



**PAL NETWORK**  
People's Action for Learning

# PAL NETWORK 2017 ANNUAL PLAN

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**A FOCUS ON DATA STANDARDS**

## **OUR VISION**

A world where all children acquire the foundational skills that allow them to thrive

## **OUR MISSION**

To bring learning and measurement to the centre of educational policy and practice

# 2017: FOCUS ON DATA STANDARDS

## For Enhanced Evidence Based Advocacy on Learning of ALL Children

The People's Action for Learning (PAL) Network has an old history characterised by individual resolve of countries undertaking citizen led assessments to willingly come together and forge a united front. The formal existence of the PAL Network with a secretariat to support its functions is still relatively young; barely two years old.

A new strategy (2017 to 2019) has been developed to steer the work of the network. The overall direction of PAL Network as articulated in 2015 has been retained. The network will continue to strengthen the capacity of its members to generate, communicate and use the evidence on children's learning to influence global and national policies. The lessons learnt have resulted in several shifts of emphasis.

2017 will focus on agreeing on standards and setting mechanisms of adherence. It is recognised that PAL network is a 'coalition of the willing' as members apply and freely opt in. However, steps will be taken to formalize membership through entering into Memoranda of Understanding to ensure adherence to agreed standards. The PAL Network will play a greater role in ensuring and assuring internal data quality, with a commitment to generating further evidence using existing data, and understanding the assessment to action landscape in a more perceptive way.

## Key Outcome Areas: Key Outputs, Risks and Mitigation Strategies

### OUTCOME AREA 1

#### **PAL Network capacity to generate high quality data improved**

In order to increase internal and external confidence in the quality of citizen-led assessment (CLA) data:

- a) A data quality standards framework will be developed to support the generation of reliable, robust and credible data on learning outcomes that is publicly available.
- b) Existing datasets will be mined for new evidence using citizen-led assessment data. Evidence will be shared widely and regularly, strengthening the reputation of the network in producing relevant and timely updates on the status of learning for *all* children.

### **What has changed in previous plan?**

The first PAL Network Strategy document (2015-2016) made certain assumptions regarding commonality of approach. It did not place adequate time, process and resources to allow 'storming' and 'norming'. Assumptions made regarding shared understanding of unity of design clouded the need to take an in-depth look at members' tools, data processes and standards. Five key steps will need to be taken namely: Data quality standards developed → adherence to quality standards monitored internally → Common metrics developed → Open data for all members' uploaded on PAL website → Data Portal (and Data Query Function) finalized. The year 2017 will focus on achieving the first 2 steps.

### **Potential Risks**

The final decision on adherence lies with the countries. Mechanisms available to PAL network to deal with non-adherence are extremely few. Formalization of membership and the creation of MOUs and quality standards documents across the network may only result in lip service to the agreements, where signatures do not ensure adherence to shared agreements.

### **Risk Management Strategies**

1. Ensure that all processes to draft MoUs and quality standards are as participatory as possible
2. Discuss the MoUs and standard documents at the Data and Design working group level and seek ratification by the Steering Committee before implementation
3. Create a peer-led traffic light monitoring system (red, amber, green) where members' monitor each other's adherence to shared agreements
4. Prepare and share an internal annual review and summary report to network members

## **OUTCOME AREA 2**

### **Network consolidated and positioned to inform global and national monitoring efforts towards SDG4**

The existing network will be consolidated to enable evidence from citizen-led assessments to be packaged and positioned to monitor progress towards achieving SDG4 by:

- a) Seeking and building partnerships with organisations concerned with monitoring, assessment, data and citizen voice.
- b) Repackaging member country data according to SDG4 equity indicators to regularly report learning progress of children most likely to be left behind

### **What has changed in previous plan?**

This outcome has been retained from the previous year. The difference in 2017 will be the more intentional approach. Alliance with like-minded institutions, researchers and individuals

will be built, and more evidence packaged to aid advocacy.

#### **Potential Risks**

PAL Network can only contribute, and it is difficult to fully understand and gauge such attribution. One will need a clear picture of the presence by members in such fora. Research related partnerships will only really take off subject to successful fund raising efforts.

#### **Risk Management Strategies:**

Developed a detailed monitoring plan back by a clearly articulated communication to allow better planning and execution. Continually seek monitoring data to enable one understand progress.

