, these camps served as catalysts for learning advancement of children and community empowerment.

In Kenya, volunteer champions conducted after-school (and in some instances, weekend) camp sessions, for one hour each. In 68 villages across three districts of Kilifi, Bungoma and Kitui, these camps were organized in English, given their high scores in Kiswahili at baseline, whereas 30 villages participated in Kiswahili camps.



Exhibit 2: My Village champions in Bungoma

3,292 children (1,644 boys and 1,648 girls) participated in the learning camps in Kenya and were supported to improve their literacy competencies over a 30-day intervention cycle. One of the My Village champions from Mgamboni, Kilifi said, “When the headteacher realized that those learners who participated in the learning camps had improved in their academics, he requested me to have the sessions in the school to benefit more learners.”

In Nepal, the ALC initiative reached 121 villages across three districts of Sarlahi, Surkhet and Makwanpur. About 281 volunteers and facilitators, comprising 194 females and 87 males, underwent training to support the initiative. Notably, 11,979 children, with 55% girls and 45% boys, were enrolled

in the learning camps, lasting 30-50 days each. The commitment of volunteers ensured the smooth functioning of these camps, with 43.60% of all village children actively participating on a regular basis.



Exhibit 3: Accelerated learning camps in Sarlahi, Nepal

The integration of fun play activities and local games further enriched the ALC experience, demonstrating the efficacy of innovative pedagogical approaches even with limited resources. The project garnered commendation from local leaders and policymakers, with one mayor acknowledging the capacity of My Village to deliver quality education under challenging circumstances. Emphasizing the importance of regular assessment and monitoring, the project team implemented a structured evaluation framework, conducting assessments every 15 days to track children's progress. Additionally, establishment of weekly meetings among district team members facilitated collaboration and knowledge-sharing, reinforcing the project's commitment to sustained impact and community engagement.

In Tanzania, learning camps enrolled 7,837 children for numeracy support and 7,938 for literacy skills enhancement. The camps were conducted within a 30-day timeframe, across the districts of Gairo, Ludewa, and Kisarawe. The implementation began with the orientation of 200 volunteers from these districts, equipping them with the necessary skills to effectively manage the learning camps. These trained volunteers conducted regular assessments every ten days, enabling precise tracking of children's literacy and numeracy progress. Encouragingly, numerous children showcased notable advancements in their learning journeys, transitioning to higher competency levels. Despite commendable attendance rates, some children faced challenges in attending regularly, underlining the importance of flexible scheduling and proactive parental involvement.

Furthermore, this period marked significant milestones in project documentation and engagement with governmental authorities. The production of the My Village Project implementation report and its dissemination to the Ministry - Presidents Office Regional Administration and Local Government (PoRALG) culminated in the acquisition of an official government permit for the project. Additionally, village meetings held across all districts facilitated transparent communication with parents, providing them with valuable insights from the My Village assessment's baseline findings.

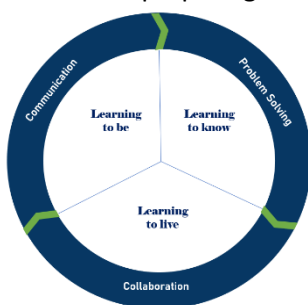


Exhibit 4: Accelerated learning camps in Kenya

Life Skills

The Life Skills component of the “My Village” project aimed to enhance social, emotional and cognitive competencies of children in the age group of 12-17 years to achieve success in life – on a personal level, an interpersonal level, and within their community and villages. Each of these areas has “transferable skills” that can be applied, directly or indirectly, to a diverse array of daily challenges and life experiences. The key objectives of our life skills program were:

- To help youth develop self-confidence and successfully deal with significant life changes and challenges, such as bullying and discrimination.
- To give children a voice: at school, in their community, and society at large.
- To enable the children to make a positive contribution to their village by developing the expertise and experience they need to claim their rights and understand their responsibilities while preparing them for the challenges and opportunities of adult and working life.



In order to achieve these objectives, the life skills package for the My Village project offers direct instruction across three thematic areas:

- Learning to be- Social Skill- Communication
- Learning to know-Cognitive Skill- Problem Solving
- Learning to live- Emotional Skill- Collaboration

Further, specific sessions on dealing with bullying and menstrual hygiene were provided as part of the curriculum.

Exhibit 5: Pillars of life skills program

With a focus on assessing the life skills programs across themes and skills, the team adopted the Assessment of Life Skills and Values in East Africa (ALiVE) tool for the purpose of assessment in project locations.

