

Teaching and Learning in Fragile Contexts (TLFC) Call for Research Proposals

Literacy Education and the “Good Classroom” in Refugee, Displacement and Crisis Contexts in Sub-Saharan Africa

Theme	Literacy education for early years (i.e. preschool to end of Primary School) in crisis-affected, displacement and refugee migration contexts in Sub-Saharan Africa.
Geographic area	Sub-Saharan African countries, regions or sub-regions affected by crisis, armed conflict, refugee flows, and/or internal displacement with more than 100,000 refugees and IDPs: Burkina Faso; Cameroon; Central African Republic; Chad; Cote d'Ivoire; Democratic Republic of Congo; Ethiopia; Kenya; Mali; Malawi; Mauritania; Mozambique; Niger; Nigeria; Rwanda; Somalia; Sudan; South Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, (UNHCR Operational Data Portal, 2024 ; IOM, 2024). In addition to these countries, CODE will accept proposals involving sub-regions where there is a well-documented refugee population such as northern Ghana.
Number of grants	10
Maximum value of grant award	\$CAD 20,000
Language	Applications may be submitted in English or French
Eligibility	Preference will be given to institutional partnerships involving research teams comprising PhD holders based in universities including faculty members, lecturers, post-doctoral fellows and graduate students. However, individuals holding a minimum of a master's degree may apply. Applicants must be based in Sub-Saharan Africa.
Duration of research	12-18 months
Application deadline	January 6, 2025, 11:59 pm EDT
Online information session	8:00 am (EST, 13:00 GMT) December 4, 2024. Click here: Register for Info Session to register for an information session. The session will provide an overview of the TLFC research grants program, and an opportunity to ask questions. The session will be recorded and publicly available following the session.
Deadline for questions:	December 16, 2024
Email for further inquiries	TLFC@code.ngo

1. Introduction: The “Good” Classroom in Crisis Contexts

At the core of this call for proposals is the “good” classroom. As a principal site for teacher-student interactions, the classroom is embedded in notions of the common good and what constitutes desirable and serviceable knowledge for economic growth, socialization, and citizenship building. CODE aims to interrogate, expand, and reimagine the “good classroom” in the context of crisis, armed conflict, internal displacement, and refugee migration in selected African countries, and the implications for education policies, pedagogies, curriculum reforms, peacebuilding, and education technologies (edtech). With this call, CODE encourages African-led research and theory building around three overlapping themes relevant for literacy education: i) knowledge and skills; ii) agency; and iii) responsiveness. These themes coincide with emergent evidence from CODE’s programming, and quality teaching and learning framework. They provide a starting point and are not intended to constrain independence of thought or creativity. On the contrary, researchers are encouraged to explore a single area of focus or combination of these and other unspecified dimensions in ways that reflect and respond to their situational contexts.

CODE is a registered non-profit organization based in Ottawa, Canada mandated to promote every child’s right to read. Currently, CODE operates in six African countries (Ghana, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Sierra Leone). Based on its [theory of change](#), CODE co-constructs modular teacher professional development courses with local partners, makes available high-quality, locally relevant reading materials, and supports educational research among Africa-based academics.

This call inaugurates the second round of grants for the Teaching and Learning in Fragile Conflicts (TLFC) project (2022-2026) funded by Global Affairs Canada. We define fragile contexts as “places where there is an accumulation and combination of risks as a result of context-specific underlying causes combined with insufficient coping capacity of the state, system and/or communities to manage, absorb or mitigate those risks.”¹ The award is designed to support African-led research and ecologies of knowledges (Santos, 2016) in the field of literacy education. The proposed outcome of the research is: ***“Education policy and practice informed by evidence on how quality teaching and culturally relevant learning materials can improve literacy and learning outcomes among refugees and IDPs in specific fragile sub-Saharan African countries”***. CODE will select 10 proposals in collaboration with an external committee of adjudicators. These may be conceptual, theoretical, empirical, and applied research proposals. Each grant has a maximum value of \$CAD 20,000 and the research must be completed within 12 to 18 months.

