



Promoting every
child's right to read

THE CODE READER: Your Gifts in Action

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EXCEPTIONAL TEACHERS: SIERRA LEONE'S GREAT HOPE

In a recently published article, The Economist drew attention to Sierra Leone's "vast but little-noted educational experiment".

In this small west African country, where over 70% of the population is under 30 years old, the current government came to power in 2018 on a platform promoting quality education as a driver of development.

Five years on, the government has doubled its budget for education and consequently increased the number of students in schools by half. David Moinina Sengeh, a dynamic young leader, was appointed Minister of Basic and Senior Secondary Education (MBSSE) and the country's (and Africa's) first-ever Chief Innovation Officer. The Harvard-educated Minister has quickly become one of the world's leading influencers and advocates of quality education and foundational learning.

However, getting children into classrooms in Sierra Leone is only the first step, the next is to ensure that girls and boys are indeed learning and acquiring the basic skills to progress in their studies. And that has everything to do with the quality of teaching.

As a key partner of MBSSE, UNICEF and World Bank in Sierra Leone, CODE has been invited to bring its unique expertise and experience to a variety of projects aimed at developing a high-quality teacher workforce. In the past 18 months alone we have supported over 7,000 primary school teachers to improve their skills and competencies in the teaching of foundational literacy through intensive training workshops, in-class mentorship, and Communities of Practice.

Without a doubt, the confluence of political will, local leadership, critical investments, thoughtful plans, and global commitments are creating a watershed moment in Sierra Leone. We feel privileged to collaborate and contribute to building momentum in Sierra Leone's education sector, and thank our many supporters across Canada for being part of it, as well!

An estimated 39% of teachers in Sierra Leone lack teaching qualifications. Many are brought to the profession by passion and sense of duty. But, as Sybil Bailor, CODE's Sierra Leone Country Lead notes, "In Sierra Leone that passion needs grooming with professional, continuous development to ensure that teaching once again becomes the respectable profession it once was."

"I teach because I love to see improvements in the children, especially girls, and to coach girls on how to stay focused on their education...."

– Kargbo (Grade 5 teacher pictured above)

"When you have an education, you can stand on your own and stand up for your community. You can be a positive influence in society. That is why I teach."

– Lamin (Grade 2 teacher)



"I have taught many of my brothers and sisters without payment. Many of these children are now in secondary school."

– Alimany (Grade 1 teacher)

Photo Credit: CODE/Peter Bregg

WE HAVE BIG PLANS FOR THE GIRLS' ACCELERATED LEARNING INITIATIVE (GALI)

Courage, potential, determination – these are some of the many words that come to mind when we think of the girls participating in CODE'S *Girls' Accelerated Learning Initiative* (GALI). Implemented in partnership with the WE-CARE Foundation in Liberia, the program provides teenage girls in early-grade primary school classrooms (grades 1-3) an opportunity to be quickly and confidently promoted to higher grades, and to gain valuable life skills.

Having carefully refined the program over the past few years, we're now ready to scale it up, and we invite you to be part of this exciting new project launching in July 2023!

Together with our local partner – the WE-CARE Foundation – we aim to double the number of schools in which the program will operate (from 20 to 40) and increase the number of girls benefiting over three years to 1,960. In the spirit of always learning and innovating, we will also pilot accelerated learning in kindergarten to help stem the tide of girls and boys entering primary school already too old for their grade.

We're delighted to introduce you to a few past participants:

Top Photo: Eva is much more than an academic support to the girls in the program, she is a mentor, confidant, and cheerleader. The camaraderie and the safe space that GALI creates helps the girls not only thrive in their studies but also gain a sense of empowerment and self-worth that allows them challenge norms and assert their rights.

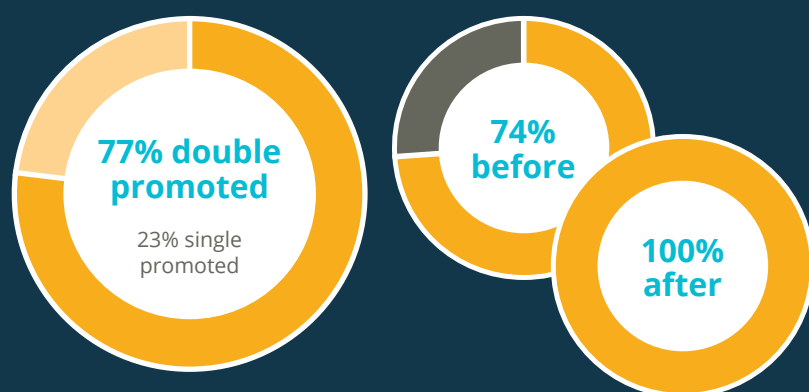
Bottom Photo: With a little help from GALI, Sarah is defying the odds. In Liberia, only 14% of the poorest girls transition successfully into junior high, and Sarah has already made it to Grade 8. Sarah shares, "I am very proud of still being in school and I want to be an engineer." By supporting this generation of girls, we are also supporting the next through compounding benefits in education, health, and economic prosperity.



GALI Delivers Real Value in the Lives of Participating Girls

Annual grade promotion rates are exceptional.

All participating girls now know how to prevent pregnancy:



“In GALI I found my voice, I can now speak up for myself.”