In Kenya, a total of 26 life skills sessions were conducted, drawing the participation of 1,198 eager learners. The project's commitment to fostering community engagement was evident, with 35 dedicated volunteers actively involved in facilitating these sessions. In Nepal, the team successfully conducted 15 sessions facilitated by 17 volunteers, reaching a total of 774 learners. The team also held a 5-day sanitary pad training in Sarlahi District, Madhesh province to create awareness about menstrual health among adolescent girls, break taboos, and spark open conversations about sexual and reproductive rights. It also included practical sessions on preparing reusable sanitary pads. In Tanzania, over the course of 15 sessions, the project organized immersive and interactive sessions designed to equip learners with essential life skills with the engagement of 60 volunteers in Kisarawe district.



Exhibit 6: Sanitary pad training in Sarlahi, Nepal

Short Message Service (SMS)

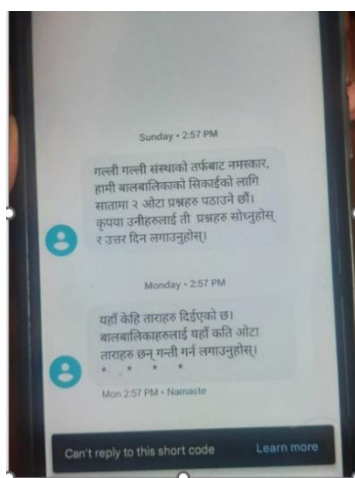


Exhibit 7: SMS sent to parents

The Short Message Service (SMS) played a crucial role in fostering parental involvement and support for children's learning within the My Village project. In Kenya, these messages included guidelines for conversations, questions, follow-ups, and collaborative activities between parents and children. The themes targeted through SMS included life skills and values. Approximately 600 SMSs were sent out to 60 parents across eight villages in Kitui, Bungoma, and Kilifi. A midline review revealed promising outcomes, with 82% of parents reporting improved academic performance in their children. Additionally, 46% reported increased time spent reading at home, and 32% reported higher involvement in their children's learning.

In Nepal, the project consistently collected phone numbers of parents during the ALC processes. A total of 46,691 SMS contents were sent to 1,279 parents. The SMS content covered literacy (English) and numeracy topics, including letter recognition, word formation, and basic arithmetic which complemented the learning conducted in camps. Parents showed enthusiasm for the learning camp and demonstrated increased curiosity about the project's interventions after receiving SMS updates. In Tanzania, a total of 4590 SMS were sent to parents with specific content to support children to learn at home. Overall, the SMS component has shown the potential to enhance parental engagement and support for children's learning across diverse contexts in Tanzania.

Community Libraries

The component of community libraries was incorporated into the My Village project with the overarching goal of fostering a culture of reading and sustaining learning gains among children. Recognizing the diverse contexts and needs across project locations in Kenya, Nepal, and Tanzania, the project has implemented various models tailored to each country's unique circumstances.

The community libraries component in Kenya builds upon previous experiences in promoting literacy through innovative means. Different models were considered, and after careful evaluation, the distribution of study packs emerged as the most feasible option within the contours of the project. This model involved distributing packages of storybooks to selected villages, bypassing logistical challenges associated with constructing physical library spaces in remote areas. By leveraging existing community networks and volunteer engagement, the project distributed 4,095 reader packs to 780 children in English and Kiswahili across the three counties of Bungoma, Kilifi, and Kitui in August 2023. A total of 4,500 resource packs were distributed by the end of the project among the beneficiary households. These were distributed across 52 villages - 30 villages in Bungoma, 11 villages in Kilifi, and 11 villages in Kitui.



In Nepal, the PMT embarked on a journey to devise a low-cost yet impactful approach to community libraries called a mobile library concept. Inspired by the idea of books in bags, the mobile library approach facilitated easy access and increased reach, addressing concerns related to supervision and infrastructure. Each learning camp kept the library bags for one to two weeks which led to easy access to reading materials across rural areas. The Nepal team established a total of 50 mobile libraries which contained about 2460 books. Through this initiative, the project team was able to reach 4915 children across 119 villages.

Exhibit 8: Moving libraries in Nepal

In Tanzania, the team adopted a multi-pronged approach to community libraries, tailored to local contexts. Two models were developed: a community-based approach and a school-based approach. The community-based model involved collaboration with village leaders to establish library spaces in village offices, promoting accessibility and community engagement. This model was adopted in five villages in Gairo district, enabling 200 books to be accessed weekly by children within the villages. In the school-based model, existing infrastructure and teacher involvement was leveraged to create

conducive learning environments within school premises. This approach not only enhanced access to books but also integrated library activities seamlessly into the school curriculum.

