

CALL FOR PROPOSALS IN WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA AND THE INDIAN OCEAN:

Generating and mobilizing innovative knowledge
for regional education challenges



International Development Research Centre
Centre de recherches pour le développement international



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1. INTRODUCTION

The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) invite proposals from individual organizations or consortia of multiple organizations, for projects to generate and mobilize knowledge so national education systems in developing country contexts can address shared policy challenges related to improving access, quality and the performance of their systems.

THE GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR EDUCATION KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION EXCHANGE

This call is part of the Global Partnership for Education Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX), which is a joint endeavor between GPE and IDRC. The goal of KIX is to strengthen national education systems and accelerate educational progress in the Global South by filling knowledge gaps, increasing access to evidence, and strengthening systems to support the generation and uptake of evidence and innovations in GPE member countries. KIX does this by facilitating direct knowledge sharing across countries through four [Regional Hubs](#) and by funding projects at global and regional levels to build and mobilize knowledge to address shared priorities in education. KIX particularly seeks to deepen knowledge about the ways in which GPE member countries can adapt and scale the impact of innovative approaches in their education systems. Projects are selected through competitive calls for proposals, including this one. In the first year of KIX, multi-region, multi-country [projects](#) were selected through a global call for proposals. This regional call for proposals is designed to respond to specific priorities of GPE member countries covered by the KIX Africa21 hub, covering 21 Francophone and Lusophone countries in West and Central Africa, plus Madagascar and the Comoros in the Indian Ocean (see Annex A).

OBJECTIVES OF THIS CALL

The objectives of this regional call for proposals are to:

- Build knowledge about innovative solutions to shared policy challenges in GPE member countries and how their positive impacts can be scaled.
- Support the use of that knowledge in and across education systems for policy, practice and technological development and implementation; and
- Strengthen capacities to generate and use knowledge and innovation for education.

The deadline for submission of proposals is September 30, 2020 (23:59 EDT).

2. SHARED REGIONAL CHALLENGES IN THE KIX AFRICA 21 REGION

This call is designed to respond to the demands of GPE member countries for knowledge and innovation. Each [KIX Regional Hub](#) led a process from March – July 2020 across GPE member countries to identify shared policy challenges for public education systems. The process involved consultation with key national education policymakers from GPE member countries, Local Education Groups (LEGs), education experts in the region, plus review of education sector plans and regional education analyses.

The priority identification process shapes the agenda of the regional Hub and is also the basis through which IDRC selected the challenges to include in this regional call. These challenges were chosen because they

- Align with KIX’s focus on national education systems from early childhood to early secondary school levels;
- Address important knowledge gaps;
- Can serve to improve gender equality, equity, and inclusion in and through education; and
- Are immediately relevant to specific countries in the region with possibility for broader applicability.

The four policy challenges for this regional call for KIX Africa21 are:

- A. Pre- and in-service teacher training and development
- B. Offering chances for out-of-school children and youth
- C. Promoting gender equality and girls’ success in school
- D. Quality bilingual and pluri-lingual teaching and learning

[Please read a working version of the report on the regional challenges here.](#) Summaries on each challenge follow below. Summaries on each challenge follow below.

A. PRE- AND IN-SERVICE TEACHER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

In the KIX Africa 21 hub countries, the need to strengthen teachers’ qualifications and capacities remains a top priority at all educational levels. In its analysis of the monitoring of Education for All (EFA), UNESCO notes “up to 40% of young adults with five years of education have not acquired the basic skills to find a job or prevent their being illiterate.... Teacher training systems are generally not able to meet the quantitative and qualitative

needs of training.”¹ With an average annual population growth rate of 3.1%, the need for teachers continues to rise. In 2009, it was estimated that more than half of African countries would need 4.6 million teachers by 2020² to achieve universal education—the number of teachers was expected to increase by approximately 3.3% in each year since 2009. Since this target remains unmet, and in an effort to meet 2015 EFA goals, many countries since the late 1990s have been forced, by factors including structural adjustment policies and lack of financial resources, to recruit teachers who do not meet required academic levels. Moreover, until recently, these educators were teaching without adequate initial training and support mechanisms to improve their skills. These factors have led to the emergence of at least three categories of teachers: (i) teachers who received professional training in educational institutions and were integrated into programs in the public service; (ii) contract teachers with less than 10 years of basic education and little training, often lacking initial training, and who, in most cases, are unequal in status and salary when compared to public counterparts; and (iii) community teachers recruited locally, who may have graduated from literacy programs but did not finish their own schooling—mainly in rural communities, which establish their own schools because of governments’ inability to provide them.

