



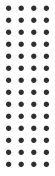
Program Booklet



2021 PAL Network Conference

**BUILDING BETTER: ENSURING
LEARNING CONTINUITY FOR ALL**
November 2nd – 4th | Virtual





Bem vindo de Moçambique! Karibu from Tanzania!

FACILIDADE and Uwezo Tanzania are honoured to welcome all the delegates and participants to the PAL Network 2021 virtual conference.

This year, Uwezo Tanzania and FACILIDADE (Mozambique), both legally registered NGOs in Tanzania and Mozambique are co-hosting the PAL conference in collaboration with the PAL Secretariat.

Initially, this year's conference was scheduled to take place in Arusha, Tanzania, but due to the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic and safety concerns, it was decided to hold a virtual conference instead. It is indeed unfortunate that the participants will now miss out on seeing some amazing sights after the conference like the majestic Mount Kilimanjaro (the crowning glory of the African Continent), incredible national parks such as the Serengeti, the Ngorongoro and Lake Manyara which are home to magnificent wild animals such as elephants, lions, zebras, rhinos, hippos, giraffes, and sanctuaries that are a haven for countless species of birds.

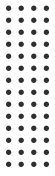
Mozambique and Tanzania are more than neighbours

Mozambique lies to the south of Tanzania and the countries share a border measuring over 800km along the Mtwara corridor and Cabo Delgado. Communities along the border reside in both countries and share the Makonde and Makua languages, traditions, culture (food, dance, various art forms and economic activities, including agriculture such as cashew nut growing). The Tanzania-Mozambique citizens who reside along the border also share cross-border trade that doesn't always require a currency conversion. Both Tanzania and Mozambique are members of the Southern African Development Cooperation (SADC).

State of learning in Mozambique and Tanzania

In the past ten years, the number of children and youth attending schools has doubled in both countries. More schools have been built and there are more trained teachers. Despite these improvements, children's learning outcomes have remained low and some school-aged children are still out of school. According to the UNESCO report titled Education in Africa, sub-Saharan Africa has the highest rates of education exclusion. Over one-fifth of children between 6-11 are out of school, followed by one-third of teenagers aged between 12-14 years.





Mozambique has shown significant improvements over the last decade, with public spending on education that is relatively high and above the average of sub-Saharan countries and low-income countries(www.data.worldbank.org). The building of classrooms, teacher recruitment and policies regarding access to education, such as free basic education from 1st to 9th grade have contributed to increased school admission. The ratio between student and teacher has also decreased substantially. Lately, these improvements have stagnated due to the increase in student numbers as education promotion policies take effect. Despite these advances, learning outcomes have not improved significantly(www.theglobaleconomy.com).

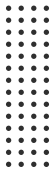
Similarly, enrolments in Tanzania have increased over the last decade with the implementation of free education, increased capitation and development of educational infrastructure across all levels of learning.

However, despite these massive investments in education, concerns over the quality of education across the two countries have been rife. Over the past 10 years, Uwezo Tanzania has engaged over 41,000 citizen volunteers to conduct learning assessment surveys on foundational literacy and numeracy. This assessment covered 600,000 children aged 6-16 years in over 271,000 households in all 159 districts of mainland Tanzania. Uwezo Tanzania further facilitated dialogues with parents and caregivers on their children's learning outcomes.

The findings from Uwezo assessments revealed that despite the enforcement of the Fee-free Basic Education Policy and improved Net Enrolment Rate in primary school going up to 90%, many children are not learning adequately enough to build foundational learning skills at early ages and grades.

Similarly, since 2016, Facilidade has assessed the literacy and numeracy competencies of 9,901 children aged 7-16 across 6,150 households, mobilised over 826 volunteers and shared the findings with parents and stakeholders in education. Despite certain similarities, the situation and status of education and learning outcomes are different in the two countries. While children living along the border can cross over to either side to attend school, the education system in each country is different. For example, the language of instruction in primary schools in Tanzania is Kiswahili which is the national language while in Mozambique it is Portuguese.





Uwezo Tanzania and FACILIDADE support efforts to help children learn

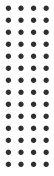
As PAL Network members, both Uwezo Tanzania and Facilidade are champions of the citizen-led assessment on foundational literacy and numeracy competencies. Both organisations are also implementing the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach, which in Tanzania is called “Jifunze” meaning learn by yourself. A similar intervention to improve reading and numeracy skills among primary school children has also been implemented in Mozambique. Named WIIXUTTA NITHWEELAKA (WN), it means learning by playing in the Emakua language. Through the programme, about 78% of children enrolled in grades 3-6 have improved their reading and numeracy skills within a short period of 50-days. The approach is a combination of playful-didactic tools and activities that ensure that children who are grouped by skill levels can improve their reading and numeracy skills.

And just like elsewhere, COVID-19 has ravaged schools and affected learning in Mozambique and Tanzania

In March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic impacted both countries badly. School closures followed which, in turn, resulted in learning loss among numerous children. In Tanzania, over 10 million children missed out on vital learning opportunities while schools were closed. In Mozambique, the Government announced the closure of all public and private schools (including kindergartens and universities) for 30 days from 23 March 2020, suspending education for a total of 8,556,761 students in 14,970 schools in the country.

Governments and CSO actors in both countries made efforts to support children to continue learning from home through TV, Radio and online platforms. However, technology and related facilities were not easily accessible to marginalised children in rural areas and poor families, hence the urban-rural divide increased.





The PAL 2021 virtual conference is well-timed for the education and learning discourse in our countries

At a time when the discourse on learning continues to dominate the global, regional, and national landscape, the PAL Network conference goes right into the heart of the conversation. The theme of the conference is timely as both the countries, like any other country in the Global South, are grappling with the effects of COVID-19 on foundational learning. The PAL Conference 2021 is bringing together various experts including researchers, education practitioners, policy actors, teachers, students and CSOs from the Global South and worldwide to share new knowledge, experiences and reflect on how we can all contribute to “Building Better: Ensuring Learning Continuity for All.” Esteemed internationally recognised keynote speakers will address various areas of learning, challenges in the education system and partnership building. It is a moment to reflect on some of the policy decisions which were made to respond to the learning crisis. You cannot afford to miss it!

We invite all the delegates and participants to hear and deliberate on the 17 paper presentations to be presented in plenary and breakout rooms, participate in discussions with eminent panellists and reflect on the talks by erudite keynote speakers from across the globe.

Karibu

Receber

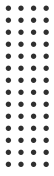
Bienvenu

Bienvenida

About Mozambique

Mozambique is a country on the eastern coast of the southern part of Africa. It has Tanzania to its north; Malawi and Zambia on its north-west; Zimbabwe, South Africa and Swaziland to its west; South Africa to its south; and the section of the Indian Ocean called the Mozambique Channel to its east. The official language is Portuguese, but only about 17% of the population speaks it as their mother tongue (INE 2019). It has about 20 major languages (Cicopi, Cinyanja, Cinyungwe, Cisenga, Cishona, Ciyao, Echuwabo, Ekoti, Elomwe, Gitonga, Maconde (Or Shimakonde), Kimwani, Macua (Or Emakhuwa), Memane, Swahili (or Kiswahili), Swaziland (or Swazi), Xichanga, Xironga, Xitswa and Zulu). In almost every part of the country, there are areas of tourist attraction. The country is famous for offering a combination of sun and beach tourism along with safari. It attracts many tourists who love diving in the waters of the Indian Ocean.