Research

As part of learning, the project teams were introduced to the A/B testing methodology facilitated by the Youth Impact team, a PAL member in Botswana. This strategic initiative sought to identify and implement programmatic tweaks that could lead to more optimized outcomes across select project locations in Kenya, Nepal, and Tanzania. The different steps implemented as part of the A/B testing learning process are elaborated in the sections below.

Step 1: Deliberation about Research Objectives and Plausible Questions

The first phase of the A/B testing process involved thorough deliberation among project stakeholders to define clear research objectives and formulate plausible questions. As a starting point, an inception meeting was held on May 12, 2023, among the PAL Secretariat, leaders and representatives of member organizations implementing the project and the Youth Impact. Through collaborative discussions, the teams examined and agreed on the overarching goals of implementing A/B testing within the My Village project context.

Step 2: Selection of the Research Question

Following extensive deliberation, the PAL Secretariat, PMTs, and the Youth Impact team collaboratively determined the final research question for the A/B testing initiative. This critical step involved aligning research objectives with project priorities and ensuring that the chosen question would yield actionable insights to inform programmatic decisions. The finalized research question for each country are as follows:

Kenya: Do SMSes sent to engage parents improve learning outcomes?

Nepal: Does parental involvement affect learning?

Tanzania: Does encouragement of the headteacher to monitor the camp improve learning outcomes?

Step 3: A/B Testing pilot Implementation

With the research question identified, the A/B testing pilot was rolled out across project sites in Kenya, Nepal, and Tanzania, spanning a duration of 6-8 weeks. Attention was paid to ethical considerations to ensure the integrity and fairness of the research process.

Step 4: Data Collection & Analysis

A pivotal aspect of the A/B testing pilot was the systematic collection and analysis of data to evaluate program impact. Pre-established assessment tools were utilized to measure the learning levels of participating children, capturing baseline data before the A/B testing intervention and endline data. This approach allowed for a comprehensive comparison of learning outcomes between Group A, subjected to program tweaks, and Group B, serving as the control group. Subsequent analysis of compiled data provided valuable insights into the efficacy of programmatic adjustments, paving the way for evidence-based decision-making for scale-up in the next phase.

Communication

The communication efforts of the My Village project were multifaceted, aiming to raise awareness, engage stakeholders, and foster partnerships to support the overall project objectives. An overview of the various initiatives undertaken is provided below.

1. **Volunteer Engagement Video:** A [video](#) regarding the involvement of volunteers was created, capturing their firsthand experiences and perspectives. This authentic portrayal adds a human element to the communication efforts, showcasing the dedication and passion of those involved in implementing the My Village project.
2. **Field Visit Collaterals:** [Pictures and documentation](#) from field visits have been compiled and organized to serve as compelling evidence of the project's impact on the ground.
3. **My Village Video:** A comprehensive video regarding the My Village project was also developed to serve as an informative tool, effectively communicating the project's goals, strategies, and impact to potential partners and supporters.
4. **Online Presence:** The project's online presence was bolstered through publication of [five blogs](#) on the My Village website. These blogs offer in-depth analysis, reflections, and updates on the project's progress, further amplifying its reach and engagement. Further, a research article focusing on life skills, a crucial component of the My Village project, was published. [Stories of volunteers](#), penned by the volunteers themselves, were published, providing a platform for their voices to be heard. The team also conducted an X (Twitter) space session regarding the My Village project during the 2023 International Literacy Day.
5. **Media coverage:** In Kenya, my village project was aired in three TV stations: *K24 coverage* - <https://www.youtube.com/live/2pvZcYf7ifA?feature=share> , *Citizen TV coverage* - <https://youtu.be/iaYj-DzmEck>, and *KBC coverage* - <https://youtu.be/PlnJahL2Hbq>
6. **Offline Advocacy:** The project has been actively represented in various advocacy and partnership initiatives, including participation in the annual career fair by Teach for Kenya (T4K). Discussions and initiatives such as the Napenda Kusoma initiative have been pursued to strengthen collaboration with the government and other stakeholders in promoting the project interventions. The localized approach to project implementation in the 3 countries have allowed for strengthened ground-level partnerships with non-profit organizations and civil society organizations that address the unique needs and contexts of each community. Insights from my Village were also presented at the 2023 and 2024 CIES conferences as well as the International Quality Education Conferences (IQEC) 2023.