While these teachers have supported the increase in gross enrolment rates, they have not resulted in quality teaching given the lack of necessary academic and/or pedagogical support. In Niger, for example, the gross enrolment rate rose from 34.1% in 1999/2000 to 72.9% in 2009/2010 and 82.0% in 2013 due to school creation and teacher recruitment. However, the results of various *Programme d’analyse des systèmes éducatifs de la CONFEMEN*³ (PASEC) tests of primary school students indicate that the vast majority, on average, retain less than half of the content of the programs, and 72% of the students are below the minimum threshold in French.⁴

Efforts are currently being made to raise the academic level at which contract teachers are recruited (minimum 10 years of basic education) and the measures for initial and continuing teacher training. These measures include (i) remote continuing education for teachers (e.g., l’Initiative francophone pour la formation à distance des maîtres, UNESCO-China Fund-in-Trust, etc.); (ii) district teachers’ conferences, which bring together educators as well as their supervisors by level of education; and (iii) pedagogical facilitation groups, which bring together teachers from a school district and are led by

¹ UNESCO. 2017. *L’UNESCO et l’égalité des genres en Afrique Subsaharienne : des Programmes Novateurs. Des Résultats Perceptibles.*

² Pôle de Dakar. 2009. *University Primary Education in Africa: the teacher challenge.*

³ CONFEMEN : Conférence des ministres de l’Education des Etats et gouvernements de la Francophonie

⁴ [Plan sectoriel de l’éducation et de la formation du Niger \(2014-2024\).](#)

district supervisors. However, the scope of these efforts remains limited to certain regions and the expansion of these initiatives poses technical and logistical challenges.

All 21 countries in the KIX Africa 21 hub have identified this priority as paramount and 11 have ranked it as a top priority (Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Comoros, Central African Republic, Chad, Niger, Mali, Senegal, Togo). In these countries, contract and community teachers now account for the majority of the teaching staff; raising the quality of learning cannot be done without them.

The challenge

To increase the quality of learning by improving the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of approaches for teachers' capacity building, particularly for contract and community teachers.

Sub-themes and potential questions

- i. What effective approaches can be adapted to ensure teachers' professional competence during the recruitment process, and to provide training and necessary support once they start?
- ii. What factors are most important to meet the needs and contexts of rural teachers and community teachers? How can strategies be adapted and scaled to support their initial and continued professional development?
- iii. Acknowledging the importance of female teachers for girls' success in school,⁵ what are effective ways to innovate in contracts to increase women's interest in becoming teachers and making a long career of it? What factors are associated with an increase in girls' enrolment and success in school? How can countries encourage the recruitment of female teachers, especially at the high school level?
- iv. What cost-effective ways can be contextualized by districts at local and provincial levels to implement initial and continuing teacher training using distance education approaches? What existing practices/innovations in the Africa 21 region or elsewhere can be adapted and how can they be scaled up in the short and long term?

⁵ <https://www.globalpartnership.org/blog/importance-female-teachers-girls-education>

B. OFFERING CHANCES FOR OUT-OF-SCHOOL CHILDREN AND YOUTH

In many countries covered by this call, student education has been interrupted by COVID-19, conflict and insecurity, and other disruptions. Disruptions have lasted for months or years, continuously or intermittently. Discontinuities create huge challenges for school systems and students need support with alternative education options or pathways back to regular school.

COVID-19: Consequences and responses

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic at the end of 2019 and the measures required to mitigate its spread have exacerbated inequality and virtually eliminated educational continuity. Thousands of schools and institutions are closed, putting activities of millions of students and hundreds of thousands of teachers in the KIX 21 region on hold. Governments have developed response plans in light of COVID-19 to support educational continuity. These plans have several components, including the use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for educational continuity using web, television, and radio platforms with digital educational resources; production, publication and distribution of past papers for examination classes, as well as for primary and core subjects.

All children face challenges during the pandemic. However, certain groups of learners who were already disadvantaged before COVID-19 may face extra difficulties in accessing measures in response plans. For example, those with disabilities will find it more difficult to keep up, and to catch up, if the new measures are not adapted to their needs, and girls may be slower to return to school because of multiple social, cultural and economic factors. There is a need to understand whether and how groups that are exceptionally vulnerable are coping, and how to help them better seize available opportunities to continue learning.

Conflict and insecurity situations and government responses

Eight of the KIX Africa 21 countries (38%) have been plagued by conflict or insecurity for almost a decade, leading to the internal displacement of millions of people—the majority of whom are women and children—and the closure of thousands of schools. These countries include Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic. The main measures taken to ensure educational continuity in the face of insecurity, as set out in the strategy for student enrolment in areas with major security challenges, have focused on:

- Learning opportunities for refugee and displaced children.
- The organization of school exams, for some students in conflict zones, based on a specific schedule and under the protection of defence and security forces.
- Training of teachers, students, and students' parents in education in emergencies.

Whether because of pandemic, conflict, natural disaster, or for any other reason, students need alternative education options to support continuous learning and return to school. The case of *écoles passerelles*, which is one example among many other innovations, is of particular interest. This innovation was initiated in response to this challenge by creating gateways, or bridges, between literacy centres and primary schools. It has been implemented in several KIX Africa 21 countries (Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Niger, Senegal). In these countries, with regard to informal education and literacy, national policy is to set up cross-over classes inspired by literacy programs in schools to give a first or second chance to people who have never attended school or who left school at a very early age.

The challenge

To develop appropriate education practice or policy solutions to support the educational trajectories of children and young people that have been interrupted by pandemics, conflicts, natural disasters or other disruptions.

Potential subthemes and questions

- i. How can the key elements of programs and innovations that have been successful elsewhere in providing alternative education for out-of-school children be incorporated into education systems? What opportunities for exchanges and pooling of resources exist in the region to formulate common approaches and achieve economies of scale?
- ii. How can approaches address the special needs of vulnerable groups, such as girls and persons with disabilities?
- iii. How can ICTs both new (online platforms) and old (radio, television, correspondence courses, etc.) be adapted and contextualized to address inequities in rural areas with poor infrastructure and ensure continuity of learning for all in times of pandemics and conflicts?

C. PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY AND GIRLS' SUCCESS IN SCHOOL

Although gender parity in education systems has improved over the last two decades in many African countries, only 38% of countries have achieved gender parity in primary education, and more dramatically 19% in lower secondary education and 6% in upper secondary education. These figures conceal great disparities depending on whether one is in a rural or urban area, rich or poor, living with a disability, etc. With regard to the duration of girls' schooling and learning outcomes, one study indicates that "[g]irls . . . spend a shorter time in school than boys (educational life expectancy of 8.7 years in 2011,

against 9.9 years for boys).⁶ 2014 PASEC results showed that, in primary education, there is a disparity in mathematical skills, where girls do not perform as well as boys (UNESCO 2018, p. 19).

In addition to issues of gender inequality, problems of equity and inclusion remain for children with disabilities, those who are out of school and, especially those in situations of conflict and insecurity. The 2015 EFA Monitoring Report shows that 12% of boys and 16% of girls of primary school age are out of school in countries of the Economic Community of West African States and, more than one-third of children of primary school age are out of school, including 40% of girls, the Economic Community of West African States.⁷ COVID 19 adds to these issues, leading to school closures in almost every country in the world, including those of the KIX Africa 21 hub.

Efforts to achieve gender equality in education consist of the following measures at the policy level: (i) the adoption of gender-sensitive planning and budgeting, as well as the establishment of related training; and (ii) positive incentives (scholarships, payment of tuition fees, textbooks and school supplies for female students, etc.). In schools and the communities, efforts consist of innovations such as: (i) eradicating negative stereotypes in textbooks and in teachers' attitudes and educational approaches; (ii) creating a safe and girl-friendly school environment by making separate toilets and sanitary pads available; (iii) ensuring the presence of women as teachers and role models; and (iv) fostering a dialogue between schools and parents on socio economic and cultural practices that are detrimental to keeping girls in school.

These measures and approaches are far from being fully implemented in the region, which stalls progress in gender equality in education. In addition, as described in the KIX discussion paper on gender equality,⁸ issues of girls' education and gender inequality in education has been addressed in a piecemeal rather than strategic and comprehensive fashion. There are gaps in understanding how education systems need to adapt to support interventions to improve girls' education and gender equality more effectively. Second, there is little research on how targeted interventions to improve gender equality outcomes can in turn be either facilitated or constrained by the characteristics of an education system in different contexts.

⁶ [ADF, AUF, Orange et UNESCO, Le numérique au service de l'éducation en Afrique, Savoirs communs n° 17, 2015](#), p. 18.

⁷ [2015. Rapport Mondial du suivi de l'EPT 2000-2015 : progrès et enjeux](#).

⁸ [GPE. 2019. Achieving Gender Equality in and through Education](#).

The challenge

To increase enrolment and retention of girls in education systems as well as improve their learning outcomes through innovative measures targeting the school and its environment.

Subthemes and questions

- i. What incentives for parents and communities can be adapted to increase girls' enrolment and success in primary and secondary education in KIX Africa 21 countries?
- ii. What are the innovative practices and elements that need to be adjusted in the teaching and learning environment to make a noticeable difference in the retention and academic performance of girls in primary and secondary education? What are the potential barriers and social, cultural and economic factors that are preventing them from being scaled to national or regional levels?
- iii. What are the enabling factors or drivers to better strengthen the contribution of female teachers to girls' school retention and success in the teaching and learning process?

D. QUALITY BILINGUAL AND PLURI-LINGUAL TEACHING AND LEARNING

Although progress has been made in most French-speaking countries in terms of enrolment rates, an assessment of students' learning achievements in nine countries using French as a language of learning has shown that 60% of children have not mastered early learning at the completion of primary education. Children in multilingual environments learn only the basics in a language (French) they do not all speak or understand.⁹ Further, despite having to teach to students, teachers themselves do not have a good command of French. This calls into question the effectiveness of the system and the quality of education.

Since the 1970s, a large number of Francophone countries in Africa have conducted pilot programs to introduce mother tongues or national languages as media of instruction. Many countries in the KIX Africa 21 region have made the issue of mother tongues or national languages in education a priority. Most have implemented experiments or innovations aimed at creating a transitional bilingual or multilingual system whereby children begin learning in their mother tongue during the first three or four years of primary

⁹ CONFEMEN. 2014. Education system performance in Francophone Sub-Saharan Africa: Competencies and Learning Factors in Primary Education (https://www.pasec.confemen.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Rapport_Pasec2014_GB_webv2.pdf)

education while learning French as a second language. Several assessments and studies have shown that these experiments have been successful for children's cognitive development and have led to a better command of French by the end of the cycle.¹⁰ Paradoxically, however, and with the exception of a few countries (Burundi, Comoros, Republic of the Congo, and Madagascar), very few countries have systematized bilingualism or multilingualism in their education systems.