About Tanzania

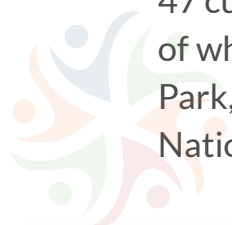
The United Republic of Tanzania is the largest country in East Africa, covering 940,000 square kilometres, 60,000 of which is inland water. Lake Tanganyika runs along the western border and is Africa's deepest and longest freshwater lake, and the world's second deepest lake. Lake Victoria is the world's second-largest lake and drains into the Nile River. The Rufiji River is Tanzania's largest river and drains into the Indian Ocean south of Dar es Salaam. One of Tanzania's most distinctive geological features is the Great Rift Valley which was caused by a geological fault throughout eastern Africa and is associated with volcanic activity in the north-eastern regions of the country

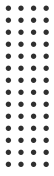
Tanzania lies to the south of the Equator and shares its borders with eight countries: Kenya and Uganda to the north; Rwanda, Burundi, Zaire, and Zambia to the west; and Malawi and Mozambique to the south. The country has a diverse landscape.

Tanzania became a sovereign state in 1964 through the union of the two separate states -- Tanganyika (Tanzania Mainland) and Zanzibar. Dodoma is the official capital of Tanzania and is centrally located in the Tanzania mainland. Dar es Salaam is the largest city and port in the country.

The estimated population of Tanzania is 56 million, which is slightly lesser than that of South Africa making it the second-most populous country located to the south of the Equator. Tanzania has about 120 ethnic groups/tribes and they have their own local languages including Emakua, Makonde and Yao/Ciyao which are also spoken in Mozambique. These local languages have originated from all four of Africa's language families: Bantu, Cushitic, Nilotic, and Khoisan making Tanzania the most linguistically diverse country in East Africa. Swahili is the first official national language of Tanzania which is spoken by many people, and English is the second.

Tanzania is home to some of Africa's most famous national parks and natural attractions, including the majestic Mount Kilimanjaro which rises to more than 5,000 metres with the highest peak, Kibo, reaching 5,895 metres above sea level. This is the highest point in Africa and Tanzania's most iconic image. Apart from this Tanzania has 47 cultural tourism enterprises countrywide and 22 magnificent national parks, some of which are Serengeti National Park, Lake Manyara National Park, Nyerere National Park, Gombe National Park, Tarangire National Park, Ruaha National Park, Katavi National Park, Mikumi National Park and many others.





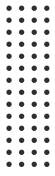
About FACILIDADE

Facilidade is a Mozambican non-governmental organization based in the city of Nampula. The Facility dreams of a society where women and men have the same opportunities, enjoy the same rights, assume their civic responsibilities, and can defend the interests of their communities. To achieve this purpose, the Facility engages citizens in local governance processes and contributes to strengthening the role that civil society organizations play in their communities.

About Uwezo Tanzania

Uwezo Tanzania is a Non-Governmental Organization committed to improving competencies in literacy and numeracy among children in Tanzania through an innovative, citizen-driven assessment on literacy and numeracy competencies, and public accountability approach to social change. Uwezo's main goal is to contribute to improved learning outcomes. This is achieved by generating independent data on basic literacy and numeracy competencies among children aged 6-16 years which is then used to trigger government response to address learning challenges and stimulate evidence-based policies that result in quality and equitable learning for all children. Uwezo's vision is to have a society in which all children are learning and realizing their full potential. Apart from learning assessments, Uwezo is also a pioneer of the "Jifunze" programme in Tanzania (inspired by Pratham's Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach). This programme is implemented to help children improve literacy and numeracy competencies within just 30-60 days. Through its community engagement programme known as Uwezo na Jamii, community members are mobilized to assess children's literacy and numeracy skills, identify learning challenges, generate local solutions and take collective action to improve children's learning outcomes and their access to schooling





Dear Colleagues and Friends,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the 2021 PAL Network Conference. This virtual conference is hosted by Uwezo Tanzania, Facilidade Mozambique, and the East and Southern African Hub (ESA) of the PAL Network. We are grateful for the support and guidance that they have provided through this journey.

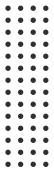
Every two years, PAL Network holds an international conference targeting researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and civil society actors to discuss children's foundational learning. ASER Pakistan and ASER Nepal hosted the previous conference in Kathmandu, Nepal in 2019 as we widened the network and invited many more people to share, collaborate and reflect on education in the Global South. We appreciate your joining us to deliberate further on how we can improve the quality of learning in the Global South.

The conference will provide an opportunity for participants to pause, reflect and discuss ways of building better and ensuring learning continuity - especially after the school closures on account of COVID-19 related lockdowns. We hope this conference will provide a forum to focus attention on children's learning and their wellbeing. In doing so we will see how to build children's resilience in foundational and socio-emotional learning and their skills for work and life; examine the interconnections between language, culture and learning; explore how education systems have responded to the needs of those at the bottom of the pyramid through suitable policies, practices and technologies; and the role of partnerships in genuine cooperation in overcoming the educational problems during the pandemic.

We hope that at the end of the three-day conference, we will be better placed to strengthen resilient education systems for improved learning outcomes, to respond to learning needs for all children and to place Foundational Literacy and Numeracy as a priority in the current learning crisis.

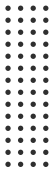
Armando Ali
CEO, PAL Network





- 01. About the PAL Network**
- 02. PAL Network Members**
- 03. About the Conference**
- 04. Acknowledgement**
 - a) Partners
 - b) Planning Committee
 - c) Scientific Committee
- 05. Conference Speakers**
- 06. Conference Panel Discussants**
- 07. Sessions Outline**
- 08. Abstracts- Day 1**
- 09. Abstracts- Day 2**
- 10. Abstracts- Day 3**
- 11. Communication Guide for 2021 Conference**





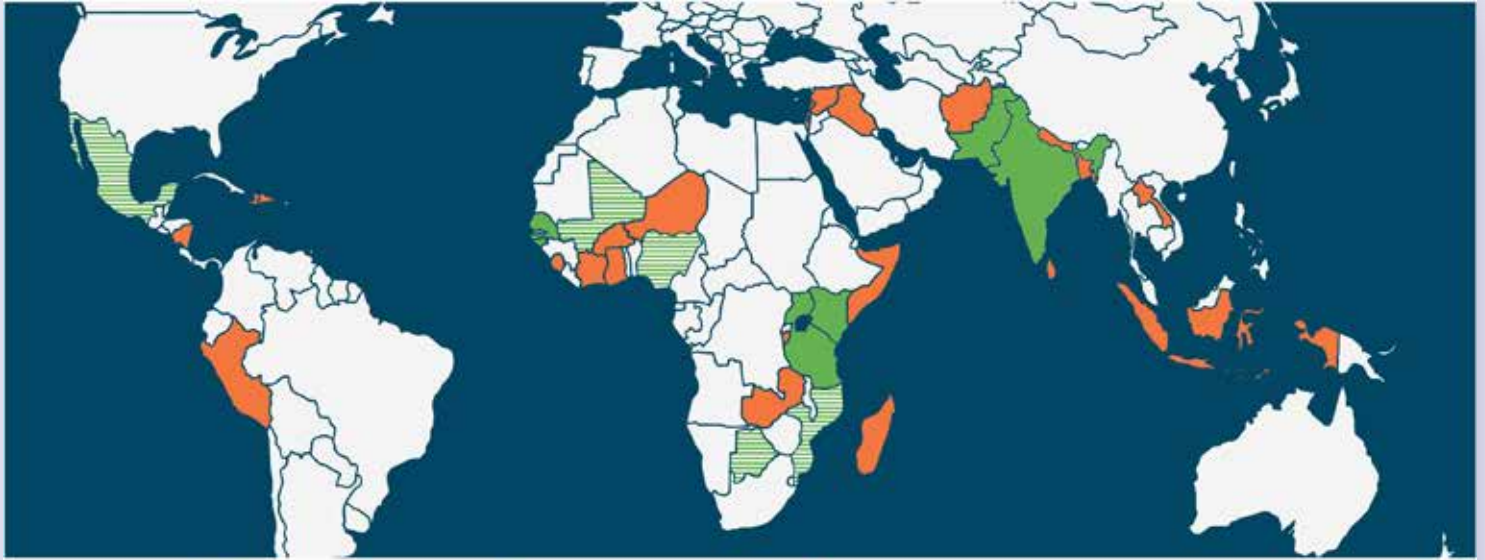
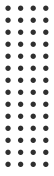
The People's Action for Learning Network (PAL Network) is a south-south partnership whose member countries work across three continents to assess the basic reading and numeracy competencies of children through citizen-led assessments, in order to provide inclusive and equitable data to inform citizen-led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

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 under the theme of Building Better: Ensuring Learning Continuity for All from 2nd – 4th November 2021

The network's first international conference themed, "Ensuring All Children Learn: Lessons on Equity and Inclusion in the Global South" in Kathmandu, Nepal was hosted collaboratively by ASER Pakistan and ASER Nepal





● Representative Nationally ● Representative at State Level ● Education projects using citizen-led assessment tools





Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, the world was already in an educational crisis as 617 million children and adolescents had not attained minimum proficiency in reading and math – 202 million of these in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNESCO, 2018).