Community Participation

The My Village project adopted a holistic village-wide approach with the aim of supporting all children within the village. Community participation was integral to the project's success and was fostered through several key strategies:

1. **Community Meetings:** Following the baseline assessment, community members participated in discussions about the learning levels of children in the village. These discussions formed the basis for identifying the need for interventions, which were designed to address the low learning outcome in foundational literacy and numeracy. Parents were encouraged to allow their children to participate in the learning activities provided by the project, emphasizing the collaborative effort between the project, parents and the community.
2. **Engagement of Local Volunteers:** Local volunteers, drawn from the village itself conducted the baseline and endline assessments. Their familiarity with the community allowed them to provide meaningful feedback to parents during surveys, enhancing the quality and relevance of data collected. The volunteer-teachers who facilitated remedial sessions were also selected from within the village, ensuring a deep understanding of local dynamics and needs.

3. **Utilization of Community Spaces:** To ensure successful implementation, the project leveraged existing community resources such as schools, community halls, churches, and open shared spaces as learning venues. This approach enabled accessibility and inclusivity, accommodating all children within the community.

Key Findings

This section provides a comprehensive overview of the scale and scope of the “My Village” project interventions conducted in each country, highlighting the breadth of impact and the reach of the programs implemented. Data analysis for My Village data was conducted after a rigorous review and cleaning of data to allow for baseline and endline results comparisons. The final analysis included the following numbers:

Country	Baseline Assessment	ALCs	Endline Assessment
Kenya	11,420	2,733*	10,672
Nepal	17,297	3,561	16,103
Tanzania	17,806	5,284	8,460

*It's worth noting that some children participated in multiple cohorts, hence the total is less than the sum of the above numbers.

Learning outcomes: Gender analysis

The gender-based analysis of learning outcomes highlights the multifaceted nature of educational interventions and their differential impact on boys and girls. While both genders benefit from foundational learning enhancements, it is important to understand gender trends in proficiency levels.

Kenya

Literacy learning camps significantly enhanced children's foundational learning in some sub-skills, encompassing both literacy and numeracy domains. Girls in Kenya displayed a significant advantage over boys in learning outcomes. This gender-based disparity underscores the need for targeted interventions to address educational equity and ensure equal opportunities for all children.

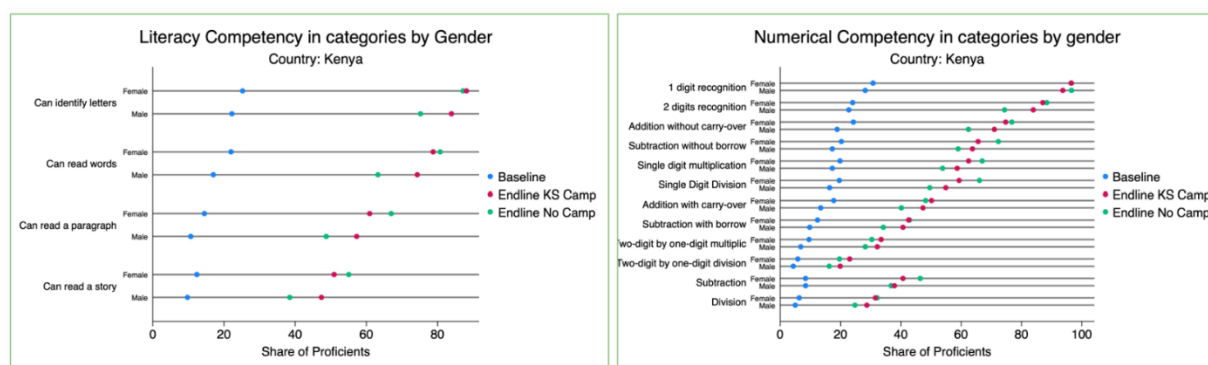


Exhibit 9: Literacy and numeracy levels by gender in Kenya

Nepal

Learning camps significantly improved children's foundational learning across all sub-skills, regardless of gender. Thus, there were no significant differences based on gender observed either at the baseline or at the endline. Both boys and girls benefited equally from the camps' interventions. Notably, camps have been more impactful in enhancing children's literacy and numeracy skills in more advanced sub-skills, showcasing their effectiveness in fostering deeper learning outcomes.



Exhibit 10: Literacy and numeracy levels by gender in Nepal

Tanzania

Learning camps led to significant improvements in foundational learning for some sub-skills, with both boys and girls benefiting from the interventions. Girls exhibited a significant advantage over boys in learning outcomes, outperforming them by up to 8 percentage points in certain skills.

