



My Village, a learning village

Introduction

My Village is an ambitious learning intervention project aimed at supporting at least one million children to read and do basic math in the next five years through community participation.

Why My Village?

Evidence from PAL Network 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 and adolescents world-wide did not have the foundational skills of reading and doing basic math of which 202 million were from Sub-Saharan Africa. Assessments by PAL members, such as Uwezo / ASER and data from Ministries of Education (MoE) have shown that almost 50% of school aged children are unable to read and comprehend a simple sentence. This global phenomenon of children's schooling without sufficient learning (as highlighted by PAL's work) is commonly known as 'learning poverty'.

Most often interventions have targeted only a fraction of children, and many being done in schools. The Accelerated Learning Programs within the PAL Network have been conducted in schools and targets children between grades 3-5. Between 2018 and 2021, the network members reached over 164,000 children in over 2,300 disadvantaged communities across eight countries. This is just but a small fraction of children that need to be supported. PAL Network recognises the need to put in more effort to reach more children and support them to acquire foundational literacy and numeracy skills as building blocks to a better future.

My village project seeks to bridge this gap, with a goal of supporting ALL children of primary school age in a village to read and do basic math.

Project Locations

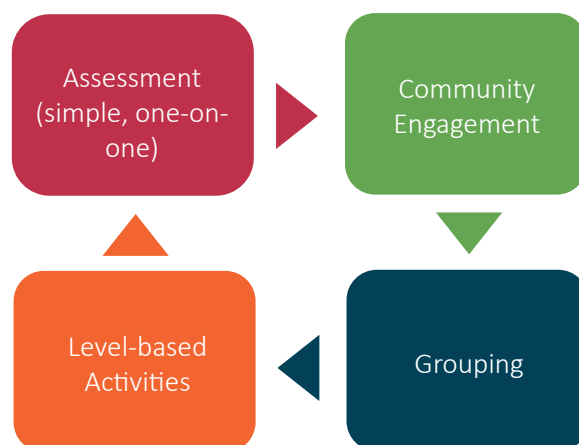
My Village project shall be piloted in 100 villages each in Kenya, Tanzania, and Nepal, for a period of two years. 50 villages each shall be sampled for year one, and another 50 added in year two.

Implementation Approaches

My village shall combine various implementation models to support learning; i) accelerated learning camps, ii) Short Message Service (SMS), iii) community libraries, and iv) life skills sessions

I. Accelerated Learning Camps

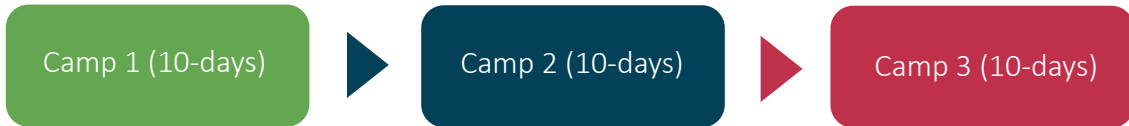
My village learning camps shall follow the Accelerated Learning Pedagogy (ALP)¹ that emphasizes beginning with the learners at their level, regardless of their age or grade. In this approach, children are first assessed to establish their learning levels. Results from the assessments are then used to group learners and level-appropriate learning activities facilitated to help them move from one level to the next. Periodic assessments are administered to track progress and inform regrouping. The figure below summarizes the approach.



¹ The Accelerated Learning Pedagogy is inspired by the Teaching at the Right Level (TaRL) approach, a teaching-learning approach originally designed to help children in grades 3-5 acquire basic reading and math skills (Banerjee, et al., 2016) by Pratham in India

The ALP learning camp process

The program shall be conducted in 30-day learning camps organized in 3 sessions of 10 days each. At the end of every 10 days, the facilitators/volunteers shall assess the children in the camps to track progress and inform regrouping. The figure below presents a summary of the process.



II. SMS Component

Messages shall be used to complement face to face sessions and enhance community participation. At least two messages shall be shared weekly, one containing a learning exercise and the other with instructions for implementing the activity. The messages shall be theme-based and connected to what children are exposed to in the learning camps.

PAL Network has developed an SMS system (Mjisomee), that will facilitate delivery of messages to parents and volunteers. Each country shall however require a short code from a local mobile service provider that will be connected to the SMS system.

III. Community Libraries

In selected villages, children will be supported to access reading materials through community libraries to help children cultivate a reading culture and sustain learning gains. The libraries to be stocked with simple story books that will be accessible to the children. Resources collected from the PAL Every Language Teaches Us project shall be availed to the libraries. In a sub-set of villages, digital content shall also be availed via tablets.

To further enhance community content creation, story telling sessions shall be organized and a select number of stories documented and availed in the community libraries.

IV. Life Skills Sessions

Periodically, women volunteers will facilitate life skills sessions with all girls in the village (12 years and beyond) about children's sexual and reproductive health rights. They will also train girls and boys to improve their soft skills and respect each other.

Community Participation

We recognise the important role of the community for the success of My Village. In all sampled villages, the local leaders and community members shall have a role to play in supporting children's learning. Community members shall form village education committees, tasked with planning for and supporting children's learning.

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