2. Current Displacement Education in Emergencies Landscape²

The world is unsettled. Conflict and climate-induced mobilities are responsible for the significant rise in the number of people displaced globally and protracted displacement periods. At the end of 2023, 117.3 million people worldwide were forced to flee their homes due to conflicts, violence, fear of persecution

¹ File:///F:/Programme-Framework-Fragile-Contexts.pdf

² Keenan, Caroline (2023) “CODE Literature and Research Review: Education in Displacement Contexts”

and human rights violations, up 8 per cent or 8.8 million people from the end of 2022 and continuing the upward trend over the last 12 years ([UNHCR, 2024](#)). A new cycle of war in the Israel-Palestine resumed in 2023 and displaced an estimated 1.7 million Palestinians (three quarters of the population), and disrupted education for 625,000 Gazan students ([UNHCR, 2024](#); [University of Cambridge and Centre for Lebanese Studies, 2024](#)). War in Sudan and Ukraine beginning in 2023 and 2022, respectively, and other emergencies, including the deteriorating situations in Myanmar and Burkina Faso, contribute to the increase in the numbers of forcibly displaced persons worldwide.

At the end of 2023, there were 43 million refugees, of which about half are children ([UNHCR, 2024](#)). Forcibly displaced children are among those most likely to face education challenges. The average primary enrolment rates for refugee children were 63 percent and 61 percent for males and females, respectively. Enrolment drops at the secondary level to 36 percent for males and 35 percent for females ([UNHCR, 2023](#)). Aggregated data masks variations within and between countries. While the exact number of IDP children are unknown, of the estimated 59.1 million people living in displacement at the end of 2021, the estimated number of children among them is about 9.9 million aged between five and 11 years, and 7.5 million between 12 and 17 years. At present, there are no internationally comparable figures on IDPs' school attendance and completion, learning outcomes or out-of-school rates but efforts are underway to address this information gap ([IDMC, 2022](#)).

The rise in the number of forcibly displaced persons globally suggests that an increasing proportion of the world's children will be out of school. This, combined with the impact of COVID-19-related school closures and disruptions, will intensify persistent inequities in education among the most marginalized children, with forcibly displaced children facing the largest gaps, and potentially rollback progress made in narrowing educational disparities since 2000. During the pandemic, at least a third of the world's schoolchildren did not access remote learning while schools remained closed ([UNICEF, 2020](#)). According to the World Bank, although high levels of "learning poverty" (defined as children unable to read and comprehend a simple text by the age of 10) in low- and middle-income countries predated the pandemic, simulation models indicate that learning poverty will increase to 70 percent from 53 percent pre-COVID-19 in the absence of rapid, concerted action, with refugee girls at greater risk of not returning to school ([World Bank, 2022](#)). Comparative regional data suggest that Sub-Saharan Africa has the highest levels of learning poverty – estimated at 90 percent at 2022 ([World Bank, 2022](#)).

Education plays a vital role in settings affected by crises. As sites for formal learning and socialisation, schools provide children and youth with access to knowledge, analytic tools, and resources for sense-making and identity formation. Ideally, they are safe havens where children feel protection from risks of abuse, exploitation, and recruitment by armed groups. Beyond learning, schools often provide students with meals, access to health and psychosocial services important to their development. Education fosters integration and strengthens social cohesion. Quality early education programmes support children's school readiness, academic progress, and long-term social adjustment. This is especially true in the case of displaced children, for whom preschool can provide stability and opportunities for language learning and social integration.

2.1 Global Frameworks on Education in Displacement

Prior to 2012, refugee education took place mainly in parallel schools separate from host country students frequently run by international organizations and often followed the curriculum delivered in the language of instruction of the country of origin. A consensus gradually emerged sanctioning the integration of refugee children in host country public education systems given the protracted nature of displacement. Over time, the average length of exile for refugees increased to between ten and twenty-five years - three times in the duration of the early 1990s (Dryden-Peterson et al., 2018). Today, refugee learners are likely to spend the entirety of their schooling years in a host country. According to UNHCR, over 60 percent of the world's refugees and 80 percent of IDP's live in urban areas³ as opposed to camp settings. Finally, funding for education in refugee-only schools is marked by persistent shortfalls and unpredictability (UNESCO, 2019).