More specifically, most of the abovementioned experiments are testing educational approaches for teaching reading, writing and mathematics in African languages. As a result, guidance documents and teaching materials have been designed as training aids for teachers. A large body of analytical work on these programs intended to improve learning in national languages or mother tongues have demonstrated that there are major issues that need to be addressed:

- the transfer of language and non-language competencies from the first language to French;
- the consideration of bilingualism in pre-service teacher training with the improvement of teacher training processes and in particular the remote use of resources in continuing education;
- management of multilingualism in the classroom: when the language of instruction is not the first language of all students in the class;
- curricular reforms that should take bilingualism into account; and
- reforms for relevant bilingual educational language policies

The challenge

To strengthen the promotion of relevant and quality bilingual or multilingual education in student learning, school management and teacher training.

Potential subthemes and questions:

- i. What actions need to be put in place for learners and teachers to ensure that the use of mother tongues and national languages contributes to improving education quality? How can these be pooled across countries with transnational languages?
- ii. How can innovations and experiments aimed at creating a bilingual or multilingual system be effectively supported in school management, teacher training, etc.?

¹⁰ Halaoui, N. & Alii. 2006. *Evaluation du programme Education bilingue au Burkina Faso*. Ministère de l'Enseignement de base et de l'Alphabétisation. Ouagadougou Burkina Faso.

[Ilboudo, P.T. 2009. *L'éducation bilingue au Burkina Faso : une formule alternative pour une éducation de qualité*. Association pour le développement de l'éducation en Afrique. Banque Africaine de Développement Tunis Tunisie.](#)

Boukary, H.& Damiba Aimé. 2015. *Le continuum d'éducation de base multilingue : évaluation de sa mise en œuvre par l'Etat depuis 2007*. Solidar Suisse, Burkina Faso.

3. SCOPE

Projects funded through this call will:

- Scan for and identify relevant approaches and innovations to address the shared policy challenge;
- Adapt and further test those approaches to assess how to scale positive impacts in GPE-member countries; and
- Mobilize knowledge and building capacity so the approaches can be taken up in policy and practice.

Projects funded through this call will NOT finance the implementation of solutions to the shared challenges, but rather build knowledge and innovation within and across GPE member countries to address these challenges.

Projects will identify innovative approaches to address one or more of the shared policy challenges. The approaches may be promising or already proven. They should be appropriate and scalable for the contexts of the region. Proposals will be expected to adapt and further test these innovations for a wider-scale use and application to deliver meaningful impact for the shared policy challenges.

Projects may focus on national, sub-national or regional levels depending on the challenge. The innovative approaches may come from within or outside GPE-member countries. They may have originally been developed to address national or international needs.

KIX supports inter-country knowledge exchange for GPE member countries. In this call, projects must focus on, and work in three or more GPE-member countries in the region. Projects should facilitate knowledge mobilization within and across countries. Please see Annex A for the list of countries.

CENTRAL CONCEPTS IN THIS CALL

Building and mobilizing knowledge: KIX regional grants will support projects that are problem-focused and action-oriented. They should be designed to build knowledge, innovation and evidence, while also creatively identifying and engaging with relevant users of that knowledge. Projects should involve education system stakeholders throughout to ensure that research is relevant and readily available for policy and practice. IDRC calls this type of project “research-for-development”.

Innovation: For the purposes of this call, the term “innovation” refers to a combination of tools, practice, technologies, policy, program, methodology, or intervention that can be used to improve education access and quality in developing contexts. The innovation may

be a package of measures that provide solutions. The innovative element may be the combination of elements that make them effective.

A critical approach to scaling impact: These projects will investigate how innovative approaches can make significant positive change in education systems by optimally scaling their impact. However, proposals are encouraged to take a critical approach to scale. Scaling is not only about making something bigger or increasing the coverage of an intervention. Scaling is the process of improving the reach, breadth, quality, equity and sustainability of the changes, benefits and solutions that innovations bring to education systems. Proposals should anticipate potential trade-offs or even negative consequences of innovations as they scale. Decisions to scale must be well justified in light of evidence, as well as the perspectives of those who could be affected (see more in [Gargani and McLean, 2017](#)).

Building knowledge about scaling, and for scaling: The grants **will not** support the large-scale implementation of identified innovations; they **will** fund research for development to generate lessons for their scaling. This may include: (1) measures to adapt and refine the innovations to the contextual needs of the selected countries; (2) developing and testing means and models to scale them; (3) supporting capacity building of stakeholders who will adapt, adopt and scale the innovations; and (4) assessing results.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

The call for regional grant projects is guided by a set of overarching questions. Starting with the shared policy challenge described in Section 2, KIX invites proposals to respond to this overall question:

How can innovative education approaches be adapted and scaled to address common challenges in GPE member countries?

The following sub-questions are suggested to guide the exploration of the overall question:

- What existing proven or promising innovations can be adapted to address the challenge(s) identified across the chosen thematic area(s)?
- What are effective approaches to adapting, scaling, and implementing these innovations in GPE member countries?
- What factors enable, incentivize, or impede the implementation of these innovations in GPE member countries?¹¹

¹¹ Applicants may refine, complement, and adapt this list of questions given the focus of their proposals.

Organizations submitting proposals are invited to tailor the overall objectives (from Section 1) and guiding questions from this call document and propose ways to focus their study to produce a useful and innovative contribution to the overall challenge.

FUNDING AND DURATION

KIX will allocate CA\$7.75 million through this call, with individual projects receiving funding between CA\$750,000 and CA\$1.20 million.

