

PAL Network Common Projects

Guidelines on data ownership, sharing, use and archiving

1 Introduction

The People's Action for Learning (PAL) Network is a south-south network of 15 member organizations in 14 countries across Africa, Asia, and the Americas. PAL Network members conduct citizen-led assessments and citizen-led actions for children's learning. In 2019, PAL Network members designed and implemented the Citizen Led Assessment of Numeracy (CLAN) across 13 PAL Network countries. In 2020 and beyond, PAL Network will work towards expanding and strengthening its common initiatives across member countries. This new direction highlights the importance of creating data access and sharing guidelines for PAL Network common projects.

2 Objectives

All common projects are guided by the following principles of the PAL Network:

- We generate responses from the global south that are appropriate for our shared contexts and issues, communicating and sharing our results regularly and learning from each other.
- We monitor and evaluate our assessments and actions in order to learn from our mistakes and take decisions based on evidence.
- We freely share our tools and methods with partners, volunteers, and other organizations.

This document provides guidelines for all PAL Network common projects that members collectively adhere to with regards to data ownership, sharing, use and archiving. These guidelines are intended to promote data access and sharing among researchers and other users to generate new insights, facilitate evidence-based discussions, and creating new partnerships to fulfill PAL Network's vision of ensuring a world where all children have a foundation for lifelong learning.

3 Scope, definition and guidelines

These guidelines apply to data that are gathered through any PAL Network common project. In this context, a "common project" is a multi-country project where financial and/or technical support for data collection is largely provided by the PAL Network. These guidelines are not intended to apply to data gathered by the PAL Network members for their own programs within their countries.

1.1 Data

- 1.1.1 In the context of these guidelines, "data" are defined as factual records (numerical scores, textual records, images and sounds) used as primary sources for PAL Network common projects, and that are commonly accepted as necessary to validate project findings.
- 1.1.2 These guidelines are mainly aimed at data in digital, computer-readable popular formats.

1.2 Data ownership

- 1.2.1 Data collected in an individual member geography through any PAL Network common project is jointly owned by that individual member organization and the PAL Network.

1.2.2 To allow shared access of data between an individual member organization and PAL Network, data for all common projects shall be entered using a common data entry platform.

1.2.3 When submitting the data to PAL Network each individual member shall specify what it considers sensitive data, if applicable. The definition of sensitive data should follow the legal definition in the respective country.

1.3 **Open access**

1.3.1 Data from PAL Network common projects shall be accessible to the research community without any legal, technical, or financial requirements. Minimal information will be required from the users to access the data. This information sharing shall potentially lead to an active engagement with the users of the data.

1.4 **Data sharing**

1.4.1 Data sharing principles

Data sharing guidelines for PAL Network common projects are based on the internationally recognized Five Safes Framework¹ which includes the project, people, setting, data, and output principles.

- **Project Principle:** Data from PAL Network common projects shall be shared for a valid statistical and appropriate purpose that delivers a public benefit to inform policy, for research and development, designing intervention programs, or delivery of services to improve learning outcomes.
- **People Principle:** Anyone can request to use data from the PAL Network common projects. PAL Network shall institute a simple online enquiry form to understand users of its data. The user will be expected to make a formal request and shall access the data as-is. There will be no further expectation of PAL Network to provide training and/or analysis unless it is mutually agreed.
- **Settings Principle:** This principle related to the practical controls on the way the data is accessed. Data from PAL Network common projects shall be accessible only from the website by filling the online enquiry form by the user.
- **Data Principle:** Data from PAL Network common projects shall be anonymized before such data is available for sharing. All location specific identifiers linked to actual communities, schools or individuals providing such data shall be removed before sharing the data.
- **Output Principle:** The user of data from PAL Network common projects shall be responsible to maintain the quality of outputs produced using the data. The user shall acknowledge PAL Network in all published outputs and email the final softcopy of the output to info@palnetwork.org. The user shall also be responsible to put measures in place to protect the use of the data beyond the authorized use.

¹ Desai, T., Ritchie, F., & Welpton, R. (2016). *Five Safes: designing data access for research* (Economics Working Paper Series No. 1601). Retrieved from the University of West of England website: <https://www2.uwe.ac.uk/faculties/BBS/Documents/1601.pdf>

1.4.2 Data sharing protocols

- The decision on sharing individual country-specific data from PAL Network common projects through their own website shall be taken by the individual PAL Network member organizations. Each member shall adapt the data sharing protocols in compliance with their national legislation and these guidelines.
- PAL Network website will host the data from common projects for all countries. PAL Network shall institute a simple online enquiry form to understand users of its data.
- The requests from users to access multi-country data from PAL Network common projects will be handled by the PAL Network Secretariat.
- Due to global objectives of the PAL Network common projects, network level release of data will precede such release at the individual member level.

1.4.3 Limitations to data sharing

The following may limit data sharing for PAL Network common projects:

- Human subject grounds that may affect the respondents of the project adversely
- Privacy grounds on condition that it would violate the privacy laws of the respective country where the data was collected
- Regulatory grounds on condition that the parent laws, legislations and other subsequent provisions limit data sharing
- Intellectual property grounds on condition that it may interfere with the intellectual property rights of the members

For multi-country PAL Network common projects where there are differences in regulatory frameworks, the PAL Network and individual member organizations shall negotiate data sharing arrangements as early as possible in the life of the project, ideally at the initial proposal stage. This will help ensure that adequate and timely consideration will be given to issues cited above.

1.5 **Data archiving**

1.5.1 Hardcopy formats from PAL Network common projects shall be maintained by the respective member organizations where such data was collected. Individual member organizations shall ensure that hardcopy formats are stored in a manner that avoids any physical damage. Members should also ensure that no sensitive or private information is shared unintentionally when the hardcopy formats are in their storage.

1.5.2 Once the data entry is completed, the hardcopy formats shall be appropriately destroyed after a period of 7 years from when such data was collected or as per any national regulations. Members should also ensure that no sensitive or private information is shared unintentionally when the hardcopy formats are being destroyed.