

Context Matters Research Grant 2022 Annual Call for Research Proposals Deadline for submission: 1, August 2022

CODE, through its Context Matters program, funds research initiated, designed, and undertaken by African researchers. The grant program supports research which is clearly situated in local contexts and recognizes the multifaceted and complex relationships between the local and global in education. Key aspects of the program are building research capacity of African scholars, promoting knowledge sharing, and informing praxis and policy.

This is the fifth Call for Research Proposals going out under the Context Matters banner. CODE, in partnership with the International Literacy Association (ILA), is offering up to **five (5) research grants of a maximum CAN \$10,000 each**.

The three areas of inquiry for this funding cycle are **Teacher Education, Literacy Practices, and Digital Literacies**, which contribute to reducing barriers to quality education for women and girls.

We invite researchers, academics and educators who are resident in sub-Saharan African countries¹ to submit proposals to CODE at contextmatters@code.ngo by **1, August 2022**. A complete list of eligible countries is included the *Full Call for Proposal* document.

To date, much of the research on literacy learning has been generalized to African countries and contexts from studies conducted outside of the region. To address the imbalance, CODE established Context Matters Grant program to support African researchers as they take the lead in evidence-based, exploratory studies. Context Matters is designed to:

- Support work by African scholars and researchers addressing issues identified in collaboration with the African literacy and teacher education communities.
- Advance research in Africa by Africans in ways that are responsive and respectful of participants and their communities.
- Strengthen the research capacity, knowledge, and recommendations of those working in the African context.
- Fund research initiated, designed, and undertaken by local teams.
- 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.
- Build a body of evidence that can be used to support education policy recommendations at local, regional, or national levels.

¹ Sub-Saharan African countries as defined by the United Nations
<https://web.archive.org/web/20100420040243/http://esa.un.org/unpp/definition.html#SSA>

In 2022, CODE and ILA are primarily interested in research projects that relate to one or more of the following:

- Explore the intersection between literacy, education, and girls' empowerment.
- Investigate the impact of digital literacies as well as the use of technology in teacher education and classroom learning.
- Investigate the role that pre-service teacher education and in-service professional development plays in strengthening the educational opportunities for girls and vulnerable populations.
- Advance local literacy practices.
- Advance context specific ways of knowing.
- Explore the relationship between the school, the home, and the community and the role this relationship can play in strengthening culturally relevant literacies.
- Explore the factors and/or interventions that contribute to reducing barriers to quality education for women and girls: with disabilities; in fragile, conflict, refugee and crisis situations; and/or in relation to the impact of the COVID pandemic.

Online Information Session

April 7, 2022

Interested researchers are invited to participate in an online information session on April 7, 2022. Go to [Research Initiatives](#) on the CODE website to register. The information session will provide an overview of Context Matters, a review of the process for applying, tips for putting together a successful proposal, and an opportunity to ask questions. The session will be recorded and made available on the CODE website.

Download the [Application Form](#)

Download Annex I [Guidelines for completing the application form](#)

Download ANNEX II [The Budget Sheet](#)

2022 Context Matters: Call for Research Proposals

Deadline for submission: 1, August 2022

Send all inquiries and completed documents to: contextmatters@code.ngo

[Application Form](#)

[ANNEX I:](#) Guidelines for completing the application form.

[ANNEX II:](#) Budget document (in excel)

1.0 CONTEXT MATTERS SEEK RESEARCH PROPOSALS THAT:

- Are realistic in terms of scope, number of research questions to be addressed, number of participants, the amount of data collected, timeframe, and budget.
- Examine the development of communities of learners that awaken an interest in social change, support empowerment, and foster literacy growth.
- Address K-12 education programming, which includes but is not limited to: children or learners from age 4 to 20, pre-service or in-service teacher education (especially as it relates to female teachers); family literacy programs; and women's community organizations.
- Include interventions aimed at increasing access to quality education for girls with disabilities and explore ways to ensure that their interests and priorities are taken into account.
- Employ, in addition to standard methodologies, Indigenous and local epistemologies that draw on local ways of knowing and approaches to research (e.g. participatory action research).
- Engage communities in a respectful, reciprocal, and responsive fashion. The proposed studies should describe how you will involve and engage the community in meaningful ways; and describe how participants will be actively engaged in the research process (e.g. data collection, analysis, interpretation of findings, dissemination of findings, and development of recommendations).