This learning crisis has been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 related lockdowns and resultant school closures. The World Bank estimated a loss of 0.6 years of schooling, adding that ‘in the intermediate scenario there may be as much as a 25% increase (from 40% to 50%) in the share of lower secondary-aged children who are below the minimum level of proficiency, (World Bank, 2020).

There has been an upsurge of remote learning programmes, diversified by context, as a measure for continued learning (UNICEF, 2021). Although commendable, questions arose as technology widened the equity gap between populations (affluent vs. poor, urban vs. rural, etc.).

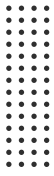
It is against this backdrop that the PAL Network Conference will explore what it takes to build better and ensure learning continuity for all.

The conference theme is supported with four sub-themes, namely: -

- (1) Children’s learning and well-being
- (2) Language, culture, and learning
- (3) Systems, learning and technology, and
- (4) Scaling and the role of partnerships.

The conference will take place virtually from 2nd to 4th November 2021.





Partners



Funders





Virginia Ngindiru

Zizi Afrique Foundation
Chairperson



Rajarshi Singh

PAL Network
Co-Chairperson



Amos Kaburu

PAL Network
Coordinator



Faridah Nassereka

Uwezo Uganda
Lead Rapporteur



Armando Ali

PAL Network
Member



Zaida Mgalla

Uwezo Tanzania
Member



Baela Raza Jamil

Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi
Member



Anabel Velásquez-Durán

MIA Mexico
Member



Thato Letsomo

Young Love
Member



Winnie Navarez

VIdA Nicaragua
Member



Ranajit Bhattacharyya

ASER Centre
Member



Lino Garcia

FACILIDADE
Member



Victoria Miguda

PAL Network
Member



Dionne Oguna

PAL Network
Member



Muhammad Usman

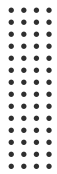
PAL Network
Member



Paul Abok

PAL Network
Member





Venita Kaul

Professor Emerita (Education)
Ambedkar University, India



Frederick Wamalwa

Senior Education Specialist
African Development Bank Group,
Kenya



Godfrey Telli

Independent
Researcher/Consultant



Richard Shukia

Lecturer, University of
Dar es salaam, Tanzania



Rajib Timalsina

Co-Director
ASER Nepal



Rabea Malik

CEO and Research Fellow
IDEAS Pakistan



Jose Antonio

Professor of Anthropology
and Linguistics, Centre for
Research and Higher Studies
in Social Anthropology, Mexico



Sylvia Schmelkes

Academic Vice-president,
Universidad Iberoamericana,
Mexico



Caroline Dyer

Professor of Education and
International Development,
University of Leeds, UK



Benjamin Alcott

Lecturer, University College
London, Institute of
Education, UK



Dana Schimdt

Senior Program Officer,
Echidna Giving, USA



Daniel Plaut

Senior Program Officer,
R4D Innovation Learning
Lead, Edtech Hub, USA



Baela Raza Jamil

Chief Executive Officer,
Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi
(ITA), Pakistan



Mary Goretti Nakabugo

Executive Director
Uwezo Uganda



Felipe Hevia

Director, Medición
Independiente de
Aprendizajes (MIA), Mexico



Ramya Vivekanandan

Senior Education Specialist,
Global Partnership for
Education, USA





H.E. Dr. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete

Keynote Speaker and Chief Guest, Conference Opening Ceremony

H.E. Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete joined the Global Partnership for Education as Chair of the Board of Directors in September 2021. He has had a distinguished public service career, both in the Tanzanian government and subsequently in international and regional organizations. H.E. Jakaya Kikwete served as the President of the United Republic of Tanzania from 2005-2015. He was previously Minister of Finance, Minister for Water, Energy and Mineral Resources, and Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in Tanzania. He also chaired the African Union and the Southern African Development Cooperation (SADC). President Kikwete holds a degree in Economics from the University of Dar es Salaam and is now Chancellor of the University. He is also a retired Lieutenant Colonel of the Tanzanian army. Dr. Kikwete is a lifelong champion of equality education.



Dr. Jaime Saavedra

Keynote speaker and Chief Guest, Conference Closing Ceremony

Dr. Jaime Saavedra currently leads the Education Global Practice at the World Bank Group after having served as the Minister of Education in the Government of Peru from 2013-2016. He is known for his immense contribution in the areas of poverty and inequality, employment, labor market as well as in the education sector. He has done groundbreaking work at the Inter-American Development Bank and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean. Dr. Saavedra has been the acting Vice-President for the Economic and Poverty Reduction Department and the Director of Global Poverty Reduction and Equity Management and has served as the president of the Board of Poverty at the World Bank. He holds a Ph.D. in economics from Columbia University and a Bachelor's degree in economics from the Catholic University of Peru.

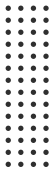


Dr. Rukmini Banerji

Guest Speaker

Dr Rukmini Banerji is the CEO of Pratham Education Foundation. Earlier this year she was awarded the 2021 Yidan Prize for Education Development. Rukmini has extensive field experience in program design and implementation of learning improvement programs in rural and urban areas in India. She was trained as an economist in India, UK and the US and earned her Ph.D. at the University of Chicago. Along with her colleagues in Pratham and ASER, Rukmini and her teams have done pioneering work in assessment and instruction towards ensuring that every child is in school and learning well. The spread of citizen-led assessments across the Global South is often attributed to these efforts.





Dr. Mary Goretti Nakabugo

Dr Mary Goretti Nakabugo is the Executive Director of Uwezo Uganda and the Vice President of the Uganda National Academy of Sciences (UNAS) Council 2019-2022. Previously, she was Twaweza Country Lead and Regional Manager of Uwezo East Africa where she implemented strategic planning and provided leadership to Twaweza programs in Uganda. Dr. Nakabugo has served as Senior Lecturer of Higher Education and Curriculum Studies in South Africa and Uganda. Her contribution to the education sector earned her the positions of Chairperson of Kyambogo University and Muteesa 1 Royal University Councils.



Prof Fernando Reimers

Prof Fernando Reimers is the Ford Foundation Professor of the Practice of International Education and Director of the Global Education Innovation Initiative and the International Education Policy Master's Program at Harvard University. He is also a member of UNESCO's high-level commission on the Futures of Education. Prof Fernades is an expert in the field of education and has written and edited several books which address education as well as other sectors. He has developed three curriculum resources aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. He is an advisor for governments, international development organizations, independent schools and other educational institutions and guides them on how to improve their quality and relevance.



Ms. Clio Dintihlac

Clio Dintihlac is a Senior Program Officer at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and works for their Global Education team. She has also worked at the Jakarta office of The Boston Consulting Group and The Tony Blair Africa Governance Initiative. She interned at the Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs at the European Commission.