Host countries are generally characterized by over-stretched education systems and often weak political and economic institutions (Dryden-Peterson, 2015; Hathaway, 2016). In these contexts, national education systems struggle to meet the education needs of their own students, and sharing scarce resources within already fragile institutional settings can contribute to inter-group tensions among host communities and refugees/IDPs (e.g. Cederman, Weidmann, & Gleditsch, 2011; Novelli, Cardozo, & Smith, 2019; Stewart, Brown, & Langer, 2008). Acknowledging these complexities, UNHCR's [Education Strategy 2012-2016](#) articulated a new approach to the education of refugees by including them in national education systems to expand the level of access and strengthen the existing system. The strategy was reinforced in UNHCR's *Education 2030*, which outlined three key objectives: i) to promote equitable and sustainable inclusion in national education systems for refugees, asylum seekers, returnees, stateless and IDPs; ii) to foster safe, enabling learning environments for all students, regardless of legal status, gender or disability; and iii) to enable learners to apply their education to secure sustainable futures ([UNHCR, 2019](#)). UNHCR endorsed the inclusion of learners in public sector schools where they follow the host country curriculum. The launch of the strategy and subsequent global frameworks related to education and displacement have begun to address some of the challenges related to education access in the context of displacement.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were launched in 2015 with the ambitious education target to "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all". Neither SDG 4, nor the corresponding [Education 2030 Framework for Action](#) (2016) can be realized without addressing the issues facing learners in displacement. Between 2016 and 2018, the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework and the Global Compact for Refugees were signed and rolled-out across 193 Member States to support refugees and host countries. In 2017, the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) member states (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Uganda) aimed to take collective responsibility to ensure that refugees have access to quality education by signing on to the [Djibouti Declaration on Refugee Education](#) and accompanying Action Plan which outlined five key commitments to refugee inclusion in national education systems through: 1) use of a multi-year costed plan of action to support inclusion of refugees

³ [UNHCR 2020](#)

into national education systems; 2) provision of higher education and TVET skills for displaced learners; 3) the establishment of regional qualifications frameworks; 4) developing policy around accreditation and certification; and 5) strengthening resource mobilisation and partnerships. Signatories have had varying degrees of success in meeting the targets, but the Action Plan clearly lays out strategies and activities to address the key issues in displacement. Evaluations measuring progress against the commitments made under the Djibouti Declaration are ongoing and would be useful to reflect on in future research related to displacement education.

3. Educational Rationale for this Call for Research Proposals

CODEs' research review, which informed this call, indicates that much of the extant research on displacement education looks at issues of access as opposed to examining factors contributing to quality. This second call focuses on literacy development and the impact of classroom quality in refugee and displacement contexts. While varieties of literacy have expanded to include financial, information and media, health, among others, this call for proposals centres on literacy education, defined by UNESCO (2018) as the "the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, and compute using printed, written, and visual materials associated with varying contexts," among populations affected by forcible displacement and refugee migration. CODE understands that the "good classroom" goes beyond reading fluency and comprehension. Since reading is a form of enculturation (Tierney & Pearson, 2021), it is value- and power-laden by virtue of what knowledge and whose knowledge is privileged in the classroom and, conversely, silenced or marginalized in formal and hidden curricula. Recognizing this, decolonial, anticolonial, and postcolonial education scholars have argued for epistemic equity by recognizing the interconnections of land, history, community, and identity necessary for countering colonizing logics of dominant western approaches and enabling intellectual, cultural, spiritual and political emancipation (Dei, 2015) and sustainability ([Demssie et al., 2020](#)).