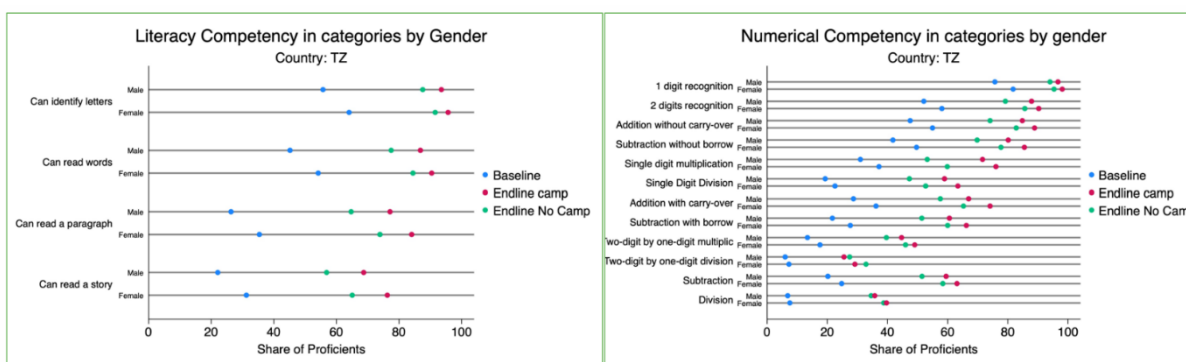


Exhibit 11: Literacy and numeracy levels by gender in Tanzania

Learning outcomes: Impact on learning equality

This analysis underscores the transformative potential of educational interventions in fostering greater learning equality. By targeting children from diverse socio-economic backgrounds and providing tailored support, camps have emerged as powerful tools in narrowing the gap in educational outcomes, paving the way for a more equitable and inclusive education system.

We constructed a wealth index using household assets and living conditions to examine the correlation between socioeconomic status and children's proficiency in foundational literacy and numeracy. Each skill assessment is represented by four lines, corresponding to four wealth quartiles. Quartile 1 denotes children from the 25% poorest households, while Quartile 4 represents those from the 25% wealthiest households.

Kenya

Baseline data reveals a notable impact of wealth on education inequality, with disparities evident across different wealth quartiles, as shown in Exhibit 12a. Interestingly, camps have shown a propensity to provide a significant boost to children from the second wealth quartile, contributing to the reduction of the learning gap between rich and poor, particularly in quartiles 2nd, 3rd, and 4th. While only literacy camps were conducted in Kenya, they also enhance children's numeracy skills, particularly in basic skills (refer Exhibit 12b). This could be attributed to various factors such as boosting children's confidence, improving their understanding of numeracy concepts, or the inclusion of basic numeracy content within the literacy camp curriculum, such as incorporating activities like singing numbers.

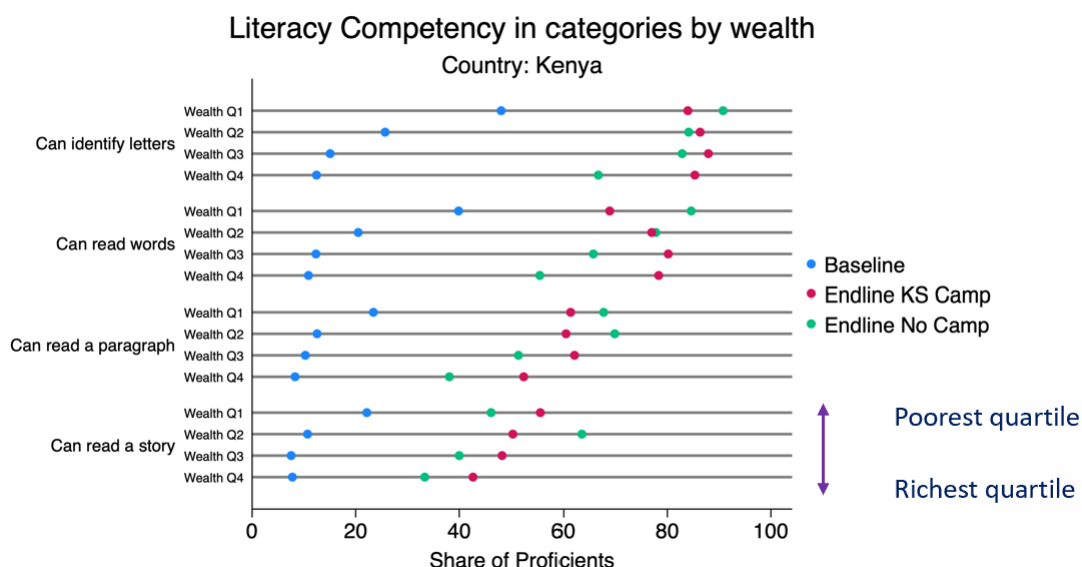
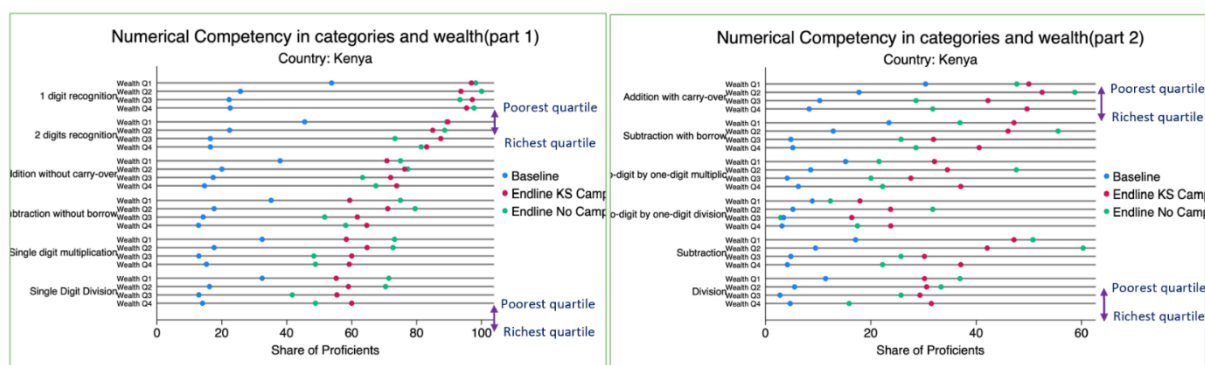


