
Context Matters

— RESEARCH GRANTS —

2022-2024 Context Matters Awarded Grants (Round 5)

Research title: The Power of Local/Indigenous Oral Narratives to Enhance Girls' Empowerment through Contextualization of Literacy Practices

Principle Investigator: Dr Tadesse Jaleta Jirata, Centre for Early Childhood Care and Education, College of Education and Behavioral Sciences, Addis Ababa University.

Co-researcher:

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Research location: Blue Hora Town, Ethiopia

Research dates: March 2023 – December 2024.

Research Summary

This study centers on the concept of "contextualization" of literacy and aims to explore the intersection between contextualized literacy practices, teacher education, and the empowerment of girls. While some studies have highlighted the importance of literacy practices in fostering girls' empowerment, there is a significant gap in research regarding the potential of local/indigenous oral narratives to facilitate contextualized literacy and enhance the social and cognitive capacities of girls.

Focusing on a teacher education program at a college and the literacy practices of two primary schools in southern Ethiopia, this project seeks to understand how storybooks derived from local/indigenous oral narratives can serve as instructional materials that bridge the gap between literacy practices and girls' empowerment within formal language education. It will systematically document how teacher education programs can act as conduits, connecting indigenous oral narratives to literacy practices and girls' empowerment, thus equipping both pre-service trainee teachers and in-service primary school educators to empower girls through contextually relevant literacy practices.

The research encompasses the exploration of local/indigenous oral narratives from diverse Ethiopian cultures and their significance in literacy development and the empowerment of girls and women, specifically within the framework of teacher education programs and the pedagogic processes of two primary schools in the Guji district, southern Ethiopia. To gather data, a qualitative participatory approach will be employed, comprising four data collection methods: document analysis, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and school classroom observations. Notably, teacher educators, primary school teachers, pre-service trainee teachers, and primary school students will not only serve as sources of data but also actively engage in the data collection and interpretation processes.

Dr. Tadesse Jaleta Jirata is an Associate Professor specializing in Childhood and Youth Studies at Addis Ababa University's Center of Early Childhood Care and Education. He holds a Ph.D. in Interdisciplinary Childhood Studies from the Norwegian University of Sciences and Technology, with postdoctoral research experience at the University of Geneva, Switzerland, focusing on Children's Rights Studies. His research focus is on 'The Power of Local/Indigenous Oral Narratives to Enhance Girls' Empowerment through Contextualization of Literacy Practices.' Beyond research, Dr. Tadesse has also played active roles in various consultancy projects for government and non-government organizations, contributing significantly to the advancement of knowledge in childhood and youth development in Ethiopia.