Moreover, digital technologies facilitate new ways for literacy learning and expanded access to teaching and learning materials. But, if unregulated, they also usher new risks and harms ([Williamson et al., 2024](#)), including algorithmic bias and data colonialism (Couldry & Mejias, 2019). Therefore, while reading fluency and comprehension are foundational, children must also be enabled to engage critically with text, speech, and imagery, and analyze and critique norms, rules, and normalized practices affecting social order and daily life (Luke, 2012). Knowledge across these multiple dimensions of literacy (reading fluency, comprehension, epistemic pluralism, and critical literacy) suggests that literacy education is multimodal, contested, and situated.

4. Priority Themes and Areas of Research Inquiry

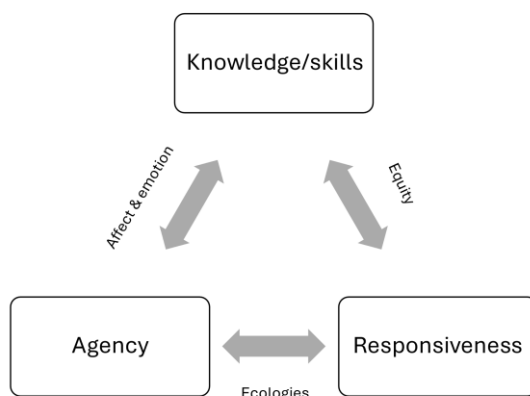
Priority areas of research for this call fall within a matrix of three educational themes (knowledge and skills; agency; responsiveness) and three areas of inquiry (equity and inclusion; teaching quality and accreditation; and teaching and learning materials) as shown in Figure 1 and elaborated further in Table 1.

4.1 Educational Themes for the Call for Research Proposals

CODE seeks to support research that addresses one or more of three educational themes:

- 1) Knowledge/skills for reading literacy and comprehension, including formal and informal curricula, and content knowledge and pedagogy in teacher professional development programs to support instructional practices, and reading assessment.
- 2) Agency, including how teachers and learners exercise agency in conflict and post-conflict settings where life may be precarious, and resources are scarce.
- 3) Responsiveness includes place-, gender-, and culturally-responsive education, and technology-enabled learning that commits to the inclusion of persons marginalized based on class, ethnocultural identity, race, ability, gender, and other dimensions of difference.

Figure 1- Education Themes (The QTL Framework)



Proposals are encouraged that cut across thematic priorities or are layered with other dimensions not specified. Notably, we have left the central component of Figure 1 (the underlying philosophical or theoretical grounding) open to interpretation as we recognize that researchers have well-reasoned preferences informed by postcolonial, decolonial, posthumanist, poststructural, feminist, liberal, or other theoretical frames. Each of these themes are elaborated below.

4.1.1 Knowledge and skills

Research on knowledge and skills is inclusive of curricula and pedagogies for literacy education, teacher professional development programs, and literacy/skills assessment instruments. Neither prescribed knowledge nor skills are value neutral; they represent struggles over control of what counts as official knowledge and what is worth teaching and learning (Luke 2012). For this reason, CODE is also interested in ecologies of knowledges (de Souza Santos, 2016) that challenge a singular way of knowing and being.

Studies suggest the global convergence of educational structures, policy and curricular frameworks with the influence of international organizations, NGOs, and networks (Meyer et al., 1977; Martens & Windzio, 2022). This isomorphism follows Euro-western values and scripts often in ways that marginalize or exclude alternative knowledge systems including Indigenous and local knowledge wherein Indigenous refers to “a cultural group’s ways of perceiving reality, ways of knowing, and the value systems that inform research processes (Chilisa, 2020, p. 10). In their review of ‘what works’ in education in emergencies, Burde et al. (2019) note the marginalization of colonial and indigenous local histories in postwar education reforms (exceptions include transitional justice) or Indigenous values and storytelling across the curriculum. Similarly, the INEE *Minimum Standards for Education: Preparedness, Response, Recovery* (INEE, 2024) promotes the use of “culturally and linguistically relevant learning materials” (p. 11), and the need to integrate decolonial approaches and counter institutional processes and structures and ways of knowing that reify unequal, colonial power relations (p. 27).