Exhibit 12a: Literacy level by wealth in Kenya

Exhibit 12b: Numeracy level by wealth in Kenya



Nepal

Baseline data underscores the significant role of wealth in education inequality, with children from wealthier households exhibiting higher proficiency levels in foundational literacy and numeracy. However, after participating in camps, there is a noticeable improvement in literacy levels across all children, regardless of socio-economic background. Remarkably, this improvement is more pronounced among children from poorer households, resulting in a significant narrowing of the gap between the educational outcomes of the rich and the poor in foundational literacy and numeracy, as shown in Exhibit 13a and Exhibit 13b respectively.

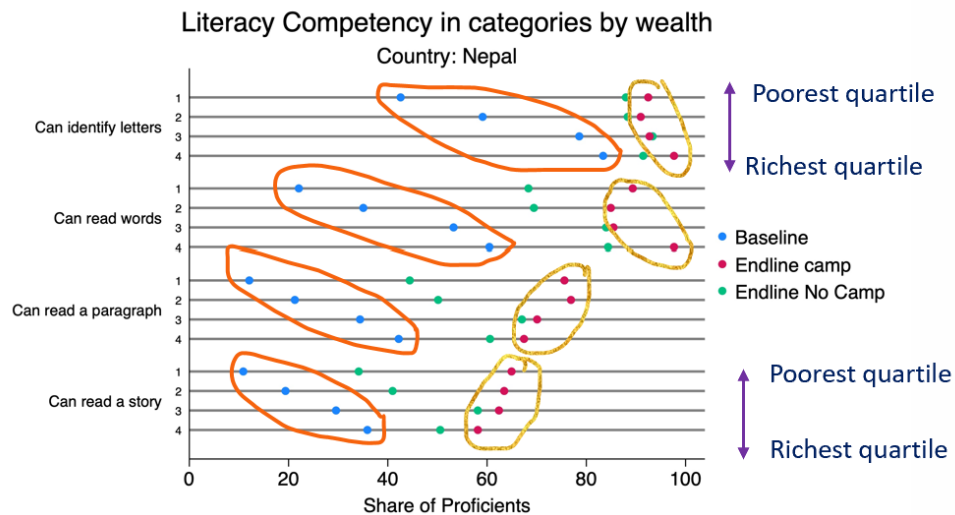
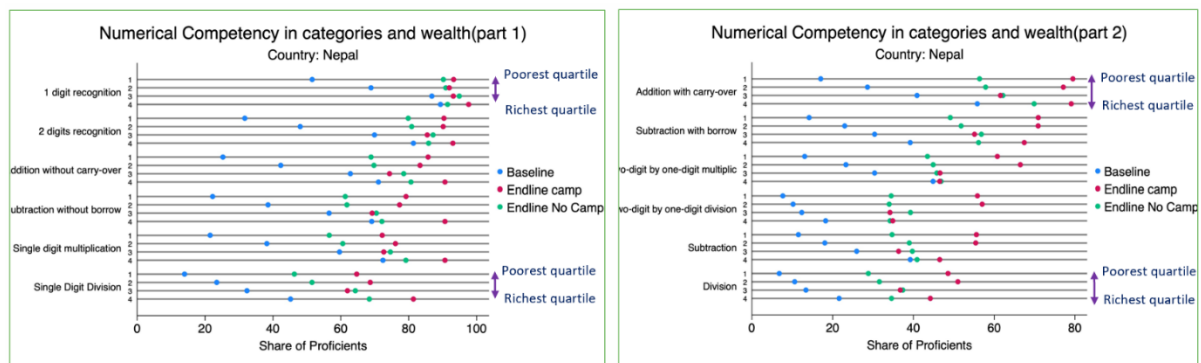