Projects can be up to 33 months in duration.

Proposals deemed high quality but not approved for funding may be retained for additional 12 months, based on applicant permissions, in the event that additional funds become available.

4. ELIGIBILITY

KIX regional calls prioritize funding to Southern organizations. Proposals must be submitted by nationally/internationally registered or incorporated organizations in Africa. These could include, but are not limited to, civil society organizations, research institutions, universities, think tanks, network secretariats and associations, non-profits or private sector, based in the region. Proposals should demonstrate that the organization applying for the grant is working in and has relationships with relevant education stakeholders in the target countries. An applicant organization/lead organization or any other organization that will enter in a grant agreement with IDRC as part of a consortium must have legal corporate registration and capacity to administer foreign funds.

Who is eligible?

- Individual Southern organizations based in Africa.
- Groups of up to three organizations working in a consortium. Proposals from consortia must name one lead organization, which can subgrant to additional organizations. The lead organization must be a Southern organization based in Africa. Other consortium members may include members from Africa; national, regional or international offices of multi-lateral organizations or international NGOs; or other organizations from outside Africa.
- Private Sector: Proposals from or that include private sector partners are welcome. Such applications should demonstrate how private sector resources—financial or technical knowhow—will contribute to the project, in partnership with others.

Who is NOT eligible?

- Individuals.
- Government ministries and agencies are not eligible for funding but can be involved in projects.
- For-profit providers of core education services.

5. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Proposals should clearly demonstrate anticipated outcomes linked to the objectives of this call.
- Proposals must address one or more of the shared policy challenges described in section 2. Proposals should present a case about existing approaches that could be relevant to address the challenge in at least three of the countries listed in Annex A. A sound justification should be included, which includes relevance to the challenge and contexts, existing evidence of results (for whom under what circumstances), gender equity and inclusion considerations to be considered, cost-effectiveness and sustainability. In addition, proposals should also explain how they will scan for other promising approaches and the criteria they will use to assess their relevance to the issues and priorities within the selected countries, of countries that share the selected challenge.
- Proposals must present a rigorous and practical methodology to generate knowledge. They should include measures to adapt and test the selected innovative approaches to meet the contextual needs of education systems in GPE member countries in which it will be implemented, as well as outline scaling issues, approaches and delivery mechanisms to be tested. Proposals should integrate critical approaches to scaling.
- Proposals must present knowledge mobilization strategies, including articulating how the project will engage and respond to relevant stakeholders throughout, to ensure relevance, quality and the potential to inform policy making and practice. Proposals should include mechanisms for inter-country knowledge sharing and may include measures for capacity building to support knowledge uptake.
- IDRC may consider separate grants to multiple consortium members on an exceptional basis in its sole discretion. Proposals should provide a rationale explaining why the consortium has come together to implement the project and describing the role and added value provided by each member organization. Consortia must describe governance and coordination arrangements they will use to produce high quality work and support fair and equitable partnerships.
- Proposals must present a project team with an appropriate range of expertise to ensure the project's success, including expertise in research; gender, equity and inclusion; and knowledge mobilization. An applicant organization/lead organization or any other organization that will enter in a grant agreement with IDRC as part of a consortium must have legal corporate registration and capacity to administer foreign funds. mobilization.

GENDER EQUALITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Gender equality, equity, and inclusion are core values to KIX, IDRC and GPE. Addressing these issues continue be core to improving access and quality for education in the global south. They are thus central to this call. All projects funded must be gender sensitive¹², gender responsive¹³ or gender transformative¹⁴. Proposals that are gender blind¹⁵ **will not** be considered. Equity in education refers to the fairness of the distribution of educational resources, opportunities and outcomes within and between societies. Inclusive education is a process that involves the transformation of schools and other centers of learning to cater for all children – including boys and girls, students from ethnic and linguistic minorities, rural populations, those affected by HIV and AIDS, and those with disabilities and difficulties in learning. Gender considerations should be cross cutting in the proposal. Specifically, proposals should explain how applicants will integrate gender, equity, and inclusion issues in all stages of the project, including rationale, design, intended results, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and knowledge mobilization processes.

ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT

Projects funded through this call will have to incorporate an adaptive management approach for at least two reasons. First, there may be emergent elements to the project design, as the process of identifying relevant innovative approaches may lead to adjustments to the implementation plan. Second, proposals are being developed during the **COVID-19 pandemic** that may pose a challenge to future planning, particularly for projects that will work in multiple countries. Proposals should present a plan of how the project will start activities in the context of COVID-19, considerations of **shorter and longer-term potential impacts of the pandemic** on the project, and how adaptations will be planned and managed.

FAIR AND EQUITABLE PARTNERSHIPS

One of the unique aspects to this call is the expectation that organizations will establish and develop [fair and equitable partnerships](#) from the beginning to the end of the project with relevant local stakeholders, involving them as appropriate throughout the project,

12 Gender (the differentiated and intersectoral experiences of women, men, boys, girls and people of all genders) is considered in the research project's rationale and is addressed in the project design and methodology.

13 Gender is considered in the research project's rationale, design, and methodology and is rigorously analyzed to inform implementation, communication, and influence strategies.