Dr. John Mugo

Dr John Mugo doubles up as the Executive Director of Zizi Afrique, and the Program Director for Ujana360. His current interests revolve around holistic development of youth in the TVET sector and exploring expanded competency-building for youth to increase success chances in work and life. John is an experienced relationship-builder with passion for systemic change in education. He has led various ambitious initiatives to improve learning across East Africa. He holds a doctorate in education from the University of Hannover, Germany.





TUESDAY | 2nd November 2021 | MC: Dr. Rajarshi Singh, PAL Network

SESSION ONE: | INTRODUCTION AND PLENARY PAPER PRESENTATION (Time: 1 hour)

4:00 - 4:10pm

Joining and announcements

Facilitator: **Mr. Armando Ali**, Chief Executive Officer, **PAL Network**

4:10 - 4:20pm

ABOUT THE PAL NETWORK 2021 CONFERENCE

Conference Planning Committee Chairperson

Ms. Virginia Ngindiru, Zizi Afrique Foundation, **Kenya**

4.20 - 4.50pm

PLENARY PAPER PRESENTATIONS

Paper 1 (10 minutes)

Calling for an Education Knowledge Bridge: Building Better by Advancing Evidence Use in Education

Presenters:

Dr. Evangeline Nderu

Dr. Suzanne Grant Lewis

Dr. Randa Grob-Zakhary

Paper 2 (10 minutes)

Building back better to avert a learning catastrophe: Estimating learning loss from COVID-19 school shutdowns in Africa and facilitating short-term and long-term learning recovery

Presenters:

Mr. Shiraz Chakera, (UNICEF)

Mr. Noam Angrist, (Young Love)

Paper 3 (10 minutes)

Purpose Driven Education Systems

Presenters:

Dr. Michelle Kaffenberger,

Professor Lant Pritchett, (RISE, Blavatnik School of Government at the University of Oxford)

Chairperson:

Mr. Amit Kaushik
ACER India

Co-chairperson:

Mr. Vikram Guria
ASER, India

Rapporteurs:

Ms. Judith Tumusiime
Ms. Steffi Elizabeth Thomas

4.50 - 5.00pm | Questions & Answers





07 // **Sessions Outline** //

TUESDAY | 2nd November 2021 | MC: Dr. Rajarshi Singh, PAL Network

SESSION TWO: | KEYNOTE ADDRESS AND PANEL DISCUSSION (Time: 55 minutes)

5:00 - 5:20pm | OPENING KEYNOTE SPEECH

HE. Dr. Jakaya M. Kikwete,
Chairperson; GPE Board & Former President, United Republic of Tanzania
Scaling partnerships to building back better in education

Chairperson: Dr. Suman Bhattacharjea ASER India	Rapporteurs: Mr. Boaz Ochi Mr. Kazi Pavel
---	--

5:20 - 5:55pm | PANEL DISCUSSION

PANELISTS:

- **Ms. Clio Dintihlac**, Senior Program Officer, **Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation**
- **Dr. Mary Goretti Nakabugo**, Executive Director, **Uwezo Uganda**
- **Professor Fernando Reimers**, Professor at Harvard, **UNESCO commission on the future of education**

Chairperson: Ms. Baela Raza Jamil ITA Pakistan	Co-chairperson: Ms. Faridah Nassereka Uwezo Uganda	Rapporteurs: Mr. Amos Kaburu Ms. Pramila Bisunke
--	--	---

5:55 - 6:05pm | TRANSITION BREAK

- **Ms. Victoria Miguda**
- **Mr. Muhammad Usman**

SESSION THREE: | BREAK OUT ROOM PAPER PRESENTATIONS (Time: 55 minutes)

6:05 – 6:25pm

Breakout Room I:

Paper 4 (10 minutes)

Desired code vs desirable codes: Language learning in a multi-cultural context

Presenter:

- **Professor Udaya Narayana Singh** Amity University Haryana, India
- **Professor Conchúr O Giollagáin** University of Highlands & Islands, Scotland, UK
- **Dr. Gordon Wells** Soillse, UHI, UK

Paper 5 (10 minutes)

Parental involvement and children's early learning in Ghana, The Gambia, and Zimbabwe.

Presenter:

- **Ms. Vanika Grover** Doctoral candidate in the Education Policy program at Michigan State University





07 // **Sessions Outline** //

TUESDAY | 2nd November 2021 | MC: Dr. Rajarshi Singh, PAL Network

Breakout Room I:

Chairperson: Dr. Modupe Adefeso-Olateju The Education Partnership (TEP) Center	Co-chairperson: Dr. Herman Van De Velde ABACOenRed, Nicaragua	Rapporteurs: Mr. James Mburu Mr. Greyson Mgoi
--	---	--

6.25 – 6.50pm | Questions & Answers

6:05 – 6:25pm

Breakout Room II:

Paper 6 (10 minutes)

Educational innovations with a playful approach to decrease the loss of fundamental learning in times of pandemic by COVID 19

Presenter:

- **Dr. Anabel Velásquez** (CIESAS),
- **Dr. Samana Vergara** (Universidad Veracruzana),
- **Professor Felipe José Hevia de la Jara** (CIESAS)

Paper 7 (10 minutes)

The Capacity of Civil Society Organisations at Sub-national Level for Education Advocacy.

Presenter:

- **Dr. Mary Goretti Nakabugo** Uwezo Uganda
- **Dr. James Urwick,** Uwezo Uganda

Chairperson: Mr. Daniel Plaut Results for Development	Co-chairperson: Ms. Dionne Oguna PAL Network	Rapporteurs: Ms. Winnie Návares Mr. Francis Njuguna
---	--	--

6.25 – 6.50pm | Questions & Answers

6.50 – 7.00pm | Announcements & Evaluation of Day 1 (In breakout rooms)





WED | 3rd November 2021 | MC: Ms. Thato Letsomo – Young Love, Botswana

SESSION FOUR: | PLENARY DISCUSSION (Time: 1 hour)

4:00 - 4:10pm

Joining and announcements, Recap of Day 1

Facilitator: **Ms. Zaida Mgalla**, Uwezo Tanzania

4:10 - 4:20pm

Paper 8 (10 minutes)

Potential of Knowledge Adaptation in the Global South.
Contextualizing Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL).

Presenter:

- **Ms. Virginia Ngindiru** (Zizi Afrique Foundation)
- **Ms. Zaida Mgalla** (Uwezo Uganda)
- **Ms. Thato Letsomo** (Young Love)
- **Dr. Mary Goretti Nakabugo** (Uwezo Uganda),
- **Ms. Amelia Ussene** (Facilidade)

4:10 - 5:00pm | REFLECTION:

Dr. Rukmini Banerji, 2021 Yidan Prize for Education Development winner in conversation with senior PAL Network leaders, **Ms. Baela Raza Jamil**, and **Dr. John Mugo**.

Chairperson:

Mr. Armando Ali
CEO, PAL Network

Rapporteurs:

Mr. Amos Kaburu
Ms. Ana Espinoza Morales

5:00 - 5:10pm | TRANSITION BREAK:

● **Ms. Victoria Miguda**

● **Mr. Muhammad Usman**





WED | 3rd November 2021 | MC: Ms. Thato Letsomo – Young Love, Botswana

SESSION FIVE: | BREAKOUT ROOM PAPER PRESENTATIONS (Time: 1 hr 10 minutes)

5:10 – 5:40 pm

Breakout Room I:

Paper 9 (10 minutes) Educational technology and gender empowerment (participation of girls). Perspectives from the Global South.

Presenter: ● Ms. Ramya Madhavan (Street Child) Ms. Usha Limbu (Street Child, Nepal)

Paper 10 (10 minutes) Foundational Learning supported by Indigenous Learning Resources.

