

OPPORTUNITY TO WORK AT THE PAL NETWORK

POSITION: Senior Program Officer
FT/PT: Full Time (40 hours per week)
UNIT: Assessment
LOCATION: Remote / Nairobi
REPORTS TO: Assessment Manager

The [People's Action for Learning \(PAL\) Network](#) is currently seeking the services of a Senior Program Officer in its Assessment Unit. The SPO will support the Assessment Manager to implement the project-related and strategic efforts of the unit, ensuring continued strengths of the PAL Network. The SPO will lead the management of assigned project areas, work closely with leading international experts and colleagues on assessment and research, and lead relations with PAL Network's 17 member country teams. At the request of the Assessment Manager and/or Senior Management, the SPO will also be expected to provide support to other pillars (action, advocacy and research), to participate in fundraising tasks, and to promote the PAL Network at various fora, as needed.

About PAL Network

The People's Action for Learning (PAL) Network is a south-south partnership of 17 member organizations working across Africa, Asia and the Americas to support children's basic reading and numeracy skills. Member organizations conduct citizen-led assessments and action interventions aimed at improving foundational learning outcomes. Registered as an NGO in Nairobi (Kenya), the PAL Network was formed to accelerate and coordinate the shared work of its members towards achieving common goals and objectives, and prides itself on being an organisation that is *created by, led by, and for the Global South*.

About the Assessment Pillar

Over the past 15 years, the [Citizen-Led Assessments \(CLAs\)](#) model, a low-cost, scalable and highly effective model that was pioneered by ASER India in 2005, has organically and rapidly spread across the Global South by the PAL Network member organisations. Evidence from these CLAs has illuminated children's foundational learning levels regularly and reliably, now recognised as one of the few measures of learning at such a large scale for both in- and out-of-school children, and has had substantial impact on policy and practice worldwide. One of the major motivations for the creation of the PAL Network was to amplify the findings from these CLAs by member organisations for global policy and practice to promote children's foundational learning. Assessments are thus a core unit at PAL Network and have placed us on the global map of education monitoring efforts.

Since 2018, the PAL Network began designing 'common assessments'¹ - a natural evolution from the CLA movement. The International Common Assessment of Numeracy (ICAN) was the first proof of concept and was administered in 2019 and 2022 in 13 and 7 countries respectively. Currently, the PAL Network is finalizing the design of the Early Language & Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PAL-ELANA), a digitally

¹ 'Common assessment' is a term used by the PAL Network to refer to the same assessment format and items being used across country contexts to promote rigorous cross-country comparisons and learning.

adaptive assessment of numeracy, language, and literacy, and will be scaling it to 12 countries in 2024. The Network has also initiated work on a large-scale common assessment of numeracy, language, and literacy in 15 countries to provide nationally representative estimates of foundational learning to check progress against SDG 4 targets. The selected candidates will be connected to these innovations and multi-country efforts.

RESPONSIBILITIES

ASSESSMENT DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION AND ADVOCACY (80%)

- Support the Assessment Manager with strategic and technical tasks within the unit.
- Lead the management of specific project areas as assigned and support with the technical and operational aspects of PAL Network's common assessment initiatives: International Common Assessment of Numeracy (ICAN), International Common Assessment of Reading (ICARe), and Early Language & Literacy and Numeracy Assessment (PAL-ELANA).
- Work closely with PAL Network member organisations to understand and document country-level assessment initiatives and provide support through capacity building workshops and knowledge sharing sessions.
- Support in creating linkages with assessment and data agencies for enhanced analysis and use of CLA data.
- Participate in international conferences and events disseminating the work of PAL Network.
- Develop blogs, research articles and white papers on new assessment initiatives.

FUNDRAISING and PROJECT MANAGEMENT (10%)

- Support in identifying fundraising opportunities for the Assessment Unit.
- Participate in proposal writing.
- Support program staff with budgeting procedures and creating annual and quarterly budgets.
- Support with oversight of task completion and accountability.
- Support other units with assessment related activities and capacity building.

OTHER (10%)

- Attend, and fully participate in, network / staff meetings and retreats as required.
- Write bimonthly and annual progress reports, and use these as the basis for monthly and annual engagements with the line supervisor.
- Perform such other duties as may be required from time to time.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Evidence that applications meet the essential criteria will be assessed by the following methods: Application (A), Interview (I), Test (T) and References (R), as indicated below:

Education

- Master's or equivalent degree. Specialization in education, psychology, economics, public policy, development studies, statistics or any related field is an advantage. (A)

Work experience

- 3 to 5 years' experience with large-scale projects. Projects being in education / education assessment are an advantage. (A)

Communication

- Attention to detail. (I,T,R)
- Ability to communicate and engage with a diverse and cross-cultural audience. (I,T,R)
- Clear and precise communication skills (oral and written) in English is essential. (A,I,T)
- Working proficiency in French, Spanish or Portuguese will be an advantage. (A, I)

Technical

- Knowledge of assessment instruments, especially in foundational literacy and numeracy, in development, implementation and/or data analysis. (I,T,R)
- Experience of research writing. (A,R)
- Familiarity with the CLA approach will be an advantage. (A, I)

Organisation

- Able to work and manage large multicultural teams effectively and efficiently (I,R)
- Takes initiative, thinks innovatively and learns independently. (I,R)
- Respects diversity and is able to work in large and small groups. (I,R)
- Open to rural/international travel for long and short durations for trainings, field pilots, meetings and workshops. (I)

Application Procedure

To apply for this position, please send the following documents to jobs@palnetwork.org by 11:59pm East Africa Time (EAT) on **Sunday, November 26th 2023**:

1. Statement of Purpose (800 words max) describing your motivation for working with the PAL Network and why you would be a good candidate for this role. Please give specific examples that align with this job description and illustrate your previous experiences.
2. CV or Resume
3. Writing sample, ideally from a short piece you have previously written where you are the only / primary author.

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis so early applications are encouraged. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted, and invited to undertake a short practical test to assess key skills and interview with the hiring committee. If you have any questions, please contact jobs@palnetwork.org or rchaudhry@palnetwork.org.