Additionally, while there is a growing volume of educational research on mental health and psychosocial health, how affect and emotions play a role in literacy development based on feeling-thinking entanglements (Jasper, 2014) is less clear. Presumably, a teacher who identifies with a host community that accommodates a refugee population engages in feeling-thinking that may lean towards action embodying care and empathy that enable understanding of the lifeworld of learners and problem solving. Similarly, emotions experienced by children affect their capacity for learning and socializing in the classroom and beyond, and are politically, culturally and socially situated (Lemke, 2013).

Examples of research from these perspectives capture wide-ranging possibilities that might examine the merits and limitations of a particular tool for measuring reading, the role of state, multilateral, and civil society actors in shaping curricular and pedagogical reforms for foundational learning, the affective conditions for literacy learning, identity formation, and meaning-making, and the impact of teacher professional development or curriculum reforms that acknowledge and integrate indigenous knowledge mindful of cultural essentialism, using drama, science or other field of knowledge) to build literacy.

4.1.2 Agency

In this call, agency refers to the capacity of individuals or groups to make choices and act to effect change in the classroom and beyond. A community pooling their resources in a post-conflict setting to build or reconstruct a school is an expression of agency. Similarly, a teacher that identifies supplementary learning materials that resonate with refugee students whose cultural identities and histories do not conform to the national curriculum enacts agency. Research aligned with this theme must be mindful of at least two aspects. First, from an ecological perspective, teacher and learner agency is enacted within structures including material, social, cultural, and epistemic that enable or constrain independent and creative thought and actions such as school culture, leadership, and peer relationships (Priestley, Biesta, & Robinson, 2015). Second, while agency is often conceived as a positive force, it may also manifest in ways that generate harms and public bads as when it reproduces inequalities through discriminatory and punitive behaviours.

Examples of research based on this theme might include studies on the enabling/constraining factors for agential action to create safe, peaceful, and inclusive classrooms, and their impact on children's reading, comprehension, and critical literacy, adaptive or resistive practices of teachers when mandated to implement new educational policies or reforms, teacher professional learning that fosters a sense of teacher agency, and pedagogical approaches that render a sense of agency students as readers.

4.1.3 Responsiveness

Responsiveness incorporates multiple relationalities that cut across education stakeholders. At the national and international level, educational authorities enact policies, frameworks, and practices that respond to the immediate needs and long-term interests of populations based on national interests and global discursive development practices and aid commitments. At the school and classroom levels, educators are the principal agents responsible for the academic performance and wellbeing of student cohorts who represent diverse intellectual capabilities, intersectional identities, personal histories, and other forms of difference. Within this ecological system, the motivation and capacity of teachers to attend and respond effectively to students extends beyond the idiosyncrasies of an individual teacher to the institutional policies, standards, practices, and resources including teacher professional development programs and school leadership that inform preferences and motivate behaviours.

Responsive behaviours include both proactive and intentional actions vis-à-vis immediate and potential threats and risks such as disaster risks context of extreme weather events and climate change, ethnocultural fragmentation and risks of armed conflict, and other forms of violence (structural, cultural, epistemic, and gender) (Galtung, 1969, 1990) that may be reproduced through school-based curricula and social relations.

Aside from these harms and risks, edtech companies accountable to shareholders (not the public), exercise growing influence in education structures and processes through learning management platforms, generative AI systems, and hardware, and software products. On the one hand, digitalization, including digital connectivity and technology, data mining for decision making, and data scraping for machine learning, promise benefits such as expanded educational access, overcoming teacher shortages, mobile education, computer adaptive testing, greater institutional efficiencies, and personalized learning systems yet risk decontextualization and widening digital gaps.

Within this highly unsettled global context, research based on responsiveness can interrogate methods and processes like place-based, gender-responsive (or transformative), culturally relevant, and otherwise equitable.

4.2 *Areas of inquiry*

The three educational themes intersect with areas of inquiry as shown in Table 1. These are: equity and social justice; teaching and learning materials; and teaching quality and accreditation. Examples are used to prompt thinking and demonstrate the broad range of possibilities and are not intended to narrow the selection of research topics.