14 Examines, analyzes, and builds an evidence base to inform long-term practical changes in structural power relations and norms, roles and inequalities that define the differentiated experiences of children and adults of all genders. Gender transformative research aims to lead to sustained change through action (e.g. partnerships, outreach, and interventions).

15 The project treats all genders the same while ignoring biological sex and historical differences and context across gendered identities. The project fails to recognize the distinct needs of girls and boys in education and that participation in education is driven by specific social, cultural, economic and political contexts and hinderances.

respecting their knowledge and expertise, and taking an adaptive approach that is responsive to the local context. Proposals should outline processes to establish such partnerships. Local stakeholders can include, but are not limited to, school principals and teachers, parents and children, local education groups and teacher unions, education ministry officials, development partners and policy makers. Fair and equitable partnerships must also be established among members of the consortium if multiple organizations are working on the implementation of the project.

RESEARCH QUALITY

The projects funded out of this call will be expected to meet the quality standards expressed in [IDRC's Research Quality Plus \(RQ+\) framework](#). Proposals must be methodologically rigorous, original and relevant. They must also be ethically sound, mindful of equity, inclusion and gender dimensions, and be well-positioned for use by different stakeholders.

6. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION DETAILS

All applications should be submitted in French or English, using the [online IDRC application](#). The components of the online application form are outlined below.

The online application will ask applicants to provide:

- the project title
- policy challenge
- countries of focus
- project summary in plain language
- contact information of the project leader and co-applicants (if applicable)
- the rationale for the consortium (if applicable)

Applicants are strongly encouraged to seek out resources on appropriately addressing gender equality, equity and inclusion in the project proposal, for instance this [Guide to Integrating Gender in your Proposal](#).

Proposals are expected to address the following in the application:

Problem Identification and Background (max. 1,500 words)

- Clearly state the problem or opportunity to be addressed in your project; how it addresses an important knowledge gap relevant to the identified policy challenge; how it addresses gender equality, equity and inclusion issues of the challenge; how the project responds to the specific identified education priorities of chosen GPE member countries, including their education sector plans, and how it could be further relevant to other GPE member countries in the region.
- Present the relevant background and literature, in relation to the proposed project.
- Provide a justification for the selected innovative approach(es) to be adapted and further tested and explain the process and criteria for identifying additional approaches that could be further analyzed in the project.

Research Purpose and Anticipated Results (max. 1,000 words)

- Clearly state the proposed project objectives¹⁶ and the research questions, adapted and refined from the objectives and guiding questions of this call.
- Describe what the proposed project will produce in terms of outputs, and the outcomes and intended impact to which it will contribute; explain how it will add to existing knowledge for education systems and how to scale the impact of innovative approaches in developing contexts.
- Describe how the proposed project objectives address and impact gender equality, equity and inclusion issues and their underlying causes.

Project Design and Methodology (max. 1,500 words)

- Describe and justify the theoretical or conceptual framework(s) to be used; plus the study design, methods, and type of analysis.
- Describe the project's adaptive management approach, and how it will manage risks, including those related to Covid-19.
- Outline how gender, equity, and inclusion considerations will be incorporated in all elements of project design and methodology.
- Outline how relevant stakeholders will be involved in fair and equitable partnerships during the project.
- Identify risks to achieving project objectives and strategies for mitigation.

Knowledge Mobilization Strategy (max. 700 words)

- Provide an overview of how the activities and outputs of the project will engage potential knowledge users (including ministries of education) on ongoing basis, the strategies to ensure that research results are used by relevant stakeholders, and what the outcomes of the project might be for policy making and capacity building.

Gender Equality, Equity, and Inclusion Considerations (max. 500 words)

- Discuss how the project addresses topics of gender equality, equity and inclusion and how it is integrated in the study design, methods, and analysis, outputs, outcomes and potential impacts.

¹⁶ This includes general and specific objectives of the project. The general objective should state the development goal being pursued related to the policy challenge. The specific objectives should indicate the specific types of knowledge to be produced; the policy, practice or innovation that could be improved with that knowledge, specifying which stakeholders will be reached; and capacities to be reinforced. These are the objectives against which the success of the project will be judged. Use only active verbs (no passive).

- Discuss the level of the Continuum of Gender Integration throughout the project as described in the gender, equity and inclusion in section 5.
- Discuss what the likely impact of addressing the problem will have on different groups within the region such as boys and girls, ethnic and linguistic minorities, rural populations, those affected by HIV and AIDS, those with disabilities and difficulties in learning.

Research Ethics (max. 500 words)

- Provide details of the potential ethical issues in relation to the proposed research and what steps will be taken to ensure the highest ethical standards and the greatest protection of research participants. Refer to the [Canadian Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans](#).
- Note that prior to commencing research, applicants will need to obtain approval from an official institutional or national research ethics body and will need to comply with the terms and conditions of the Grant agreement.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (max. 700 words)

- Provide a theory of change and results framework, and an overview of the mechanisms, methods and evidence to be used to assess project progress.
- Discuss how monitoring, evaluation and learning will incorporate and assess gender equality, equity and inclusion issues.

Project Team Capacities (max. 1,000 words)

- List the project team members, their roles and expertise relevant to the project (research, scaling, learning facilitation, gender, equity and inclusion, and knowledge mobilization).
- Provide a brief overview of the organization's (or the consortium's) track record relative to its proposed role in the project.