Presenter:

- Mr. Adrian Cetina Catzin, (Doctoral Candidate Florida International University)
- Professor Felipe José Hevia de la Jara (CIESAS)
- Ms. Winny Cherotich Ngeno (PAL Network)
- Ms. Indrani Roy (Research Consultant)
- Dr. Rajarshi Singh (PAL Network)

Paper 11 (10 minutes) Rebuilding with mothers as partners: How and why do mothers engage in children's education in rural India?

Presenter:

- Ms. Laura Cashman (University of Cambridge)
- Ms. Poorva Shekher, (ASER Centre)
- Ms. Ankita Jha, (ASER Centre)
- Ms. Preeti Manchanda (ASER Centre)

Breakout Room I:

Chairperson:

Ms. Ramya Vivekanandan
Global Partnership for Education (GPE)

Co-chairperson:

Ms. Haidara Aissa Magaza
OMAES, Mali

Rapporteurs:

Ms. Maryanne Kimani
Mr. Greyson Mgoi

5.40 – 6.10pm | Questions & Answers





WED | 3rd November 2021 | MC: Ms. Thato Letsomo – Young Love, Botswana

5:10 – 5:40 pm

Breakout Room II:

Paper 12 (10 minutes)

Contextualizing Children’s Mental Wellbeing and Learning Disruption in the times of COVID-19

Presenter:

- **Dr. Abdul Razaque Channa** (University of Sindh, Jamshoro as Assistant Professor)

Paper 13 (10 minutes)

Children’s learning and digital identities observed in an Open Learning Program

Presenter:

- **Dr. Rajarshi Singh** (PAL Network)
- **Mr. Nishant Baghel** (Pratham)

Paper 14 (10 minutes)

Disability and learning in Ethiopia: What has changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Presenter:

- **Professor Nidhi Singal**, (University of Cambridge)
- **Professor Ricardo Sabates**, (University of Cambridge)
- **Professor Dawit T. Tiruneh** (University of Cambridge)
- **Professor Tirussew Teferra** (RISE Ethiopia)

Chairperson:

Mr. Rajib Timalisina
ASER Nepal

Co-chairperson:

Mr. Benjamin Masebo
Uwezo Tanzania

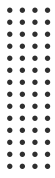
Rapporteurs:

Ms. Winny Cherotich
Ms. Winnie Návarés

5.40 – 6.10pm | Questions & Answers

6.10- 6.20pm | Announcements & Evaluation of Day 2 [In breakout rooms]





THURS | 4th November 2021 | MC: Dr. Rajarshi Singh and Ms. Thato Letsomo

SESSION SIX: | KEYNOTE SPEAKER (Time: 25 minutes)

4:00 - 4:10pm Joining and Announcements & Recap of Day two

Facilitator: **Ms. Amelia Maria Ussene**, Facilidade; Mozambique

4:10 - 4:25pm | **CLOSING KEYNOTE SPEAKER**

Hon Dr. Jaime Saavedra, Global Director, Education; **World Bank Group**,

“Accelerating building better in education in the Global south, optimising the role of development partners”

Chairperson:

Dr. Mary Goretti Nakabugo
Uwezo Uganda

Co-chairperson:

Dr. Herman Van De Velde
ÁBACOenRed, Nicaragua

Rapporteurs:

Ms. Irene Chepng'etich
Ms. Maryanne Kimani

SESSION SEVEN: PLENARY PAPER PRESENTATION (Time: 50 minutes)

4.25 - 4.55 pm

Paper 15 (10 minutes)

Can collaborative action drive better learning outcomes?
A Critical Examination of a Values and life skills project
in Africa

- **Dr. Florence Nansubuga** (Makerere University)
- **Dr. Purity Ngina** (Zizi Afrique Foundation)
- **Mauro Giacomazzi** (Luigi Giussani Institute of Higher Education)
- **Dr. John Mugo** (Zizi Afrique Foundation)

Paper 16 (10 minutes)

Mitigating Learning and Development Losses for Children
in Early Years: Evidence from the Global South

- **Mr. Hamza Sarfraz**, Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA)
- **Ms. Saba Saeed**, Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA)
- **Ms. Baela Raza Jamil**, Idara-e-Taleem-o-Aagahi (ITA)

Paper 17 (15 minutes)

Partnering for progress on basic education and
foundational learning in the Global South

- **Mr. Manos Antoninis** (Global Education Monitoring Report)
- **Mr. Nicolás Buchbinder**, (PAL Network)
- **Mr. Muhamad Usman** (PAL Network)





THURS | 4th November 2021 | MC: Dr. Rajarshi Singh and Ms. Thato Letsomo

Chairperson:

Mr. Noam Angrist
Young Love, Botswana

Co-chairperson:

Dr. Soufianou Moussa
LARTES, Senegal

Rapporteurs:

Ms. Winny Cherotich
Ms. Steffi Elizabeth Thomas

4.55– 5.15pm | Questions & Answers [Plenary]

SESSION EIGHT: | CALL TO ACTION (1 hr 15 minutes)

5.15 – 5.45pm

Presentation of the Conference Call for Action/Declaration and Plenary Reactions

5.45 - 5.55pm

Launch of the 2019 PAL Book

5.55 - 6.05pm

Adoption of the Conference Declaration

6.05 - 6.10pm

Next steps

Chairperson:

Mr. Armando Ali
CEO – PAL Network

Co-chairperson:

Mr. Syeed Ahamed
CEO, Institute of Informatics and
Development (IID)/ASER Bangladesh

Rapporteurs:

Mr. Amos Kaburu
Ms. Judith Tumusiime

6.10 - 6.20pm | CONFERENCE EVALUATION



1. Calling for an Education Knowledge Bridge: BUILDING BETTER BY Advancing Evidence Use in Education

Evangeline Nderu, Suzanne Grant Lewis, Randa Grob-Zakhary

The gap between what we know ... and what we do in education lies at the heart of a global learning crisis. The learning crisis demands dramatic and urgent system improvement. Despite huge progress and many important initiatives, the communities of research, policy, and practice are often independent islands of activity making worthy, but uncoordinated, attempts to bridge the gaps. This is even more so when considering evidence that emerges from civil society organisations focused on applying and refining interventions. Their experiences are rarely reflected in policy or implementation choices. Building on IfE's global COVID School Reopening Tracking, analysis was conducted to interrogate the causes of such barriers, and feasible opportunities for improvement. Analysis of 88 global and regional education knowledge organisations and 46 interviews, were carried out between May 2020 and January 2021. This analysis was complemented by rigorous comparisons with the health system evidence generation and use infrastructure and culture. The findings highlight it is not the lack of new research that is the greatest obstacle to progress, but the failure to access and use what we already know. Furthermore, there is a strong consensus and collective political will about the urgent need to better access and use country and community evidence in education dialogues at local, national, regional, and global levels. While there are outstanding examples that address this challenge, they are building blocks, not complete solutions. Therefore, the final component of this paper puts forth an appeal and roadmap for collective action to span the knowing-doing gap by building an "Education Knowledge Bridge" that lifts experiences and voices from the Global South into a sustainable evidence architecture. Finally, findings are used to propose concrete approaches routinely applying evidence from civil society to strengthen education practices at scale for improved learning outcomes.

2. Building back better to avert a learning catastrophe: Estimating learning loss from COVID-19 school shutdowns in Africa and facilitating short-term and long-term learning recovery.

Shiraz Chakera, Noam Angrist

We model learning losses due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the potential for cost-effective strategies to build back better. Data from Early Grade Reading Assessments in Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Tanzania, and Uganda suggest half to over a year's worth of learning loss. In modeling losses over time, we found that learning deficits for a child in grade 3 could lead to 2.8 years of lost learning by grade 10. While COVID-19 has stymied learning, bold, learning-focused reform consistent with the literature reviewed in this paper—specifically reform on targeted instruction and structured pedagogy—could improve learning even beyond pre-COVID-19 levels.