- Proposals should demonstrate clearly how the research results will contribute to one or more of the following:
 - the evidence-base for research on gender-inclusive pedagogy;
 - the quality of information and data available on the specific topic;
 - the interventions and tools that improve educational opportunities for women and girls, especially in fragile, refugee, or health crisis situations;
 - the design of larger or further studies;
 - the improvement of literacy development;
 - informing education policy;
 - informing education practices;
 - the best ways to measure the impact of such interventions on the learning, health, and wellness outcomes of women and girls.

1.1 Submissions can also include:

- Proposals that explore small-scale research projects that could contribute to larger projects, such as a pilot study.²
- Proposals that build on successful pilot research projects that address the themes and concepts listed above.
- Proposals that include a reanalysis of national achievement assessments or national-level data from regional or international assessments that address themes and concepts listed above.
- Proposals that include collaborations among researchers from different academic institutions, or between literacy/education organizations and academic researchers, or provide mentorship/support to up-and-coming researchers.
- Proposals that draw from other aspects of Context Matter's guiding Landscape Review, entitled Girls' Empowerment through Language and Literacy (GELL): A Landscape Review of Gender and Literacy Research in African Contexts.

² A pilot study, pilot project, pilot test, or pilot experiment is a small-scale preliminary study conducted to evaluate feasibility, duration, cost, adverse events, and improve upon the study design prior to performance of a full-scale research project.

2.0 AREAS OF INQUIRY

2.1 Themes

In 2022, Context Matters is primarily interested in research projects that relate to one or more of the following general themes:

- advancing local literacy practices;
- advancing context specific ways of knowing;
- the intersection between literacy, education, and girls' empowerment;
- the factors and/or interventions that contribute to reducing barriers to quality education for women and girls: with disabilities; in fragile, conflict, refugee and crisis situations; and/or in relation to the impact of the COVID pandemic.
- the role that pre-service teacher education and in-service professional development plays in strengthening the educational opportunities for girls and vulnerable populations;
- the relationship between the school, the home, and the community and the role this plays in strengthening culturally relevant literacies;
- the impact of digital literacies as well as the use of technology in teacher education and classroom learning;
- aim to contribute to sustainable change.

2.2 Three areas of inquiry:

Proposals should address at least one of these three areas of inquiry **Teacher Education, Literacy Practices, Digital Literacies**. The questions written under each heading are suggested topics to consider. Researchers are encouraged to propose other topics so long as they relate to one of the three areas of inquiry and address literacy, education, and gender equality.

Research proposals must clearly address how the results will contribute to or fill a gap in existing knowledge and understanding.

The studies should capture K-12 education programming, which includes but is not limited to children or learners from age 4 to 20, pre-service or in-service teacher education (especially as it relates to female teachers); family literacy programs; and women's community organizations.

Three Areas of Inquiry:

1. Teacher Education

- What are the characteristics of successful pre-service education (teacher education) programs, as it relates to girls' empowerment, within public institutions in your region?
- What is the role of building connections between school, home, and communities and how does this influence learning outcomes?
- How might incorporating culturally relevant literacies relevant to the everyday lives of teachers and students improve or influence literacy and learning outcomes? (consider factors such as and language, instructional quality, student learning, assessment practices, and national curriculum).
- How have pre-service or in-service teacher education programs adapted to remote learning processes and/or the use of technology?
- How are in-service teachers and their pupils adapting to the use of technology (any form of technology) inside and outside of the formal classroom setting? (challenges, barriers, successes, process of adaptation).
- How do formal and informal instruction within clubs, coaching programs, mentorship programs, (or other informal programs) influence literacy and learning outcomes? How do these forms of instruction influence: empowerment, gender equality, and/or sexual health?
- How can communities of practice support teachers as they strive to promote empowerment and equality in their classrooms and schools?