– Anita at E.J. Yancy School in Margibi County

Photo Credit: CODE/Janet Phillips

Please contact Janet to learn how you can partner with us on this deeply meaningful new initiative:

jphillips@code.ngo

CONTEXT MATTERS

Sustainable literacy development by Africans for Africans

Many organizations, institutions, and governments are working tirelessly to contribute solutions to support African countries' ministries of education in their curriculum development and teacher education programs. Yet often the approaches are based on evidence collected in non-African contexts, by researchers outside of sub-Saharan Africa, or they represent outside interests. As a result, the solutions can fail to address the importance of local needs and capacity building, as well as the social concerns, environmental contexts, language, or ways of knowing the world of the specific African country.

In an endeavor to build research and development capacity in sub-Saharan Africa, CODE launched the Context Matters Research Grant Program in 2017. Now in its fifth year, and its second year in partnership with the International Literacy Association, Context Matters has issued small-scale grants to sub-Saharan African researchers conducting contextual, exploratory studies in the areas of literacy development, teacher education, and girls' empowerment.

The dedicated and thoughtful researchers whom this grant program supports are designing and leading research projects that provide valuable insights into both practical and theoretical issues affecting education in sub-Saharan Africa.

As Professor Hellen Inyega from University of Nairobi, Kenya, explains in the quote above, this funding has allowed research teams to work in collaboration with communities, colleagues, education institutions, and practitioners. By mobilizing local expertise, they have been able to engage with local, context-specific educational challenges and potential solutions.

The creative and resourceful researchers are examining an array of issues that range from gender representation in textbooks to communities' perceptions of literacy education for girls. Despite the variety, what ties these studies together are the efforts to reduce barriers to quality education, and to present locally and contextually specific recommendations to improve education policy and practice in each country.

Foundational literacy is the key to improving learning writ large in any context, and context does matter, especially as we endeavor to develop and deliver literacy programs that meets local needs, supports local expertise, and engages with local participants in respectful ways.

Learn more at code.ngo/contextmatters

Adapted from an article written by Dr. Katie Bryant and Lynn O'Rourke for publication in Literacy Today magazine.

"Context Matters grants bring to the foreground research that would otherwise remain on the periphery. The program provided ample opportunities to refine and focus the project with support from reviewers with plenty of latitude to determine my own research design and data collection methods."

– Professor Inyega,
University of Nairobi, Kenya

TEACHER TRAINING TEXTBOOKS TO BE ROLLED OUT NATIONALLY IN MOZAMBIQUE

The quality of teaching is arguably the most significant contributor to student learning outcomes, including literacy! Quality teaching starts with quality teacher training. CODE's *Better Education through Teacher Training and Empowerment for Results (BETTER)*, co-funded by Global Affairs Canada, focuses on supporting teacher training institutes to enhance curriculum and resources.

Over the past few years, we've worked closely with our local partner organization Associação Progresso, the Ministry of Education and Human Development in Mozambique, Global Affairs Canada and many other stakeholders to develop five comprehensive teacher training manuals (i.e. textbooks). These have been in use in 19 teacher training institutes for the past two years already, but early in 2023 their use will be rolled out nationally at all 38 teacher training institutes in Mozambique. This will include the printing and distribution of 40,000 textbooks as well as training in their effective use. We look forward to sharing more in the coming year.



CODE, 2020

LEADERSHIP UPDATE

We wish to extend our deepest gratitude to Judy Hauserman, Dr. Rumeet Billan and Wade Burton for their years of dedicated service on CODE's Board of Directors. We extend a warm welcome to Nathalie O'Neil, Rachel Welch O'Connor, Cathy Carlin, and Pauline Port who joined the CODE Board of Directors this past year. Our great thanks as well to Brian Traquair and John Bai for their leadership as Board Chairs of CODE and the CODE Foundation, respectively. They are succeeded in their roles by Bruce Montador (CODE) and Cathy Carlin (CODE Foundation).

ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

CODE's Annual Report and Audited Financial Statements for the fiscal year 2021-22 are now available online at code.ngo/accountability. Thank you all for contributing to an extraordinary year that saw us support over 300,000 girls and boys on the path to becoming confident and capable readers! If you'd like to receive a printed copy, please contact Clare at cmcinnes@code.ngo and we will gladly place one in the mail for you.

LEGACY GIVING – A TRUE CELEBRATION OF ONE'S LIFE AND VALUE

For many of our donors, leaving a gift to CODE in their Will is a way to celebrate their life and their values. A gift in your Will to help advance children's literacy says a lot about who you are and what you care about.

We know these are decisions that are not taken lightly. Leaving a gift in your Will is often discussed with a partner or loved ones to make sure that everyone is on the same page, and that your wishes are honoured.

Having these important conversations can sound uncomfortable. But it doesn't have to be! Talking about your values and the change you want to see in the world can kick-start the conversation, and even motivate your loved ones. Here are three questions to get you started:

- How do you hope our family history and life story will live on after we are gone?
- How will the causes or charitable work we've invested in continue?
- What kind of message do we want to pass on to our children and grandchildren about helping others?

Explore more tips and excellent resources from our partners at Will Power to help get the conversation started. Visit: willpower.ca/charities/code

"The true meaning of life is to plant trees under whose shade you do not expect to sit."

– Nelson Henderson



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