Additional Documents

In addition to the proposal, applicants are expected to submit:

1. Contact information of the lead applicant and members of the partnership if applicable.
2. [Institutional Profile Questionnaire](#) (IPQ) to be completed by the lead applicant.
3. Estimated budget, with a cost breakdown by categories using the [IDRC budget template](#). Complete all the tabs except the Summary tab, which will be generated automatically. Save the completed and duly signed budget as a PDF document and attach this to your application. For a list of eligible expenses, please refer to the IDRC [Guidelines for Acceptable Project Expenditures](#). For general information, refer to the [General IDRC Funding Guidelines](#). Please add information on any matched funding, or additional leveraged resources, that are relevant to this proposal under the “Donor contributions” and “Local contributions” tabs.
4. Abridged CVs of the lead applicant with relevant experience and key contact individuals from other organizations in the case of the partnership (CVs should be no longer than two pages).

By submitting this proposal, the Applicant confirms that their acknowledgement of the applicable [Terms and Conditions](#) for the Grant Agreement, acknowledged and accepted, form an integral part of the funding application. The Applicant also agrees to abide by [IDRC Corporate Principles on Research Ethics](#), [IDRC Open Access Policy](#) and [IDRC Open Data Statement](#) of Principles to proceed. Any failure to abide by or accept any of the stated conditions may cause IDRC to consider the application null and void.

7. EVALUATION CRITERIA

An independent expert panel will assess proposals using the evaluation criteria and criteria weighting (in percentages) outlined below.

Evaluation Criteria	%
<p><i>Relevance and likelihood of impact</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The proposal responds to the identified shared policy challenges outlined in the call <input type="checkbox"/> The proposal speaks to the guiding questions of the regional grant. <input type="checkbox"/> The proposal focuses on scanning for, testing and assessing the scalability of an innovation that is well-justified, feasible and cost-effective in the context of chosen GPE member countries. <input type="checkbox"/> The proposal presents convincing strategies, including stakeholder involvement, policy engagement approaches and links with education planning processes, for the uptake of project results in the selected GPE member countries. <input type="checkbox"/> The proposal identifies the gender, equity and inclusion challenge and presents a convincing strategy on addressing the challenge. 	30
<p><i>Project design and methodology</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The proposal presents a convincing design to achieve relevant and important results within the (maximum) 33-month funding period. <input type="checkbox"/> The project has an appropriate methodology to address research question(s) <input type="checkbox"/> The proposal includes clear strategies for adaptive management and mitigating risks. <input type="checkbox"/> The methodology clearly states how gender, equity and inclusion will be incorporated in the project. <input type="checkbox"/> The proposal identifies key ethical issues and ways of addressing them, including how ethical oversight will be managed. 	30

<p><i>Gender, equity, and inclusion considerations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Gender, equity, and inclusion are considered at all stages of the project, including design, intended results, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and knowledge mobilization processes. 	15
<p><i>Organizational capacity</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Applicant demonstrates a strong track record that is suitable to the task proposed. <input type="checkbox"/> The team demonstrates capacity in education systems, gender equality, equity and inclusion issues and applied research. <input type="checkbox"/> The proposal explains how the team will coordinate their multi-country work, ensure fair and equitable partnerships, and <input type="checkbox"/> In the case of consortia, effective governance and coordination mechanisms to be used. 	15
<p><i>Monitoring, evaluation and learning</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> The proposal includes a theory of change and results framework with outputs, outcomes, and intended impact. <input type="checkbox"/> The proposal includes a monitoring and evaluation strategy to help the team monitor progress, adapt, achieve results, and report. 	10
<p><i>Total</i></p>	100

8. SUBMISSION AND REVIEW PROCESS

Proposals must be submitted no later than September 30, 2020 (23:59 EDT). Proposals received after the deadline or incomplete proposals will not be considered. For an application to be considered complete, each section of the application must be filled, and all supporting documents included in the application. All applications must be submitted, in French or English, using the [online application form](#).

The review process will consist of the following steps:

1. Verification of eligibility requirements and proposal completeness: IDRC will review all submitted proposals to ensure they meet eligibility requirements and all necessary application materials. Incomplete proposals or those that do not meet the requirements will not be considered further.
2. Initial shortlisting of eligible proposals: In case of a large number of submitted proposals, IDRC will review eligible proposals on the basis of the evaluation criteria presented herein and shortlist the top 20 proposals, which will be sent to the KIX Independent Assessment Panel (IAP).
3. Review and ranking of shortlisted proposals by IAP: IAP members will review eligible proposals using the evaluation criteria. Each proposal will be reviewed by at least two panelists. Proposals will be ranked on the basis of scoring and subsequent IAP discussion. The IAP will recommend which proposals are of sufficient quality to receive KIX funding.
4. Recommending a cohort of projects: IDRC will identify a cohort of proposals up to the maximum budget for the funding envelope available for the call from the IAP's list of highest-ranking applications, to be submitted for approval by the KIX Executive Committee. As much as possible, the cohort will balance thematic, geographic and applicant diversity. IDRC will also analyze budgets and proposals' value for money.
5. Executive Committee approval: The Executive Committee of KIX will provide final approval of the projects funded through this call.
6. IDRC reserves the right to request successful applicants to make changes based on feedback from the IAP and IDRC, if necessary. IDRC may also facilitate additional interaction with KIX representatives in GPE member countries to further hone the selected proposal to country realities.
7. High-ranking proposals, which are deemed of sufficient quality but are not funded through this round, will be kept by IDRC for up to 12 months for future funding opportunities, provided permission to do so is given by applicants.

