

BUILDING BETTER: ENSURING LEARNING CONTINUITY FOR ALL

A PAL Network Conference 2021

Sub-themes

Conference Dates: November 2nd – 4th, 2021

Background

The [People's Action for Learning \(PAL\)](#) Network is a south-south partnership of 15 organisations from 14 countries working across Africa, Asia and the Americas whose aim is to promote children's foundational literacy and numeracy. Every two years, PAL Network organises an international conference targeting researchers, practitioners, policymakers and civil society actors to discuss progress, challenges and opportunities relating to children's foundational learning. PAL Network members *Uwezo Tanzania* and *Facilidade Mozambique* will on its behalf hold the second virtual conference from **2nd–4th November 2021** under the theme of **Building Better: Ensuring Learning Continuity for All**.

Sub-themes

1. Children's learning and their wellbeing

The education crisis attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic has cemented the need to re-evaluate access to education, quality, inclusion and equity. Vulnerable children are now at a higher risk of dropping out of school, missing out on learning or disconnecting from formal education. The papers under the children's learning and their wellbeing sub-theme will explore how to build children's resilience in foundational and socio-emotional learning as well as skills for work and life.

Some topics of interest are listed below:

- i. What recovery strategies could ensure learner social and emotional wellbeing after re-opening?
- ii. If we are to strike a balance between remote and physical learning, what works for learners furthest behind? How do we explore the interconnectedness between other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and SDG 4.1? a) SDG 1.2 – Living in poverty and learning; b) SDG 3.8 – Health coverage and learning and c) SDG 5.3 – Early marriage/gender-based violence and learning.
- iii. What role could alternative pedagogies play in improving learning outcomes (art-based, experimental, sport-based methods, activity-based learning, etc.)?
- iv. How can we ensure equitable and inclusive learning that focuses on learners with special needs during recovery?

2. Language, culture and learning

It is now well documented that children learn better in their [mother tongue](#) or the language with which they feel most comfortable. Culturally and contextually appropriate content engages children more effectively. Meaningful teaching-learning activities that “speak” to children capture their attention and imagination, especially those at the bottom of the pyramid. Papers within this second sub-theme will examine the interconnections between language, culture and learning to propose

pathways through which to improve children's foundational learning by leveraging indigenous knowledge and pedagogies.

Some topics of interest are listed below:

- i. The prolonged school disruptions (where applicable) transferred the responsibility of children's education to the communities and households. With this in mind, what role has local and global culture and language played to ensure continued learning, and how useful is this during and post-COVID?
- ii. What role can indigenous languages play in learning post-COVID and promoting sustainability? How can we use storytelling and indigenous teaching-learning activities to improve children's learning?

3. Systems, learning and technology

Under the third sub-theme on systems, learning and technology, papers will explore how education systems have responded to a bulging bottom of the pyramid. The papers within this section will delve into how various systems have responded to this need in terms of policies, practices and technology integration.

Some topics of interest are listed below:

- i. What and how to improve local technology ecosystems to support children's foundational learning in the Global South. How can technology be adapted and in what forms can it be used to enhance equitable and inclusive education for learners furthest behind?
- ii. How have education systems in the Global South responded to the learning crisis during emergencies? What measures are necessary? How can we apply ed-tech at scale to promote inclusive and equitable learning for those furthest behind?
- iii. Educational Technology and gender empowerment (participation of girls). Perspectives from the Global South.

4. Scaling and the role of partnerships

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) hold institutions to account, support positive humanitarian changes and supply subject matter expertise. Under the fourth sub-theme, the role of partnerships and especially linkages between CSOs, development partners and government agencies, will be explored.

Some topics of interest under this are listed below:

- i. The importance of genuine cooperation in overcoming the educational problems during the pandemic. What is the implication of tangible cooperation that aims to overcome the challenges posed by pandemics?
- ii. How can research evidence generated by civil societies be applied to strengthen education practices at scale for improved learning outcomes?
- iii. How does the nature of the partnership between civil society and governments influence the uptake and application of research evidence to improve practice and policy at scale?