Table 1: Examples of Research Inquiries in the Themes/Inquiry Matrix

Areas of inquiry	Educational (“Good Classroom”) Themes		
	Knowledge and Skills	Agency	Responsiveness
Equity and social justice	What forms of indigenous knowledge enhance literacy instructional practices, and assessment techniques?	What forms of pre- and in-service teacher professional learning enhance teacher agency among newly recruited refugee teachers?	What in- and out-of-school factors enable/constrain teachers’ capacity to support differently abled groups in learning?
Teaching and learning materials (TLMs) including edtech	How can TLMs capture the lived experience and memory of displaced/refugee communities to facilitate learning.	How do TLMs support meaning-making and education peacebuilding?	How do community forest schools practice literacy education and conceive of human-more than human relations?
Teaching quality and accreditation	Do teacher accreditation systems strengthen educational quality?	Can professional learning communities in contexts of displacement facilitate shared learning and improved teaching practice?	Reading assessment methods in temporary education contexts in emergencies

5. Proposal Submissions

Researchers are invited to submit proposals related to any of the three thematic priorities and areas of inquiry described above or a combination of these and other themes. The proposed research may be theoretical, empirical, or applied and use qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods. It may address formal and informal education including pre-school (kindergarten) and/or basic/primary level provided that it focuses on literacy education. The call is open to various forms of research related to literacy education specific to crisis, displacement and refugee contexts in Sub-Saharan Africa. Some examples are given below.:

Scoping and systematic reviews

- Scoping and systematic reviews related to the three themes and rationalized based on gaps in the current scholarship.

Theoretical and conceptual contributions

- Novel theoretical/conceptual approaches informed by African knowledge systems including spiritual knowledge.
- Refinements to current theoretical or conceptual frameworks based on the current state of the art in literacy education.

Empirical and applied research related to curriculum, instructional practice, and assessment

- The roles of curriculum and pedagogy in validating and/or marginalizing systems of knowledge in displacement contexts.
- Models for integrating Indigenous knowledge systems in literacy education (this might include, for example, transposing African orality (and subgenres such as proverbs, riddles, songs, etc. into children's written stories, or expressing more-than-human relations in storytelling)
- Blood and intergenerational memory in literacy education for transitional justice, reconciliation, and peacebuilding
- Indigenous knowledge, forms of spiritualism, and cross-curricular connections with literacy education
- Experimental and quasi-experimental approaches to literacy education
- Digital technologies and literacy education
- Case studies of the history of reading/literacy education in selected country or community context and the implications for current literacy education practices and policies
- Multilingualism and translanguaging in literacy education particularly for language groups displaced into contexts of languages other than their own or displaced into communities of multiple languages.
- Literacy education policies for refugee or displacement populations
- Teacher professional development and accreditation programs (in- and pre-service) for refugee teachers
- Role of communities of practice/professional learning communities within displacement contexts
- Literacy education and groups affected by social exclusion

Empirical and applied research related to book production and distribution, and other teaching and learning materials

- Mapping and analyzing the book supply chain including traditional and edtech networks and implications for decolonizing children's literature in displacement contexts
- Libraries and modes of delivery (mobile, audio, and digital libraries) in these crisis and temporal contexts for accessing text including alternative format texts for children with visual disabilities.
- Challenges for illustrators and authors of children's literature

Indigenous research methodologies

- Indigenous research methods for literacy education.
- Monitoring and reporting tools and systems. Researchers are encouraged to propose alternative approaches to performance-driven accountability systems that typically conditions program funding and/or reimagining accountability with counter-hegemonic discourses.

