WHY, WHAT AND HOW OF ASSESSMENTS: WORKSHOP FOR THE PAL NETWORK

Concept Note

The People’s Action for Learning Network (PAL Network) now comprises of fourteen countries working across three continents\(^1\) to assess the basic reading and arithmetic competencies of all children, in their homes. Findings from these assessments are increasingly being cited in education debates at national and international levels\(^2\). Assessment tools lie at the core of these citizen-led assessments and hence it is important to adopt stringent test development processes in order to ensure that the data from these assessments is reliable and the conclusions are valid.

In this context, the proposed workshop aims to:

1) **Build capacity of participants in assessment design**
   Most of the literature on educational assessments is based around developed country contexts where almost all children are in school, attend regularly and are able to read and do basic arithmetic in early grades. The test instruments in these countries are designed for these contexts. Over the years, several members of the PAL Network have developed knowledge and expertise (usually by experimenting in the field) in designing assessments that meet our core principles of assessing all children in the household, while also being simple to administer, understand, and communicate. This workshop aims to bring together the experiences and expertise within the PAL Network to improve the assessment development process for the new as well as old members.

2) **Develop and pilot framework, items and methods to get a deeper understanding of assessment design theories**
   Using a case study based approach of applying theory into practice, this workshop aims to facilitate participants to come up with assessment framework and items that can later be piloted by participants in their own countries. This will facilitate continued engagement and discussion around improving test development and piloting processes.

3) **Discuss steps to finalize a common quality assurance framework for test development for the PAL Network**
   This workshop will provide an opportunity for members to share the processes that they follow while developing and piloting assessment tools. Based on these discussions efforts will be made to finalize common minimum guidelines that can be documented as a framework to ensure quality of the test development process for all PAL Network members.

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\(^2\) For instance, national planning documents (such as India’s 12\(^{th}\) Five Year Plan document), several editions of UNESCO’s Global Education Monitoring Report, Brookings Institution’s Learning Metric Task Force, etc.
Topics covered
- Introduction to assessments – definitions, perspectives and critical questions
- Purpose of assessment
- Principles of robust assessment
- Prerequisites to learning assessments
- Developing and piloting assessments

Delivery method
While delivering the above topics, a holistic approach will be followed that includes discussion on popular literature around assessment development contextualised for citizen-led assessments; CLA-like case-studies to apply theory into practice at each stage; decisions and experiences from ASER India and other PAL Network members.

Participants
1-2 members from the assessment development team and the operations lead of each country

Logistical details
Event: 5-day workshop
Dates: Monday, 27th November to Friday 1st December 2017
Venue: Lagos, Nigeria