Exhibit 13a: Literacy level by wealth in Nepal

Exhibit 13b: Numeracy level by wealth in Nepal



Tanzania

Exhibit 14a and Exhibit 14b show that children from wealthier households exhibit higher proficiency levels at the baseline, indicating a clear correlation between socioeconomic status and educational outcomes. Learning camps have played a pivotal role in enhancing children's foundational literacy and numeracy across all socio-economic strata, contributing to the reduction of the learning gap between rich and poor. While the impact may not be as pronounced as in Nepal, camps have nevertheless made

significant strides in fostering greater equality in learning outcomes.

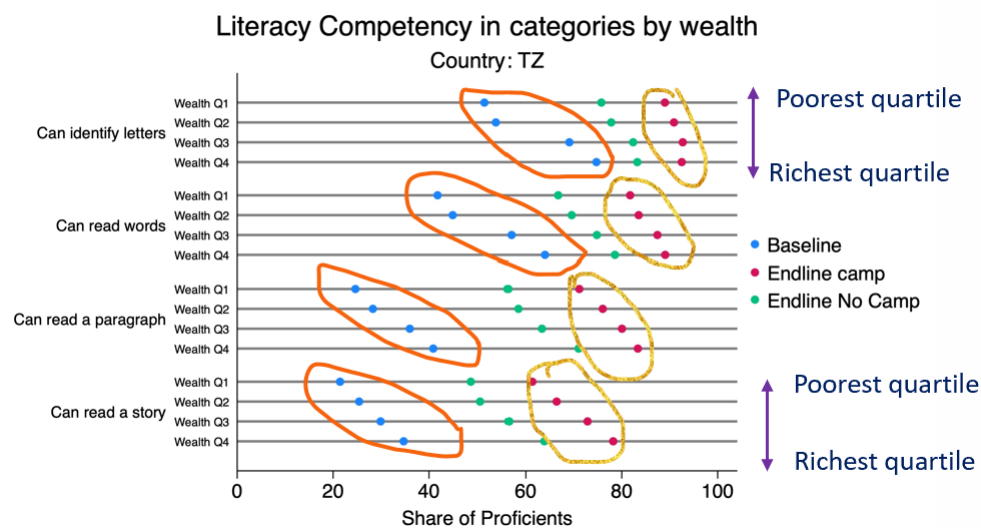
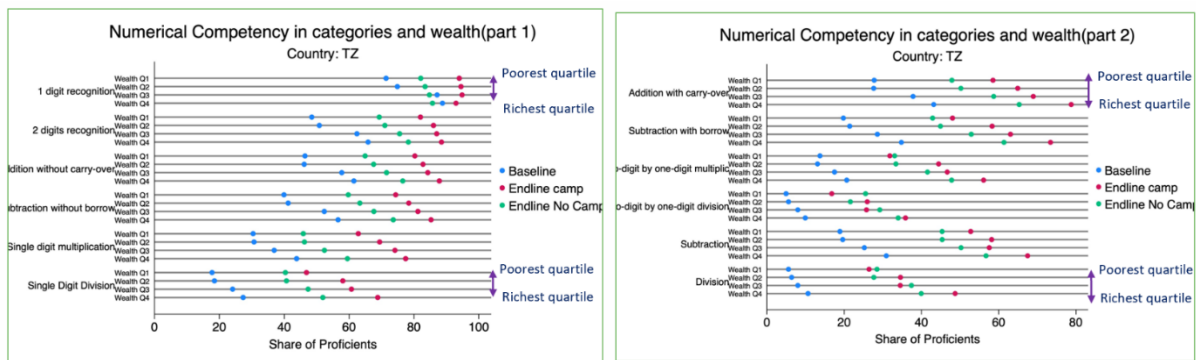