### **OUTCOME AREA 3**

#### **Actions to improve learning taken as a result of CLA's understood and ideas pollinated across the network**

Actions to improve learning taken as a result citizen-led assessments data are wide and varied. In order to better understand the landscape

- a) actions emerging as a result of CLA data will be researched and documented - from policy advocacy to intervention programs intended to improve learning outcomes
- b) initial attempts will be made to network actors who use CLA data to inform their actions

#### **What has changed in previous plan?**

The first network plan did not have a clear articulation of 'assessment to action' even though it was discussed at leadership levels, and was the theme of the 2016 Annual meeting

#### **Potential Risks**

The results of the study that has been commissioned to study the countries theories of change, and their interpretation of action will only be finalised at the end of the year. Fund raising will also need to be undertaken to actualise the 'pollination of action ideas'

#### **Risk Management Strategies**

Efforts will be put in place to receive and act on the unfolding evidence, rather than wait for an end of research report. The secretariat staff member assigned to the Assessment to Action Working group will participate in several joint activities with the research team to allow seamless sharing of emerging findings. Direct fund raising will be undertaken to support 'action'.

## OUTCOME AREA 4

### Network strengthened, bolstered by responsive governance and diversified resourcing

Network strengthened through identification of, and response to, learning needs of both existing and potential members. The ongoing consolidation of governance and working structures within and across network members will ensure well-functioning and responsive network that ensures PAL Network delivers on its strategy and attracts adequate resourcing.

- a) Strengthen existing and new network member's knowledge and understanding of key thematic areas specific to conducting citizen-led assessments (CLA) through a thriving learning environment
- b) Governance structures of the network adhere to principles of corporate governance
- c) Members' participation in working groups and task forces strengthened and supported
- d) Financial health of the network strengthened through diversified resourcing

### What has changed in previous plan?

There are two key shifts in 2017:

1. Mechanisms have been established to ensure more horizontal working across the network membership through 'distributed leadership' executed through five working groups. Special task force committees will be created on a need basis to cater for further contributions. The Secretariat will still play a central role in facilitating, connecting and convening the network, with one designated staff member from the Secretariat supporting each working group.
2. The PAL Network Steering Committee took the decision in July 2016 that PAL Network should seek formal registration. Preparatory processes have begun that will ensure formal registration of PAL Network by 2018. The implication may demand a reconstitution of the current board, and a bigger governance responsibility for the new board.

### Potential Risks

1. The strategic direction has changed from a 'Secretariat strategy' to a 'Network strategy'. This means the Secretariat will play a convening role, with the working groups leading on the shared activities. The risk is that members may have competing priorities and strong time commitments to their in-country work, and this may mean that the work remains undone, or is done by secretariat members.
2. Registration of PAL Network as independent organization may demand a new governance structure with different emphasis of responsibilities spread across legal, financial to strategic roles. A new board that meets the regulatory specifics may need to be constituted. Other demands, like coming up with board charter, policy

documents for the new organization on HR and finance, training will need to be planned for. There will be a high demand of time on the new board yet at the same time the activities of the strategy must be implemented

### **Risk Management Strategies**

#### **On Working Groups**

1. Support working groups, and the leadership to be more efficient and effective. Plan a leaders meeting to allow shared understanding of roles and responsibilities
2. Ensure that every working group has a different member of Secretariat staff assigned to support and coordinate their work; and that the Secretariat member regularly initiates contact; schedules calls where necessary and updates the group on progress
3. Document progress of working groups in a summary report every six months for consideration by the Steering Committee
4. Allow possibilities of other variation of participation, be it ad hoc task forces originating from specific members that support the network

#### **On Governance**

1. Prepare a registration options paper by a legal practitioner succinctly informing on the legal implications (an activity under the OE grant 2016-2017)
2. Prepare governance Papers on different themes, e.g. strategic and management mandates, board constitution and right balance of skills, legal responsibilities, and financial management responsibilities, financial and internal controls amongst others (Under OE Grant).
3. Plan for quarterly meetings for the incoming Board of Directors
4. Prepare an induction package to the PAL Network for incoming Directors
5. Organise for induction for incoming board on corporate governance and if possible on finance for non-finance managers

## **OUTCOME AREA 5**

### **Organisational competence grown and learning, monitoring and evaluation planned for and conducted**

In order to build a culture of learning and reflection, a number of activities will be undertaken:

- a) For staff members where learning opportunities will be integrated into weekly work plans
- b) For programing where monitoring will be purposefully undertaken to inform on if we are on track, and lessons learnt.