2. Literacy Practices

- What is the relationship between literacy and empowerment?
- How do literacy policies support or discourage girls' education and empowerment?
- How do literacy practices connect to or influence communities and students?
- How do education policies build bridges to communities and students?

- How do classrooms, community agencies, networks, and structures support adolescent girls' empowerment and education? (e.g. book clubs, writing circles, reading groups, gender clubs, and human rights clubs).
- How do schools and/or teacher education programs support and prepare teachers to address gender equity, and/or sexual health, and/or wellbeing?
- How do teachers and students define empowerment and what are effective interventions for supporting the further empowerment of teachers, girls, and boys?

3. Digital Literacies

- In what ways do the use of technology support learning in crisis (for example: refugee, internally displaced people, economic, environmental, or health crisis)?
- In what ways do the use of technology help or hinder literacy and learning outcomes in various settings. (e.g. the regular classroom and learning settings, amongst girls with disabilities, amongst refugee or other vulnerable populations)?
- What is the relationship between digital literacies and empowerment in various settings (e.g. the regular classroom and learning settings, in teacher education, amongst vulnerable populations)?
- How are new technologies being used in the context of classrooms, community agencies, learning networks, teacher education institutions?
- What are the challenges faced by educators and learners when attempting to implement digital literacies in the local context?
- How is the impact or influence of learning through technology on the wellbeing of adolescent girls and boys measured?
- Explore the initiatives implemented to support learners, in-service teachers, pre-service teachers, and teacher educators during the COVID crisis.

3.0 WHO CAN APPLY?

Context Matters welcomes proposals from researchers, academics, and educators who are residents of and work in the education sector in eligible countries listed below.

Eligible countries include: Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo, Cote D'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea: Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Reunion, Rwanda, Rwanda, Saint Helena, Sao Tome and Principe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Funded researchers must be affiliated with and/or collaborate with an academic institution. All proposals should reflect current professional research standards and must articulate how they will adhere to ethical standards and procedures for research involving human participants.

Research proposals must clearly address how the results will contribute to or fill a gap in existing knowledge and understanding. Context Matters does not fund “monitoring and evaluation (M&E)” components of existing programs.

4.0 TERMS OF RESEARCH

The studies can be of any duration but are envisioned to cover a two-year period.

5.0 FUNDS

The grant is issued in Canadian dollars up to \$10,000.00.

Funds may be used to support:

1. Items needed for the research and not routinely available through the place of employment of the applicant.
2. Implementation of research activities.
3. Materials and supplies (paper, books, etc.).
4. Travel and accommodation directly related to the research.
5. Books: for student and teacher use, for library reference, for implementation of activities
6. Administrative expenses (postage, duplication costs, printing, communications).
7. Payment in support of a graduate student or research assistant.

Funds may NOT be used to support:

1. Direct contribution to the salary of the Principal Investigator or co-researchers.
2. Equipment (computers, mobile devices, audio-visual equipment); Specialist equipment required to implement the proposed study can, in certain instances, be supported, if justified.
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 in international forums, will not be supported. (However, upon successful completion of the study, new funds may be made available for this purpose).

6.0 REVIEW PROCESS

- Information Session. Interested researchers are invited to participate in an online information session on April 7, 2022.
(see [Research Initiatives on the CODE website](#) for registration and more details). The information session will provide an overview of Context Matters, tips for putting together a winning proposal, and provide an opportunity to ask questions.
- Proposals will be reviewed by CODE for adherence to the stated submission requirements indicated in Call for Proposals, Application Form, and Submission Guidelines.
- A panel of anonymous jurors comprised of African researchers and/or researchers from African institutions will then review all eligible applications and provide recommendations to the International Advisory Committee.
- The International Advisory Committee will then provide feedback, recommendations, and requests for more information as needed.
- Research teams may be assigned a mentor to assist in the revision of proposals. CODE will then determine which proposals to fund.
- All efforts will be made to notify all applicants of the status of their applications on or before November 1, 2022.

