



Rewriting the story  
for global literacy

## ‘Context Matters’ Research Awards

Establishing an African Research Agenda in Language and Literacy

### Initial Call for Submissions

#### CODE’s ‘Context Matters’ Research Awards

This is an initial call for what will become a sustained annual program of support for an African Research Agenda in Language and Literacy. As part of this initial call the Canadian NGO **CODE** will offer up to 5 research awards (maximum CAN \$ 10,000 each) to increase the effectiveness, efficiency and salience of K-12 education programming, including related pre-service teacher education, in Africa.

#### Background

Research on literacy in general and reading in particular has largely been carried out in high-income countries and contexts and generalized to low-income countries and contexts. The initiative “*Context Matters*” has been established by CODE to support African researchers to take the lead in evidence based research that is situated in local contexts and recognizes the multifarious and complex relationships between the local and global in education.

#### Advocacy

*Context Matters* research awards are designed to support work by African scholars and researchers interested in addressing issues identified collaboratively and in consort with the African literacy community. It prioritizes funding of research initiated, designed and undertaken by local teams and seeks to strengthen the research capacity knowledge and recommendations of those who work in the African context. These grants are designed to foster international partnerships and alliances that bolster Africa’s ability to meet the UN Sustainable Development Goals in the areas of education and gender equality.

#### Emerging Issues

In this initial call, CODE will focus the awards on literacy issues related to Girls Empowerment. This effort is framed within the context of the global Girls’ Education movement and support for Canada’s Feminist International Assistance Policy wherein a call is made to all Canadian partners to **step up their commitment to evidence-based decision making** by investing in policy research, better data collection and evaluation for gender equality.

*Context Matters* is also a response to the shift from the 2000 Millennium Development Goals’ (MDG) focus on access to education to the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) focus

on educational quality. To date, research on literacy and gender in Africa has tended to map out differences in reading achievement scores, highlighting the effects of wealth, gender, and location on reading achievement; the largest literacy disparities are evident between girls from marginalized and low-income households in rural areas and boys from privileged and high-income households in urban areas. However, when it comes to more specific pedagogical questions regarding gender and what works to support and strengthen the literacy practices of girls and boys in different contexts, there is a paucity of research. It is this gap that CODE seeks to help address in this call for meaningful gender and literacy research proposals.

## **Call for Proposals**

CODE seeks to foster the development of student readers who question and interact with text and student writers who thoughtfully produce text including digital text. We are interested in both individual literacy growth and the development among communities of learners that awakens an interest in social change. This round of funding targets the intersection of gender as a social construct and the discourse of power. Funded researchers must encourage participants to engage actively in data collection, analysis, interpretation of findings, and subsequent recommendations. Priority will be given to proposals that clearly demonstrate how participants will engage actively in data collection. We also encourage applicants to include reference to how the proposal will address rural or urban disparities.

We will target the following 3 areas of inquiry in evaluating proposals. The questions following are meant only to be suggestive. Proposals will be evaluated based on the design, feasibility and importance of the studies.

### **1. Reading and Learning Materials**

How is gender (including puberty) represented in reading materials? Marketed? Made sense of by girls themselves? How do literacy policies support or discourage girls' education and empowerment? How are these various representations understood by girls in a variety of contexts/ Schools? After school programs? Libraries? Gender and other Clubs? In families? In communities?

### **2. Literacy practices**

How do classrooms, community agencies, networks and structures support girls' empowerment? (e.g. book clubs, writing circles, reading groups, gender clubs and human rights clubs)? How are new technologies and digital literacies being used in these contexts?

### **3. Sexual health literacies**

How does sexual health information, including menstrual hygiene management help or hinder girls as they negotiate safer and more gender equitable relationships? How do these materials work in classrooms? In after-school programs, families and communities? How are schools or teacher education programs supporting teachers and health workers as they seek to teach about gender equity, sexual health and wellbeing and personal safety?

The call is for research in support of K-12 education programming, which can be interpreted broadly to include (for example), family literacy programs (adults and children); teacher education (pre-service or in-service, especially as it relates to women teachers); women's community organizations (health, etc).

### **Who can apply?**

For this initial call, CODE is limiting the awards to the countries where we have active programming and local partners. Researchers, academics, and educators who are resident and working in the education sector in Kenya, Ethiopia, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Tanzania, Mali and Mozambique are encouraged to apply.

### **Term of Research**

The studies are envisioned to cover a maximum two year period.

### **Funds MAY be used to support**

1. Items needed for the project and not routinely available through the place of employment of the applicant
2. Materials and supplies (paper, books, etc.)
3. Travel directly related to the project
4. Books for student and teacher use or library reference
5. Administrative expenses (postage, duplication costs, printing)
6. Payment in support of a graduate student
7. Maximum of 8% of total grant to overhead costs

### **Funds may NOT be used to support**

1. Salary of the Principal Investigator
2. Equipment (computers, mobile devices, audio-visual equipment) is not supported; however, if there is specific equipment linked to the actual study such as a cell phone with camera, the applicant needs to provide a strong rationale.
3. Indirect costs (costs not directly associated with the project such as charging for existing office space).
4. **Costs of conference attendance and/or support for the dissemination of the research, will not be supported as part of this grant, however, upon successful completion of the study, new funds may be made available for this purpose.**

## **GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION (use attached form)**

**All proposals should be submitted in English.**

Proposals should be formatted as follows, with a total page limit, including references, of four (4) pages:

1. One-page summary (single spaced, font 12):
  - Summary of the proposed project consisting of an overview, a statement on objectives and the intellectual merit of the proposed activity, and a statement on the broader impacts of the proposed activity.
2. Project Description (maximum 4 pages, single spaced, font 12)::
  - Brief description of how the proposed research links to Context Matter's guiding Landscape Review, provided by CODE, entitled "[Girls' Empowerment through Language and Literacy \(GELL\): A Landscape Review of Gender and Literacy Research in African Contexts](#)"
  - An outline of the general plan of work, the timeline, the broad design of activities to be undertaken, and, where appropriate, a clear description of both qualitative and quantitative methods and procedures.
3. Appendices, including:
  - Budget justifications (up to 1 page single spaced, font 12)
  - Reference list (up to 1 page single spaced, font 12)
  - Letters of support from target groups and others involved in project (up to 3)
  - CV of the Principal Investigator

**The Principal Investigator must have a formal institutional affiliation as part of their Research Proposal to CODE. This stipulation requires completion of the attached form including signature of an official from the Institution.**

CODE expects strict adherence to the rules of proper scholarship and attribution.

CODE strongly encourages women, minorities and persons with disabilities to participate fully in its programs.

**Deadline for submission: 21 May 2018**

Please visit our website at [www.code.ngo](http://www.code.ngo) for more information. Send all inquiries and completed documents to: [ContextMatters@code.ngo](mailto:ContextMatters@code.ngo)

The adjudication team will include a panel of researchers from African organizations (or African researchers) and CODE. All efforts will be made to review, process and give final notice of winning submissions to applicants by July 6, 2018.