



Citizen-Led Assessment in Central Africa

I. Introduction

a) Djangirde

The name of the Citizen-Led Assessment in Cameroon is called Djandirde. Djangirde is the *Fulfulde* word for learning, a word that adequately represents the teaching and learning process. It is an arm of Amom Charity a Non-Governmental Organization with Registration No 40/E29/11/vol.8/APPB.

b) Amom Charity

Amom Charity is a Cameroon based Non-Governmental Organization with Registration No 40/E29/11/vol.8/APPB. The organization was established in 2006 with the primary mission to economically empower the people of Cameroon in Central Africa to meet their daily challenges that require urgent intervention and to provide solutions and measurable results through its education programs. For the past 10 years, we have improved, facilitated and provided access to education for children from poor and disadvantaged backgrounds as well as animated local communities towards the realization of their strategic developmental goals.

c) Citizen-Led Assessment

Amom Charity seeks to fill this gap by generating new information on children's literacy and numeracy across Cameroon, in a manner that informs the public, stimulates countrywide debate, and creates policy change from the bottom-up through the introduction of Household Citizen-Led Assessment (CLA). The CLA will assess the basic reading and numeracy competencies of all children, in their homes, through annual citizen-led assessments.

d) People's Action for Learning Network (PAL)

Djangirde is part of the PAL network. PAL is an abbreviation that stands for People's Action for Learning. It consists in an approach and methodology developed in India in 2005 for citizen-led, household-based assessments of student learning. The success of this initiative has attracted member countries and 11 years down the line the PAL Network has a membership of 10 countries in 3 continents, namely:

1. India and Pakistan in Asia
2. Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Mali, Senegal, Mozambique and Nigeria in Africa
3. Mexico in South America

In 2015, 4 more countries, Cameroon, Ghana, Nepal and Bangladesh were granted provisional membership of the PAL network. One of the expectations of provisional membership is that the country will take steps to pilot the citizen led assessment initiative. The tradition of each PAL Network country has been to give a name to its program that communicate the purpose.

II. About us Djangirde

a) Vision

Countries where ALL children acquire foundational learning skills that will equip them to become educated citizens in order that they may contribute to a better society.

b) Mission

To bring children's learning to the centre of education policy and practice through citizen engagement in assessing and improving learning for all children between the ages of 6 -14.

c) Objective

To provide evidence on ALL children's learning through citizen-led assessments and improving learning for all children with external acknowledgement of the impact.

III. What Does the Djangirde Do?

- Designs basic assessments in foundational skills, including reading and simple arithmetic based on national curricula expectations.
- Assesses the basic reading and numeracy competencies of all children (including children who are not going to school) through citizen-led assessments at home.
- Children are assessed one on one, using the oral method, because it is the best way to determine if a child can read or not.

a) The 7 principles of CLA

- Where? CLAs are conducted **in the household** to ensure all children are reached, and to involve parents as observers in the assessment. The household is the only place to find ALL children. On any given day some children may be absent from school, some may not have enrolled and others may have dropped out of school altogether.
- What? CLAs **focus on basic skills** of reading and arithmetic as building blocks for future learning
- How? **Tests are conducted orally**, one-to-one with each child. Children who cannot read cannot do written tests.
- Who? Tests are administered by **trained citizen volunteers** (practising primary teachers are not recruited as assessors): We need to de-mystify learning by **involving parents** and **ordinary citizens**. Widespread and large-scale engagement of citizens is essential to change in policy and practice. The assessors should be as independent as possible and closer to the community in which assessment takes place to continue the conversation on education even beyond the assessment
- When? The assessment is conducted frequently e.g. annually or biannually or triennially. To bring about significant change in national priorities and mindsets frequent, timely and current assessments are needed. At the beginning, and if resources permit, the assessment in Cameroon could start off as an annual activity to create a buzz on learning, but later it could be done biannually to permit time for engaging with the results.
- Simple tools: Keep the tool as simple as possible so that even ordinary and illiterate parents can understand how children are learning

- Large scale: The assessment is large scale so that it is representative at national and sub-national level: Estimating the scale and spread of the problem is vital to designing appropriate solutions.

b) Where Are Assessments Carried Out?

- Assessments are conducted on a scale that is nationally representative, allows for comparison with the country and sparks a nationwide debate on matters of education. Assessments are carried out throughout the national territory and for the good of the whole nation.
- Assessments are carried out in the household, because the household is the best place to find a representative sample of all children, irrespective of the school they attend.

c) When Are Assessments Carried Out?

- Children are frequently assessed at regular intervals. Regular assessments expose the problem of lack of learning, allow the comparison of data over time, and create momentum.

d) How Are Assessments Carried Out?

- Djangirde data will meet the PAL Network highest standards, to ensure the collection of accurate evidence about children's learning.
- Djangirde data will be open and accessible to all. The data is only made publicly available once report publications have been launched and not before!

e) Who Carries Out Assessments?

- As many citizens as possible are included, using simple tools, communication and assessments. Citizens from all walks of life conduct these assessments to understand the problem first-hand.
- Assessment results are communicated regularly to inform citizen understanding and influence policy. Findings are communicated regularly to sustain a conversation over time and inform decision-making at all levels.

IV. Role of Education body

- Embrace, recognise and support CLA as a complementary form of assessment in Cameroon
- Support the citizen-led assessment by offering an introduction letter to the implementing organisation (Amom Charity) to introduce it to national and subnational authorities and schools
- Recommend curriculum specialists / examiners/ subject specialists to provide technical expertise to the test panellists
- Participate in the assessment as monitors (and not as assessors, to maintain the independence of the process) when called upon
- Preside over the launch of the assessment report and other key events
- Support with fundraising e.g. direct funding, introduction to potential funders, references to funders