### **What has changed in previous plan?**

Monitoring and Evaluation had not been identified as a key outcome area. It was integration in other activities. Due to this, a monitoring and evaluation framework had not even been developed.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion, the intent will be to ensure a well-functioning network that delivers on its strategy. Successful implementation will result in robust data that yields comparable evidence across the network derived from citizen-led assessments. The role of citizen-led assessment data in contributing to, and complementing global efforts to monitor progress towards achieving SDG 4 Indicator 4.1.1 will be more pronounced. The network will be readily able to connect the evidence it collects with actions for improved learning. In this regard therefore, the network will retain focus on its vision of achieving a world where all children acquire basic reading and math competencies, these being the foundations that will allow them to grow.

## 2017: PLAN AND BUDGET

Accounting Code	Planning Code	Sub-Activity	2017 Total USD	2017 Total KES
	1	<b>PAL NETWORK CAPACITY TO GENERATE DATA OF GOOD QUALITY IMPROVED</b>	247,876	24,787,603
	1.1	<b>NETWORK DATA QUALITY STANDARDS FRAMEWORK DEVELOPED</b>		
		Sub total	124,049	12,404,900
	1.2	<b>EXISTING DATASETS MINED FOR NEW INSIGHTS WITH AN EQUITY FOCUS</b>		
		Sub total	123,827	12,382,700
	2	<b>NETWORK STRENGTHENED TO POSITION ITSELF TO INFORM GLOBAL MONITORING EFFORTS TOWARDS SDG4</b>	100,018	10,001,833
	2.1	<b>PAL DATA AND PROCESSES CONSOLIDATED AND REPACKAGED TO AID MONITORING EFFORTS</b>		
		Sub total	50,627	5,062,700
	2.2	<b>PARTNERSHIPS WITH GLOBAL ORGANIZATIONS CONCERNED WITH: EDUCATION MONITORING, ASSESSMENT, DATA AND CITIZEN-FOCUSED ORGANIZATIONS PURSUED</b>		
		Sub total	49,392	4,939,200
	3	<b>ACTIONS TAKEN BY MEMBERS TO IMPROVE LEARNING OUTCOMES UNDERSTOOD AND IDEAS POLLINATED ACROSS THE NETWORK</b>	57,562	5,756,238

Accounting Code	Planning Code	Sub-Activity			2017 Total USD	2017 Total KES	
	3.1	<b>DOCUMENTATION OF ACTIONS EMERGING FROM CITIZEN-LED ASSESSMENT DATA UNDERTAKEN AND SHARED</b>					
		Sub total			17,642	1,764,238	
	3.2	<b>INTERNAL MATCHMAKING FACILITATED FOR LEARNING, SHARING AND ADAPTATIONS</b>					
		Sub total			39,920	3,992,000	
	4	<b>NETWORK STRENGTHENED BOLSTERED BY RESPONSIVE GOVERNANCE AND DIVERSIFIED FUNDING</b>				680,679	68,067,917
	4.1	<b>NETWORK STRENGTHENED THROUGH SHARED LEARNING AMONGST EXISTING AND POTENTIAL NEW MEMBERS</b>					
		Sub total			277,617	17,761,695	
	4.2	<b>GOVERNANCE AND WORKING STRUCTURES CONSOLIDATED TO ENSURE WELL FUNCTIONING NETWORK</b>					
		Sub total			387,810	28,781,000	
	4.3	<b>NETWORK INVESTS IN UPDATING AND INTERESTING POTENTIAL NEW DONORS TO FUND CLA</b>					
		Sub total			15,252	1,525,222	
	5	<b>ORGANISATIONAL COMPETENCE GROWN AND LEARNING, MONITORING AND EVALUATION CARRIED OUT</b>				6,500	650,000
	5.1	<b>LEARNING TO IMPROVE COMPETENCIES IN KEY AREAS UNDERTAKEN</b>					
		Sub total			-	-	

Accounting Code	Planning Code	Sub-Activity			2017 Total USD	2017 Total KES
	<b>5.2</b>	<b>PLANS AND BUDGETS PRODUCED IN A TIMELY MANNER</b>				
		Sub total			1,500	150,000
	<b>5.3</b>	<b>MONITORING AND EVALUATION UNDERTAKEN</b>				
		Sub total			61,501	615,001
		Subtotal Implementation			1,199,137	119,913,700
	<b>6</b>	<b>ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS</b>			<b>73766</b>	<b>7,376,601</b>
		Grand Total			1,272,813	127,281,316