References

- Burde, D., Lahmann, H., & Thompson, N. (2019). Education in emergencies: 'What works' revisited. *Education and Conflict Review*, 2, 81-88. https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10081593/1/Burde_Article_14_Burde.pdf
- Couldry, N., & Mejias, U.A. (2019). Data colonialism: Rethinking big data's relation to the contemporary subject. *Television & New Media*, 20(4), 336-349.
- Chilisa, B. (2020). *Indigenous research methods*. Sage.
- Dei, G. J. (2008). Indigenous knowledge studies and the next generation: Pedagogical possibilities for anti-colonial education. *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*, 37, 5–13.
- Cederman, L.E., Weidmann, N.B., & Gleditsch, K.S. (2011), Horizontal inequalities and ethnonationalist civil war: A global comparison. *American Political Science Review*, 105(3), 478-495.
- Demssie, Y.N., Biemans, H.J.A., Wesselink, R., Mulder, M. (2020). Combining Indigenous knowledge and modern education to foster sustainability competences: Towards a seat of learning design principles. *Sustainability*, 12, 6823. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12176823>
- Dryden-Peterson, S., Adelman, E., Alvarado, S., Anderson, K., Bellino, M. J., Brooks, R., Bukhari, S. U. S., Cao, E., Chopra, V., Faizi, Z., Gulla, B., Maarouf, D., Scherrer, B., Smoake, E., & Suzuki, E. (2018). *Inclusion of Refugees in National Education Systems* Background Paper Prepared for the 2019 Global Education Monitoring Report). UNESCO
- Foster, N. (2023), 21st Century competencies: Challenges in education and assessment. In N. Foster and M. Piacentini (Eds.), *Innovating assessments to measure and support complex skills*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/3637901c-en>.
- Galtung, J. (1990). Cultural violence. *Journal of Peace Research*, 27(3), 291-305.
- Galtung, J. (1969). Violence, peace, and peace research. *Journal of Peace Research*, 6(3), 167-191.
- Jasper, J.M. (2014). Feeling–thinking: Emotions as central to culture. In B. Baumgarten, P. Daphi, & P. Ullrich (Eds.), *Conceptualizing culture in social movement research*, (p.23-44), Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lemke, J.L. (2013). Thinking about feeling: Affect across literacies and lives. In O. Erstad & J. Sefton-Green (Eds.), *Identity, community, and learning lives in the digital age* (pp. 57-69). Cambridge University Press.
- Luke, A. (2012) Critical literacy: Foundational notes, theory into practice, *Theory into Practice*, 51(1), 4-11.
- Novelli, M., Lopes Cardozo, M., & Smith, A. (2019). The '4 Rs' as a tool for critical policy analysis of the education sector in conflict affected states. *Education and Conflict Review*, 2, 70-75.
- Santos, B. (2016). *Epistemologies of the South: Justice against epistemicide*. Routledge.
- Stewart, F., Brown, G. K., & Langer, A. (2008). Major findings and conclusions on the relationship between horizontal inequalities and conflict. In *Horizontal inequalities and conflict: Understanding group violence in multiethnic societies* (pp. 285-300). Palgrave Macmillan UK.
- Taylor, A. (2017). Beyond stewardship: common world pedagogies for the Anthropocene. *Environmental Education Research*, 23(10), 1448–1461. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13504622.2017.1325452>
- Tierney, R.J., & P. Pearson, D. (2021). *A history of literacy education: Waves of research and practice*. Teachers College Press.
- UNESCO (2019). Global Education Monitoring Report. Migration, Displacement and Education – Building Bridges, not Walls. Paris, UNESCO
- Yemini, M., Engel, L., & Simon, A.B. (2023): Place- based education – a systematic review of literature, *Educational Review*, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/00131911.2023.2177260>
- Williamson, B., Molnar, A., & Boninger, F. (2024). *Time for a pause: Without effective public oversight, AI in schools will do more harm than good*. National Education Policy Centre, School of Education, University of Colorado Boulder. https://www.nepc.colorado.edu/sites/default/files/publications/PB%20Williamson_0.pdf

GUIDELINES FOR SUBMISSIONS

Conditions (funding, duration, eligibility)

Funding

The grant is issued in Canadian dollars and valued up to \$20,000 (see Section 9 - Budget for details on allowable expenses).

Duration of research

All research must be completed in 12 to 18 months and no later than June 2026.