Exhibit 14a: Literacy level by wealth in Tanzania

Exhibit 14b: Numeracy level by wealth in Tanzania



Challenges

- **Data Management Complexity:**
 - (i) While online platforms offered efficiency in data entry and ensured data consistency, challenges arose due to device availability for data collectors. Some teachers lacked the necessary devices, leading to delays in data collection and upload, especially in remote areas with limited internet connectivity.
 - (ii) The lengthy process of data cleaning and analysis further contributed to delays in providing timely feedback and action during project implementation.
- **Time Constraints and Scope of Work:**
 - (i) The project encompassed four comprehensive components, including baseline and endline assessments, necessitating significant time investment.
 - (ii) Groundwork such as partner recruitment, volunteer engagement, and building relationships with education officials and stakeholders were crucial but time-consuming. Balancing these preparatory activities with project timelines posed challenges to effective implementation.
- **Limited Volunteer Capacity:**

- (i) While training was provided, not all volunteers had teaching backgrounds, posing a learning curve for some. This impacted the implementation of interventions as per expectations.
- (ii) Retaining trained teacher-volunteers proved difficult in certain villages due to competing priorities, resulting in the loss of valuable project resources.
- **Inconsistent Child Attendance:** The learning intervention's effectiveness relied on consistent attendance, structured for a 30-day cycle with 10-day intervals. Inconsistent and erratic attendance patterns among children hindered the intervention's impact, underscoring the importance of regular participation for successful outcomes.

Lessons learnt

- **Inception Phase for deeper engagement:** Dedicating sufficient time to the inception stage helps in facilitating deeper engagement with local authorities, enabling co-creation with communities, and fostering collaboration with school leaders. The project timeline necessitated these crucial elements to occur concurrently with implementation. However, we recognized that a more extensive inception phase would have allowed for more comprehensive groundwork, ensuring a smoother execution.
- **Understanding Local Context is Essential:** Reading materials, lesson ideas, stories, and even life skills sessions were contextualized, taking the cultural sensitivities of each region into consideration. This approach ensured relevance and resonance with the communities we served, fostering deeper engagement and acceptance of our initiatives.
- **Prioritize Community Building:** During the implementation of the My Village project, the importance of prioritizing community building was further reinforced. This involved investing significant time in onboarding stakeholders at various levels, including county, school, and community levels, right from the outset of the project. Engaging these stakeholders early on helped us to build stronger buy-in, garner local authority support, and enhance engagement with government stakeholders.
- **Schools as Designated Centers for Learning Camps:** Designating schools as centers for our learning camps proved advantageous in mitigating scheduling challenges for learning camps. Moreover, situating interventions within schools reflected parental confidence in the project. To further enhance community-focused projects, we implemented weekend and holiday-based interventions, catering to diverse schedules and preferences.
- **Capacity Building of Local Partners:** Recognizing the importance of capacity building among our local partners, we focused on addressing management or operational challenges within these organizations. Through structured, continuous, and needs-based capacity building initiatives, we aim to empower our partners to effectively contribute to project objectives and sustainability.
- **Adopt Incentive-Based Volunteerism Model for Youth Volunteers:** We adopted an incentive-based volunteerism model for youth volunteers. Implementing sustainable approaches such as volunteer recognition, leadership fellowships, and in-person check-in meetings incentivized and rewarded their contributions, ensuring their continued involvement in the project.
- **SMS to parents with a follow-up call approach:** Despite the promising outcomes, challenges were noted in Kenya, with half of the parents reporting difficulties using the SMS service for learning with their children. A/B testing research has shown that a follow-up call and efforts by volunteers to reach out to parents post the SMS have borne better results on the learning

and engagement of children. Future initiatives in Phase 2 shall focus on capacity strengthening of volunteers to effectively engage parents and support home learning.

Conclusion

The pilot phase of the "My Village" project has showcased the path towards sustainable change, transforming the lives of children who once struggled with basic reading and math into empowered learners ready to embrace lifelong learning. This success story fuels our ambition to expand and deepen the impact of the project. As we prepare to scale up the project, we envision extending the reach and deepening the impact of "My Village" to new villages, each becoming a beacon of transformative education and empowerment. Picture a village where every child reads with comprehension, computes with confidence, and communicates with clarity—a village brimming with possibilities.

To realize this ambitious goal, we will undertake the following activities:

- Implement the four core components of "My Village"—Accelerated learning camps, SMS for parental engagement, life skills sessions, and community libraries—while adhering to established protocols and procedures.
- Co-create efficient project management tools and processes to ensure the smooth execution of intervention programs.
- Facilitate learning and sharing sessions to deepen our understanding of various intervention programs, both within and outside the network, fostering continuous improvement and innovation.
- Incorporate research to better understand the data and inform the interventions at every stage of implementation.

Together, we will continue to nurture children and rewrite the narrative of education, one village at a time.