6.1 Proposals will be evaluated using the criteria below:

Intellectual Merit: Will the research results and analysis advance knowledge in the fields of study outlined in the Call for Research; contribute to the evidence-base on gender empowerment or gender-inclusive pedagogy; or increase knowledge about how to best measure the impact of interventions that improve the educational opportunities, health, and wellbeing for women and girls, and vulnerable populations? Does the proposal go beyond existing research?

Potential Impact: Will the research results make an impact on an aspect of the education system, community engaged in the project, or society as a whole? Will the results of the project help African countries meet the UN's sustainable development goals? Will it contribute to evidence-based decisions regarding policy, better data collection, and evaluation of gender equality? In what ways will it contribute to Context Matters' targeted areas of interest (such as refugee education, reading materials, literacy practices, or sexual health literacy)?

Methods: Are the methods employed ethical, culturally sensitive, gender sensitive, and inclusive? Is there a sufficient level of detail provided in the proposal in relation to how data will be collected, analyzed, and interpreted? If appropriate, does the research methodology clearly demonstrate the procedures for how research participants will be engaged in activities such as data collection, analysis, interpretation of findings, developing recommendations, and sharing these with potential users? Will the methods employed result in relevant, meaningful, and valid findings regarding literacy development, enhanced in-service teacher education programs, or advancing gender-responsive practices? How do the methods align with "best practices" of education researchers? How do the methods align with the goals of the research? How do the methods align with the interests of the community or research site?

Ethical considerations: CODE and ILA expect research teams to engage communities in a respectful, reciprocal, and responsive fashion. How will the research process ensure the health and safety of researchers and research participants? How will the research process approach or address interactions between male/female researchers and male/female research participants? Have issues around consent for children under 18 to participate, child protection, and a code of conduct including prevention of sexual exploitation been identified and addressed?

Qualifications of Researcher: Does the research team have the necessary skills (personal, social, and technical) to carry out the proposed research project? Is there evidence that the team has an adequate track record? Do the researchers have experience, knowledge, or qualifications related to the topic? Are the researchers affiliated with an institution with adequate subject matter and methodological expertise to monitor their work? Can the researchers clearly demonstrate the strategies that will be used to build trust and rapport with participants around sensitive topics.

Collaborations: While not required, collaborations among researchers from the same or from different academic institutions, or between literacy/education organizations and academic researchers, or collaborations that provide mentorship/support to up-and-coming researchers will be noted.

Budget: Is the proposed budget adequate to complete the research? Are the costs outlined aligned with stated requirements in the Call for Proposals? Are the overhead costs in line with the Context Matters' requirements?

If the proposed budget is beyond the \$10,000.00 CDN grant, be sure it is clear where the remaining funds will come from? Collaborations/joint research projects are encouraged and acceptable.

ANNEX I: GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSION

Please review these **Guidelines for Submission** carefully before completing the **Application Form**. Download the application form [here](#).

All proposals should be submitted in English using the attached Application Form.

Proposals should be a maximum of 7 single-spaced pages, not including references and required attachments (CVs, work plan, budget, letters of reference). Follow the guidelines below for each section.

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

Section 1:

Contact information: Title, Name and Institutional Affiliation: The Principal Investigator must have a formal institutional affiliation evidenced by the signature of a senior official from the affiliated institution in section 6 of the Application Form.

Section 2: Project title, country (region/city), **proposed start date** (Jan 2023 is earliest recommended date), **duration of the research** (a max of two years) and a **list of investigators** (include the names, titles, institutions, departments or organization names, and the gender of the co-researchers).