Eligibility criteria

- Individual researchers or a research team affiliated with an organization such as a higher education institution in Sub-Saharan Africa or non-governmental organization or other legal entity. If the applicant is affiliated with a higher education institution, they must indicate their relevant department(s)/centre(s) involved.
- Applicants must hold, at minimum, a master's degree in a relevant discipline. Preference will be given to PhD holders and candidates affiliated with higher education institutions. Early career scholars are encouraged to apply as part of a research team.
- Research teams must specify the members (institutional affiliation and areas of specialization), including their respective roles and responsibilities and describe the prospective contributions of each participant.
- Cross-national research by two researchers/teams are also eligible to apply. In this case, researchers from two different higher education institutions or other departments within the same institution may apply as a consortium. Each team must be responsible for a specific component (i.e. a different country case analysis guided by shared research questions and methodology). When detailing the proposal, the nodes for collaboration must be clearly elaborated as well as the respective roles of constituent team members and leadership. In the case of a cross-national comparison, each of the constituent teams (up to a maximum of 2 teams) must apply separately to be eligible for a maximum of \$CAD 40,000 (double the rate of individual proposals) provided there is a clear and reasonable process for blending the findings from the two teams.

Review Process

Selection process

The selection process involves two stages: At the first stage, all proposals will be screened by CODE for adherence to the stated submission requirements indicated in the call before being anonymized and passed on for review in the second stage by a panel of jurors. The jurors are composed of researchers affiliated with African higher education institutions, research, and development. They will assess the submissions, request further information as needed, and make final recommendations to CODE.

Assessment criteria

Proposals are assessed based on 8 criteria:

1. **Intellectual merit:** Does the research address gaps in the current scholarship on literacy education and will the results advance knowledge as it pertains to the thematic priorities identified in this call in ways that problematize, deepen, and/or extend academic discourses and practices. Is there coherence across the various main parts of the research proposal (theoretical frame, research questions, methodology).
2. **Potential impact:** Will the research results provide insights into literacy education practice and/or policies by proposing new or revised theoretical/conceptual frames, monitoring and evaluation tools, or generating evidence that addresses gaps in the scholarship.
3. **Equity considerations:** Does the research engage substantively with issues of equity using feminist theory, disability studies, decolonial, or political economy approaches that make explicit power and knowledge in educational equity.
4. **Methodological rigour:** Does the methodology persuasively outline the rationale for the selected methodology, align with the research questions, and provide adequate detail regarding participants, data sources, data collection, and data analysis to evoke confidence in the capability of the researcher(s) to implement the research in the proposed time frame.
5. **Ethical considerations:** Does the methodology adequately detail measures that will be taken to ensure ethical standards and the protection of participants including (if applicable) the submission to institutional ethics review boards.
6. **Researcher qualifications:** Does the researcher(s) have the necessary knowledge and skills relevant to implement the proposed research based on their education and research portfolio as indicated in the academic curriculum vitae. In the case of a team, do the members possess the complementary knowledge and skills necessary to undertake the proposed research.
7. **Knowledge mobilization:** Does the proposed knowledge mobilization strategy indicate creative outreach across a range of actors, local communities, and local and regional networks including the TLFC Scholars Circle (a group of TLFC grant recipients from Rounds 1 & 2). All research generated from this grant is aimed to support literacy education development and should be available free for all to use. Accordingly, all research outputs will be made available using open access resources including edited books and journal articles, webinars, podcasts and other knowledge mobilization products freely accessible to users.
8. **Financial considerations (budget and schedule):** Is the proposed budget adequate for the planned research activities and align with a duration of 12-18 months. Costs are calculated mindful of both fairness and reasonableness and include only allowable expenditures. If the costs exceed \$CAD 20,000, the balance remaining is clearly accounted for from other funding sources.

9. **Risk mitigation.** Risks are fully accounted for, and mitigation plans are considered in both the planning and budgeting processes (i.e. currency fluctuations, increased insecurity limiting access to specific populations, weather events affecting access to areas).

Key Application Documents (found at [Call for Proposals - CODE](#))

Online Application form: <https://form.jotform.com/242734003664250>

Annex 1: Guidelines for completing the application form.

Annex 2: The budget sheet