CONCEPT NOTE

PURPOSE OF THE MEETING
The PAL Network will organize a consultative meeting immediately prior to the UKFIET conference at the University of Oxford, tentatively scheduled for Monday 4th September. The aim of the meeting is to discuss ideas and recommendations to better position PAL Network to inform global monitoring efforts towards achieving SDG4, with a particular focus on Indicator 4.1. The outcome of the meeting will be concrete, action-oriented recommendations for the strategic engagement of PAL Network in monitoring progress towards achieving SDG4 between now and 2030.

BACKGROUND
Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) sets bold and ambitious new targets that emphasise the quality and equity of education, building on the previous focus of access. SDG4 requires that ‘no education target should be considered met unless met by all’. To ensure that no child is left behind, active efforts are needed to identify the most disadvantaged children. Identifying these children requires an understanding of where they are most likely to be found.

Across the developing world, the hardest to reach children are often found in the hardest to reach areas, and are not likely to be in school. Even when children are enrolled in school, many attend irregularly. When children do attend, they may be enrolled in schools that are not government schools, and do not feature in any official records. Whilst evidence generated via school-based assessments may be well suited to Western country contexts, in developing countries these types of assessments cannot answer the question of whether all children are learning.

Since 2015, there have been intensive efforts to design metrics intended to measure and track countries’ progress towards the SDG targets and their respective indicators. Many of the proposed methods and approaches to obtain globally comparable measures of learning include data from school-based assessments. Data from household-based assessments have recently been included in the UNESCO Institute for Statistics Catalogue of Learning Assessments which marks and important step towards the inclusion of learning data for children in the developing world who are likely to be found in non-traditional settings.

CITIZEN-LED ASSESSMENTS
Citizen-led assessments have made robust contributions to increasing understanding of the learning crisis, and have significantly improved knowledge of the inequalities that persist in educational access and acquisition of foundational reading and numeracy skills. In contexts where a significant proportion of children are out-of-school or attending irregularly, school-based assessments may suffer from selection bias. Collecting data from households ensures that all children, regardless of the type of school they attend, are represented in the study sample. Household-based, citizen-led assessments present a strong and necessary alternative to understanding progress towards achieving SDG4.
OBJECTIVES
The PAL Network will convene a small group of experts who are familiar with citizen-led assessments and engaged in forums and advisory groups developing indicators designed to measure countries’ progress towards the SDG4 targets, to discuss and provide recommendations regarding:

1. How best to package and position existing data from citizen-led assessments to monitor progress of all children in non-traditional settings often observed in developing countries;
2. How best PAL Network can continue to engage in forums such as GAML to ensure the contexts of global South countries are represented and heard;
3. The development of a global reporting scale that has enough granularity at the lower levels so as to be able to capture the wide variation in learning levels.

OUTPUTS
The consultative meeting will result in the following outputs:
- A report summarizing the meeting, including action-oriented recommendations and next steps for PAL Network;
- A series of Information Briefs produced by PAL Network based on the recommendations;
- A position paper on why data from citizen-led assessments is vital to monitoring progress towards achieving SDG4

MEETING ORGANIZATION
The consultative meeting is tentatively scheduled to take place on the afternoon of Monday September 4th at the University of Oxford, immediately prior to the UKFIET meeting on Tuesday. The PAL Network will identify approximately ten experts to participate in the meeting. The PAL Network will prepare and agenda, participants list and background documents to be circulated prior to the meeting. The working language of the meeting shall be English.