3. Purpose Driven Education Systems

Michelle Kaffenberger, Lant Pritchett

A common theme across education systems that have successfully shifted to improve learning is the restoration of the core purpose of the education system to equip children with learning. This paper proposes a conceptualization of education systems as being composed of a technical core and support functions. The technical core combines a purpose the system is aiming to achieve with a set of technical practices to achieve the purpose. The support functions, such as HR, accounting, and IT, maintain the operating conditions that enable the technical core to carry out activities. In this conceptualization, education systems may be ineffective in several ways. The purpose of the technical core may be “contested”, such as when key members do not share a coherent vision of what the purpose is. The core may be “rotten” and serve purposes such as providing rents to various actors. Or the core may be “ineffective”, having a shared purpose but inadequate technical practices to support that purpose. Many efforts to improve learning, whether piecemeal changes to support functions or large-scale reforms, are ineffective because they do not change the technical core of the system. Across examples of education systems that have successfully shifted to improve learning outcomes, including in Brazil, Tanzania, Kenya, and India, a shared theme is the clear (re)establishment of learning as a core purpose of the system. This has often taken the form of strong political will and the commitment and dedication of leaders to explicit learning goals, and the clear communication and delegation of these goals to the rest of the system. The commitment to learning goals then allowed other elements in the system, such as information, motivation, support, and finance, to also align around these goals. Such political will and commitment to learning have often been spurred by new and widely available information on low learning levels, and by grassroots movements demanding higher quality education.

4. Desired Code vs Desirable Codes: Language Learning in a Multi-Cultural Context

Udaya Narayana Singh, Conchúr ó Giollagáin, Gordon Wells

The challenge for educators in the Global South is not to allow a learning gap and have a continuity in all kinds of learning environments. The education managers here plan for foundational learning with a belief that children must be seen and counted in the formal system – which is a statistical approach. However, what dominant learning theorists of the Global North do not tell us is that a lot of “unlearning” may be necessary for children belonging to indigenous communities to find a cultural “fit” to function in their own societies whereas the textbooks have a bias towards the majority speech and grammar. Also, what the children learn in the school system is a control over an elite Desired Code that may suit well in their professional life but they do not get to learn about its cultural contexts. However, in some speech communities, this monistic approach to language teaching leaves them in a difficult situation because they are to function in a natural multi-lingual setting that may demand code-switching and mixing in the Desirable Codes. But many other settings – such as in Scotland, one may disfavour code-mixing in Gaelic and English, as that leads to lesser and lesser use of the marginalized speech forms. Although linguistically homogeneous context may seem to be a utopia, the fluid and multidimensional linguistic boundaries at community level may also be viewed as desirably counter-colonial. Contrast this with the West Indies and many other situations where the basilect to acrolect “creole continuum” would throw another kind of challenge to planners on the questions of language definition, mixing and issues of trans languaging. The paper thus raises a debate as to whether a mediating multilingual approach that is eclectic could help us design a new kind of school curriculum for such plural cultural contexts.



5. Parental involvement and children's early learning in Ghana, The Gambia, and Zimbabwe.

Vanika Grover

Active parental involvement in a young children's early development and learning helps develop cognitive and socio-emotional abilities essential for children's mental and physical health and a productive adulthood (Yousafzai et al., 2014). However, there is limited literature from low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) that explains the link between parental involvement and children's early learning. I address this lopsidedness in the literature by quantitatively analyzing associations between home-based parental involvement and children's early learning in LMIC contexts of Ghana, The Gambia and Zimbabwe. With early childhood education institutions shutting down for large periods of time during the global pandemic, the responsibility of providing adequate stimulation to children has shifted primarily to caregivers in the household (Yoshikawa et al, 2020). Thus, to create better targeted and effective policies for parents and children, it is crucial to first understand how parental involvement is linked to children's early learning in varying contexts. With data from UNICEF's Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys Round 6 for the sample countries, I use multivariate regression analysis to conduct my research on 10,000 children in the 3 – 4 year age group. Study results show that mother's involvement is significantly associated with children's higher cognitive development and father's involvement is associated with children's higher physical development. Beyond parents, other adult members in the household also interact with the child, and others' involvement is associated with higher levels of cognitive development. Broadly my findings imply that in the context of LMICs that have different family demographics, for instance larger family sizes, as evidenced by MICS data from Ghana, The Gambia, and Zimbabwe, policy literature while examining the notion of home-based adult involvement should pay careful attention to other family members (beyond the parents) who interact with the child.

6. Educational innovations with a playful approach to decrease the loss of fundamental learning in times of pandemic by COVID 19

Anabel Velásquez - Durán Samana Vergara-Lope Tristán, Felipe José Hevia de la Jara,

The Mexican Educational System seeks to promote quality education for life, however there is a low performance of students as evidenced in different national and international tests. In addition to this context, the effects generated by the COVID-19 pandemic have increased the probability of school dropout and loss of learning, as a result of long absences in schools. Thus, the need arises to implement distance educational innovations to improve foundational learning through a scaling-up process. The objective is to evaluate the effect of the use of a series of educational innovations in reading and mathematics with a playful approach and designed based on the CAMaL (Combined Activities for Maximised Learning) and TaRL (Teaching at the Right Level) principles, on learning loss in children and adolescents in rural municipalities of the State of Veracruz, Mexico. The research approach was quantitative, with a non-experimental transectional design. The sampling was non-probabilistic, considering 301 participants with an average age of 8.5 years. These innovations were implemented by correspondents and teachers, in times of pandemic by COVID-19 through the Project Independent Measurement of Learning - MIA under the modality of summer courses, taking the name of La Radio es MIA. The evaluation was carried out through satisfaction surveys, statistical reports and systematization of the process. The results show that the effect of the playful approach and the use of TaRL and CAMaL with the methodology of the MIA Project are positive, help to reduce learning loss and improve fundamental learning; in addition, these interventions can be scaled through a model of co-construction with municipalities and educational authorities.



7. The Capacity of Civil Society Organisations at Sub-national Level for Education Advocacy.

Mary Goretti Nakabugo, James Urwick

For the past decade we have worked with many civil society organisations (CSOs) at district level in the country to carry out independent, national assessments of children's literacy and numeracy and to raise public awareness about educational issues. The usual pattern has been for one CSO in each district selected for the assessment to recruit citizen-volunteers who, after a short period of training, visit selected households to assess children and obtain survey data both from households and from primary schools. After each assessment exercise findings at district level are made available to the same CSOs. The most recent national assessment exercise (in 2018) was supported by 32 CSOs (one for each district in the sample). This paper examines the situation of our partner CSOs at this unprecedented time of Covid-19. In August-September 2020, using a mixed-method approach we obtained data through a combination of semi-structured interviews conducted by telephone or zoom and a survey questionnaire distributed and collected by email. The interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of eight CSO representatives and, subsequently, questionnaire responses were obtained from 30 out of 32 representatives contacted. The findings show that nearly all of our CSO partners consider advocacy to be part of their mission and are continually active on educational, as well as other social, issues. They are generally able to present their concerns and recommendations both to the district education authorities and to school representatives. Although all the CSOs wish to continue collaborating with us in national assessments, education advocacy and research, they are faced with severe financial constraints. They hope for further training of their staff, especially in resource mobilisation and research methods. The potential for scaling up education interventions and advocacy through CSO partnerships cannot be overemphasised. The challenge is on ensuring sustainability of such partnerships amidst Covid-19 shocks.



8. Potential of Knowledge Adaptation in the Global South. Contextualizing Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL).