Section 3: Project Summary

- Summary should be one 500 words maximum (1 page, 12 pt font, single spaced) and **must** include the following:
 - Proposed title
 - Statement of purpose, objectives, and research questions
 - Description of the intellectual merit (contribution to the field) of the proposed research
 - Significance of the proposed activity to the research participants
 - Expected impact and/or potential influence on policy, teaching practices, learning outcomes, teachers, students, or community.

Section 4: Project Description

2,500 words maximum (about 5 pages, single spaced, 12 pt font)

and **must** include:

- Background (a brief literature review or description of the context) of the topic under investigation
- Proposed target population (be specific about ages and include the estimated number of participants) being investigated
- Objectives and research questions
- Methodology (qualitative, quantitative, action research, methodologies that are rooted in Indigenous and local epistemologies, etc.).
- Activities to be undertaken
- Definitions of key terms/concepts including precise definitions of any variables to be measured
- If using focus group discussions (FGD) give sample questions and indicate strategies for building trust and rapport with participants when discussing sensitive topics
- Data collection tools, instruments
- Proposed data analysis procedures
- Intended outcomes including a note on what would make this research project a 'success'
- A brief plan for sharing the results with the community or participants involved, as well as with national or international audiences: such as a final visit to the field sites, conferences, publications, media outlets, coalitions, or education sector meetings.
- Work plan with timeline

Section 5: Ethical Clearance

- CODE and ILA expect research teams to engage communities in a respectful, reciprocal, and responsive fashion.
- CODE and ILA expect strict adherence to ethical standards and procedures and the rules of attribution.
- Describe the ethical standards and clearance procedures of your institution and how you will (intend to) meet these.
- If your institution does not have such standards or procedures in place, describe the standards and procedures you will follow to ensure compliance with best practices. Note that this section must be completed in order for the proposal to be forwarded to the review jury.
- Successful research teams will be expected to read and agree to CODE's policies: *Code of Conduct*, *Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Policy*; and *the Child Protection Policy*.

Section 6: Institutional Affiliation

The Principal Investigator must have a formal institutional affiliation included in the research proposal. This stipulation requires the signature of an official from the Institution.

Section 7: Appendices. Complete and attach the following to your application:

- Annex II. Proposed Research Project Budget Template (separate Excel template)
- Reference list (up to one (1) page single-spaced,).
- Letters of support from those involved in the project (for example target group, government officials, community members, school administrators, up to 3 letters). Please note that letters of support are not required for jury review. However, if your proposal is accepted, you will be asked to provide these letters of support.
- CV of the Principal Investigator
- CVs of co-researchers

8. Budget

- Complete **Annex II. Proposed Research Project Budget Template** (separate Excel template). The proposed budget should clearly link your expected results to the amount requested.
- If the proposed budget exceeds the \$10,000.00 Canadian dollar amount, indicate other funding sources that will be used to cover additional costs . Collaborations/joint research projects are acceptable.

Funds may be used to support:

- Items needed for the research and not routinely available through the applicant's place of employment
- Implementation of research activities
- Materials and supplies (paper, books, etc.)
- Travel and accommodation directly related to the research.
- Books: for student and teacher use, for library reference, for implementation of activities
- Administrative expenses (postage, duplication costs, printing)
- Payment in support of a graduate student or research assistant

Funds may NOT be used to support:

- Contribution toward the salary of the Principal Investigator
- Equipment (computers, mobile devices, audio-visual equipment); Specialist equipment required to implement the proposed study can, in certain instances, be supported, if justified.
- Indirect costs (costs not directly associated with the project such as charging for existing office space).
- Costs of conference attendance and/or support for the dissemination of the research, will not be supported. (However, upon successful completion of the study, new funds may be made available for this purpose).

ANNEX II: PROPOSED RESEARCH PROJECT BUDGET TEMPLATE

Provide an estimated budget for your research projects including notes with justifications using the Excel template provided, download the excel file here: [www.https://code.ngo/approach/research-initiatives/](https://code.ngo/approach/research-initiatives/)