9. INQUIRIES

One webinar, hosted in French and English, will take place on August 20, 2020 (8:00 AM EDT) to answer questions about this call for proposals. Questions must be submitted in advance; the question submission deadline for the webinar is August 13, 2020. **When submitting your question, please ensure that you include the name of the region you are applying for in your e-mail subject line.** To attend the webinar, [please register \(https://forms.gle/1qidmm45BspT3vwg6\)](https://forms.gle/1qidmm45BspT3vwg6) for the webinar by 12:00 PM EDT on August 19, 2020. Only those who register will receive access to the webinar platform.

Any inquiries that affect all applicants will be posted anonymously online on the [KIX regional call FAQ site](#). Applicants are strongly encouraged to monitor this website for any information updates regarding this call.

10. CALL TIMELINE

Activity	Date
Call launch	July 31 th , 2020
Webinar	August 20 th , 2020
Deadline for submitting proposals	September 30 th , 2020
Review of proposals by IDRC	October 2 nd - 16 th 2020
Review of proposals by IAP	October 23 rd - November 6 th 2020
Proposals selected for funding receive feedback from IAP and IDRC and make amendments if necessary	December 2020
Applicants resubmit amended proposals	January 2021
Approval of proposals	January 2021

11. REGIONAL GRANT GLOSSARY

For the purposes of this call, research, innovation, scaling, and global public good are defined as follows:

Research for development is a problem-focused and action-oriented process that is designed to not only generate new knowledge and evidence, but also creatively identify and engage with relevant users of the knowledge, involving them and ensuring that research is readily available for policy, practice, and technological development. Research for development often includes measures to build the capacity of knowledge users.

Innovation is a tool, practice, policy, program, methodology, or any other intervention that can be used to improve education access and quality in developing contexts.

Scaling is the process of improving the reach, breadth, scope, quality, equity and sustainability of the changes, benefits and solutions that innovations bring to education systems.

12. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. As a Canadian Crown corporation, IDRC is subject to Canada's [Access to Information Act](#). Consequently, any submissions in response to this Call for Research Proposals will be held by IDRC in a manner consistent with the *Access to Information Act*, including IDRC's obligations to disclose documents requested by members of the public.
2. By way of submitting an application under this Call, applicants consent to the disclosure of the documents they submit to IDRC and external reviewers who are involved in the assessment and selection processes of proposals. If selected for funding, applicants further consent to the disclosure of their name and the title of the proposed project in any announcement of selected projects. Unsuccessful proposals will be destroyed within 180 days after the close of the application period. Proposals deemed as high quality by the IAP, but which do not receive funding from this round, will be retained for additional 12 months, based on applicant permissions.
3. Applicants must publish research findings in the public domain in accordance with [IDRC's Open Access Policy](#).
4. IDRC reserves the right in its sole discretion at any time to withdraw support for a project or recipient where the i) implementation, ii) monitoring of, or iii) access to a project is not possible or would jeopardize the safety of staff, contractors or anyone affiliated to IDRC. Additionally, where it is determined that a project or participation of an institution or individual would or could reasonably violate laws, sanctions or other obligations with which IDRC and or the applicant must comply, support for the project may be withheld or withdrawn.
5. Country clearance requirements – IDRC has conducted general agreements for scientific and technical cooperation with a number of governments. These agreements establish the framework for IDRC cooperation with that country by defining the rights and obligations of both IDRC and the government. As such, the applicant institution may be required to obtain country approval in accordance with these agreements prior to receiving funding from IDRC. This requirement applies only for selected applications. IDRC reserves the right to not pursue the funding of a selected project if the country approval is not secured within six months after IDRC officially announces approval of the project, as this would jeopardize the timely completion of the initiative.

13. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON GPE AND IDRC

GPE is a multi-stakeholder partnership and funding platform that aims to strengthen education systems in developing countries to dramatically increase the number of children who are in school and learning. GPE supports developing country governments to develop good quality education sector plans. GPE also mobilizes financing from public and private sources around the world and encourages developing country partners to provide sufficient domestic financing for basic education. Finally, GPE enables developing countries to address common education challenges through learning from each other, strengthening technical capacity, and accessing the best technical expertise.

IDRC is a Canadian Crown corporation that collaboratively works with researchers from the developing world in search for their own solutions for building healthier, more equitable, and more prosperous societies. IDRC achieves this by providing developing-country researchers with financial resources, advice, and training to help them find solutions to local problems, encouraging knowledge sharing with policymakers, researchers, and communities around the world, and fostering new talent by offering fellowships and awards.

ANNEX A

List of GPE Member Countries in the KIX Africa 21 region.

Benin
Burkina Faso
Burundi
Cabo Verde
Cameroon
Central African Republic
Chad
Comoros
Côte d'Ivoire
Democratic Republic of Congo
Djibouti
Guinea
Guinea-Bissau
Madagascar
Mali
Mauritania
Niger
Republic of Congo
Sao Tome and Principe
Senegal
Togo