Virginia Ngindiru, Zaida Mgalla, Thato Letsomo, Mary Goretti Nakabugo, Amelia Ussene

This paper presents systematic experiences in the adaptation and contextualization of a Pratham's pioneered "Teaching at The Right Level (TaRL) approach to improve basic literacy and numeracy skills among primary school children in a Global South region. To improve basic literacy and numeracy skills of children in grade 3-6, through TaRL within 25-60 days learning camps spread across the year. We will discuss how TaRL was adapted in a Global South region to improve the foundational competencies in numeracy and literacy. The programs applied either school and/ community delivery models, which were led either by regular teachers at school and/or external facilitators. Assessment tools were pegged at the national basic curriculum expectations. The adaptation focused on: i) reskilling of teachers - to master TaRL methodologies ii) periodic assessments -establishing learning levels and ascertain learner progress; iii) targeted instruction -whereby level-appropriate material and activities are organized in fun and engaging way; iv) parental involvement, v) continuous teacher support-through mentoring and refresher course, and vi) monitoring and learning-through school visits, observation and reflection meetings. Over 41,000 students were reached in the region. In this paper, we will discuss the achievements of the programs in light of improved literacy and numeracy skills, parental engagement, partnerships and teacher professional development. For example progress in Numeracy ranges between 60-95% while in literacy it ranges between 41-83% respectively. Discussing these results we demonstrate the potential of contextualising TaRL in the Global South region and the impact it has on improving foundational Literacy and Numeracy skills. It is possible to adapt TaRL in Africa to ensure no child is left behind in learning the basics. But, it requires careful design, partnership and monitoring.

9. Children's learning and digital identities observed in an Open Learning Program

Nishant Baghel, Rajarshi Singh

Experiments showcasing the positive impact of educational technology on children's learning is well documented. But often, innovative solutions that are "ported" from the global north fail to assist children in rural and developing contexts in their learning journeys. Our digital initiative was launched in 2015. Its approach is community-driven, focused on supporting the development of children's cognitive and non-cognitive skills, and integrates technology with social platforms for activity-based learning. The program has kept evolving since its inception, experimenting with content, delivery mechanisms, learning structures and other programmatic aspects. The proposed paper intends to outline the sociological ramifications and dynamics of group-level identity observed in in our Open Learning Program across 400+ rural locations. An analysis of children's groups and examination of children's interactions will be used to understand how children's adoption of self-learning in a developing context. Furthermore, social constructs, group cohesion, and group formation will also be analyzed to gain insights into children's self-regulated learning. While the intervention serves as a scalable model to overcome barriers of poor access to materials and supporting children's learning through digital education tools, this paper will focus on children's digital identities and learning.



10. Contextualising Children's Mental Wellbeing and Learning Disruption in the times of COVID

Abdul Razaque Channa

COVID-19 has detrimental effect on the vulnerable members of the population especially people with disability, senior citizens, and school aged children. Corona is believed to be unlike anything humanity has seen in recent history because of its implications on children's health, mental well-being, and educational disruption. This research paper examines public primary education system and investigates the implications on children's mental health and school learning in Pakistan's Sindh Province during COVID-19. This ethnographic study incorporates an interdisciplinary approach with a focus on applied anthropology and educational pedagogy. The data is collected using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods. Ethnographic research methods such as participant observation, semi-structured interviews, and case studies are used to collect qualitative data. Surveys through e.g., via email, Facebook, WhatsApp and SMS are used to gather quantitative responses. The study's findings suggest that the educational disruption caused by COVID-19 has affected children's school learning 1. i.e., many fifth-grade students were unable to read the grade three lesson for a school textbook. 2. limited sociability and a lack of play affect children's mental health, impacting their ability to focus on their studies and causing them to forget letters and words in simple sentence writing. Furthermore, the corona has revealed the disparities in socioeconomic opportunities for school learning, access to educational resources, and the government's inability to reach out to society's most vulnerable population in times of crisis.

11. Educational technology and gender empowerment (participation of girls). Perspectives from the Global South.

Usha Limbu, Ramya Madhavan

Marginalised children and communities face immeasurable risk due to the COVID-19 crisis. In Nepal, 8M+ children are out of school as a result of school closures and educators have turned to technology to mitigate the impact of this. However, these efforts have tended to exclude children who were already out of school and cannot access alternative forms of learning due to the digital divide and access to low-tech alternatives is limited due to discrimination in language. Only 12% of children have had access to alternative learning, compounding chronic learning crises [UNICEF 2021]. Our 'Marginalised No More' [GEC/LNGB] focused on effective and equitable approaches to addressing gaps in alternative learning for adolescent, out-of-school Dalit girls in Nepal's Eastern Terai. We pivoted towards a combination of recorded instruction and interactive resources to reach over 4,000 girls in hard-to-reach and remote areas, about 70% of whom could not recognise a single letter when they joined the programme. These resources were in the local vernacular and encouraged self-learning. However, the learning approach relied on robust engagement with communities in order to translate into effective implementation. Our Community Management Committees (CMC), comprising parents, community leaders and students, played a central role in the delivery of the programme. With our teams unable to access communities due to stringent mobility restrictions, community focal points led daily and weekly monitoring and remediation of girls requiring specific support. In our experience, the use of edtech coupled with intensive community-centred strategies was critical in ensuring continued learning for girls during the lockdown; 54% of the girls progressed to reading paragraphs and stories compared to 22% at baseline. As Nepal enters another indefinite lockdown, efforts to scale edtech, especially in hard-to-reach and remote communities, must include a community centered approach in order to achieve successful outcomes at scale.



12. Foundational Learning supported by Indigenous Learning Resources- Experiences from Every Language Teaches Us (ELTU) Project

Winnie Cherotich, Indrani Roy, Adrian Cetina Catzin, Felipe Hevia, Rajarshi Singh

UNESCO estimates that despite multiple years of schooling 617 million children and adolescents worldwide have not achieved minimum proficiency levels in math's and reading (UIS, 2017). The resultant "learning poverty" (World Bank, 2019) is expected to deepen significantly as a result of the COVID-19 related school closures. Distancing from formal education since March/April 2020 has disproportionately affected children who were already disadvantaged. During this time the situation of girls' education has been worse (Acosta & Evans, 2020). To tackle these challenges, governments across the Global South have supported distance education and blended learning programs. However, due to the gap between learning content and children's local contexts, most education systems in developing economies have not been able to adequately support children's learning in hard-to-reach areas during the pandemic. Without teachers to help them navigate through teaching-learning content, the learning gains may have been limited for young learners. This paper describes the efforts made in promoting community and indigenous knowledge to support foundational literacy and numeracy in children as part of the Every Language Teaches Us (ELTU) project. ELTU is working towards building a repository of indigenous learning materials (games, songs, stories, riddles, puzzles, ice breakers, dances etc.) to strengthen children's foundational literacy and numeracy and make children's learning aligned to their socio-cultural environs across six PAL countries (India, Pakistan, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Mexico). PAL Network's experiences in collecting, collating and adapting indigenous learning resources are presented in detail. The process of including materials from local communities to enhance children's access to contextualized teaching-learning resources and the insights gained during the process are discussed. The paper aims to show how incorporating indigenous learning materials can enhance learning interventions and at the same time help in revitalising the languages themselves.

13. Rebuilding with mothers as partners: How and why do mothers engage in children's education in rural India?

Laura Cashman, Poorva Shekher

While the COVID-19 pandemic led to unparalleled challenges for the global education community, it also brought about a period of innovation. Evidence from rural India demonstrates that 75% of children received familial support for their learning during school closures and the more educated the parents, the more help their children received. Considering the link between parental involvement, achievement and socio-emotional learning for children, educationalists can take advantage of this momentum to further involve parents, especially mothers, as we rebuild the education system. In response, this study explores the influence of various maternal characteristics on engagement with children in rural India. Findings from both quantitative and qualitative surveys determine a link between mothers' socio-economic status (SES) and their involvement in their children's education. Using quantitative data from the mothers of over 11,000 underperforming, primary-age children, we found that mothers with higher levels of education and wealth were more likely to be engaged in their children's schooling and learning. Detailed qualitative interviews with 40 mothers demonstrate that the double burden of household chores and farm-related work act as a barrier to engagement for mothers from low SES backgrounds. Maternal background characteristics not only impact their involvement levels but also the type of activities they choose to engage in, whether this is indirect support, such as ensuring that they attend school, or more hands-on engagement in learning activities at home. As we begin the process of rebuilding our education system, we believe that mothers can continue to play a vital role in their children's education. This study sheds light on some of the factors and limitations that contribute to the kind of engagement mothers have with children's learning. We hope that this can be used to devise efficient ways for better involvement of mothers in improving their child's education.

14. Disability and learning in Ethiopia: What has changed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic?

Nidhi Singal, Ricardo Sabates, DawitT. Tiruneh, Tirussew

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to pose challenges for the provision of education for children around the world. Learning during the prolonged school closures has been particularly challenging for children with disabilities. Their parents, for instance, voiced considerable challenges in meeting the educational and emotional needs of their children, as well as continuing to engage with their livelihood activities. Therefore, significant concerns are being raised in relation to the impact of school closures on learning and emotional wellbeing for children with disabilities. In this paper, we show changes in the prevalence of disabilities in Ethiopia as well as changes in numeracy achievement which could have been the result of school closure. We present findings from data which was collected for grade 1 and grade 4 children in 2018-19 (prior to the pandemic) and then in 2020-21 (right after schools reopened) in six regions of Ethiopia. We demonstrate that the prevalence of mild, moderate to severe difficulties has increased over time and there are indications of formal numeracy loss for children with disabilities relative to children without disabilities. As we move forward with the hope of returning to regular school routines, there is a need to acknowledge that children with disabilities, like all children, will need targeted support in re-engaging with learning, which may be different across regions. These are important reflections that we hope to present in the PAL Network Conference if our paper is selected. Keywords: Covid-19 School Closure; Disability; Numeracy; Equity; Ethiopia. were most significant at the Grade 1 level, where scores doubled in Baijapur and nearly doubled in the other two districts.



15. Can collaborative action drive better learning outcomes? A Critical Examination of a Values and life skills project in Africa

John Mugo, Purity Ngina, Devotha Mlay, Mauro Giacomazzi, Luigi Giussani, Florence Nansubuga

The education sector in this region has witnessed tremendous change in policy, improvement of learning environments and curricular and instructional transformation to match the demands of the 21st-century. Notably, the curricula in some countries within the region have adopted skills for 21st-century living, including value-based education to uphold national ethos. To support this vision, civil society organizations under the umbrella of a regional network, have established a collaborative understanding and measure of values and life skills. This collaboration brings together government agencies, teachers, parents and civil society actors to: 1) Develop contextualized and open-sourced tools; 2) Use the tools to assess selected values and life skills among adolescents aged 13-17 years; 3) Use the evidence to nudge greater focus on these competences among teachers, parents and children/youth; and 4) Develop local expertise in measurement and amplify the southern voice. We have adopted a participatory process, where 50 panelists develop the tools, around 30 advisors collaborate to inform the process, and 50 institutions engage in learning sessions. This paper examines the theory of participation, its rationale and effectiveness in achieving the assessment objectives. First, a critical review will analyze literature on the theory of coalition-building and propose a framework for understanding collaborative actions in education. This framework will serve as a lens to examine the tenets of values and life skills, including design and operational aspects. Lastly, we will be examined in our potential to inform change in policy and practice, basing on the completed activities, including the contextualization and literature review studies, the tool development workshops and pilots, and the learning meetings. This paper will provide a framework for establishing and implementing collaborative projects in the global south, nurturing evidence cultures and using learning to inform change. Key Words: Life skills, collaboration, civil society organization, Assessment

16. Mitigating Learning and Development Losses for Children in Early Years: Evidence from the Global South

Hamza Sarfraz, Saba Saeed, Baela Raza Jamil

As practitioners and stakeholders continue to cope with the ramifications of pandemic-induced school closures and disruptions in the educational landscape, it is becoming clearer that official early year's schooling—particularly in Global South settings—involve more than just academics. These are also spaces for childcare, enabling environments, and child development. Thus, the onset of COVID-19 pandemic has brought about learning and development losses for young children (aged 3-7). The emerging question then with regards to child learning and wellbeing is 1) the exact nature of the pandemic's impact on early years and 2) the solutions that can address this adverse impact. This paper aims to investigate the effects of COVID-19 on early learning environments and the potential for home-based learning in addressing learning losses and children's socio-emotional well-being. Our insights are based on an early years' mixed-methods study, covering 2000+ households and 150+ schools, undertaken in a province in the Global South. The study deploys the global MELQO tools for early years to collect evidence on home learning environments and practices, socio-economic situation, child wellbeing, teacher support, and distance learning for children aged 3-7. Our quantitative data is complemented by extensive qualitative interviews with various actors. In this paper, we identify key nodes that can be leveraged to ensure child wellbeing and learning at a systems and household level. There is an appetite for early learning at the household level. Parents have engaged with children's academic and socio-emotional learning at home. There is also evidence of play-based learning emerging as a low-cost solution for home learning. Teachers have also attempted to ensure children's wellbeing during school closures through low-tech approaches. However, gaps remain with regards to parental capacity to engage children in alternate forms of early years pedagogy. In this paper, we examine these various facets and present systems level and context-relevant policy suggestions for the future.

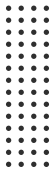


17. Partnering for progress on basic education and foundational learning in the Global South

Manos Antoninis, Nicolás Buchbinder, Muhammad Usman

At current rates, many countries will miss the targets of universal primary and secondary completion. Furthermore, the current COVID-19 pandemic puts critical progress made towards SDG 4 and national education goals in jeopardy. Despite the magnitude of the current challenge, we believe that by building strong partnerships around the importance of universal completion and learning, there is a unique opportunity to accelerate systemic change. Under the theme of 'Scaling and the importance of partnerships', we propose to present the role of partnerships behind a new initiative designed to support effective country-led change on basic education and foundational learning in Africa – central components of the fourth Sustainable Development Goal on education, SDG 4. Ministry of Education representatives in focus countries from each Africa sub-region will work with us to identify and research policy bottlenecks and successes at the national level on basic education and foundational learning. Along with new data analysis on the theme, including CLA data, core findings from the national collaborative research will be shared in an annual regional Spotlight Report and discussed in depth in a new regional peer learning mechanism established by the African Union. The presentation would explain the foundational work being put in place with partners to lay the ground for the Spotlight Series, and the preparation underway to ensure its findings contribute to peer-learning and stronger accountability at a continental level.





Please follow us on our social media handles



palnetworkHQ



palnetworkHQ



PAL Network



PAL Network



PAL Network

2021 Conference hashtags

Main hashtag

#PALConf2021

Other hashtags

#BuildingBetter
#LessonsFromGlobalSouth

Tweeting Guidelines

- Photo posts get 35% more engagement than standard tweets. Photos take up more space on your Twitter feed and naturally attract attention. Don't be shy about posting lots of photos at the conference!
- Tweets that contain data or numbers get 18% more retweets compared to posts that don't. Where possible, during conference sessions, remember to live tweet data, statistics and case studies!
- Please tag @palnetworkHQ in your tweets so we can keep a record of twitter activity during the conference

Tips

- Remember to share up to 30 second videos of the 2021 PAL Conference sessions on your social media handles and tag PAL Network
- We will ask for your feedback at the end of every day of the conference, please share both positive and negative and what needs to be improved after every session with us. Questions are also allowed.
- Please remember to share all images you capture with us during and after the conference. You can email the images to conference@palnetwork.org

