CALL FOR PROPOSALS IN EAST, WEST, AND SOUTHERN AFRICA:
Generating and mobilizing innovative knowledge for regional education challenges
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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 Africa 19 hub, covering 19 Anglophone and Lusophone countries in East, West and Southern Africa (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 November 6, 2020 (23:59 EDT).
2. SHARED REGIONAL CHALLENGES IN THE KIX AFRICA 19 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 Africa 19 are:

A. Strengthening in-service teacher mentorship and support
B. Increasing access to early childhood care and education for rural and marginalised children
C. Increasing access to quality education for rural and marginalised children
D. Strengthening utilisation of learning assessments

Please read the full report on the regional challenges here. Summaries of each challenge follow.

A. STRENGTHENING IN-SERVICE TEACHER MENTORSHIP AND SUPPORT

Teacher professional development includes on-going training, practice and feedback, and follow-up support. Ongoing professional development keeps teachers informed of new research on how children learn, emerging technology tools for the classroom, and new curriculum resources. While the costs of extensive professional development can be a challenge for national education systems, well-designed teacher mentorship and support programs have been documented to be both an effective and cost-effective form of professional development.
Teacher mentoring is a complex and multi-dimensional process of guiding, teaching, influencing, and supporting teachers. Evidence suggests that mentoring provides much-needed opportunities for individualized support to teachers. Mentors lead, guide, and advise teachers with the goal of continuously improving the professional knowledge and skills required for teachers to instruct and prepare students. The complexity of mentoring includes the multiple needs of in-service teachers as well as those of their mentors—who may be school leaders, headteachers, education officers, or fellow mentor teachers.

As many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa grapple with acute shortages of qualified teachers for their rapidly expanding basic education sectors, the potential significance of mentoring and support for in-service teachers is gaining wider recognition. Across the region, in-service teacher mentorship programs take many different forms, ranging from short duration training—for example, the annual Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) retraining of teachers in Nigeria and the In-service Education and Training (INSET) activities in Ghana and Mozambique—to more extensive school-based professional development involving classroom visits from mentors and inspectors to observe and mentor teachers over extended periods, as seen in Zambia.

To institutionalize effective programs and achieve equitable opportunities for continuous mentoring and support for all teachers, countries must develop policy frameworks that address both practical and motivational issues. Firstly, in many countries in the region, where mentorship and support for in-service teachers exists, it does not yet cover the curriculum and essential pedagogical issues. Secondly, most mentorship programs are not accessible to all teachers and are not well aligned or integrated in teachers’ professional development goals and career trajectories. Lastly, there is lack of standardized mechanisms for communicating feedback to teachers and instructors to ensure continual of mentorship programs.

The challenge

To improve teacher mentoring and support through adapting, diversifying, and contextualising national, district and/or school-based mentorship programs and other innovative and sustainable approaches that consider the complexity, process, and function of effective mentoring systems.

Potential subthemes

i. How can effective approaches for teacher mentorship at national, district or school levels be identified, further expanded, and enhanced to improve teaching and
learning? How can in-service teacher mentorship programs and educational career paths be better aligned?

ii. How can innovative and sustainable approaches for building capacity of senior officials and headteachers be adapted and scaled up so that they effectively support teachers?

iii. What monitoring and communication systems for giving teachers feedback can be adapted and contextualised for continuous mentorship and support?

B. INCREASING ACCESS TO EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION FOR RURAL AND MARGINALISED CHILDREN

Early childhood care and education (ECCE) helps children build the cognitive, physical and emotional skills that are foundational for school readiness. Yet, access to quality early childhood care and education remains inaccessible despite commitments made by the governments of sub-Saharan countries, such as SDG4 and Africa’s 2063 agenda. The African Union notes that pre-primary education across the continent is ‘severely underdeveloped,’ plagued by ‘disparities, poor management, and a lack of coherent curriculum and linkages with primary education’ (CESA 16–25). In the last 10 years, a vast majority of countries in the region have enacted early childhood development policies, but to little effect. There is a lack of knowledge on how implementation of these policies can be strengthened, especially in rural areas and post-conflict countries such as Rwanda, Sierra Leone, and Liberia.

Although there have been major policy and practical initiatives targeting quality early childhood education, preschool education is widely characterized by low enrolment and poor quality, particularly in rural areas. A large proportion of preschool education in most countries is provided by the private sector and concentrated in urban centers, where parents tend to be more aware of ECCE benefits and are better able to afford these programs. Several persisting factors inhibit access to ECCE for children in the rural and marginalised areas, including lack of resources by parents due to poverty, inequitable access to services, the absence or insufficiency of mechanisms to ensure quality education and training for teachers and caregivers, lack of enforcement of existing regulations, and the low status of early childhood education personnel. Additionally, poverty, conflicts and prevalence of childhood infections make the region particularly vulnerable and interrupt the building of sustainable and quality early childhood provision.
The challenge

To increase access to quality early childhood care and education (ECCE) for rural and marginalised children by identifying, contextualising, and adapting effective ECCE approaches.

Potential Sub-themes

i. How can innovative and cost-effective ECCE approaches be adapted to enhance access to pre-primary education for rural and marginalised children?

ii. How can the quality of ECCE be supported with innovative approaches for developing and implementing quality standards and guidelines?

iii. What pedagogical approaches that include foundational literacy and numeracy can be adapted and scaled up to improve school readiness for preschool children?

iv. What approaches can be adapted to build the capacity of parents, communities, and teachers in their crucial roles to support access to sustainable, quality, pre-primary education?

C. INCREASING ACCESS TO QUALITY EDUCATION FOR RURAL AND MARGINALISED CHILDREN

UNESCO reports that over one-fifth of children in Sub-Saharan Africa between the ages of 6 and 11, and one-third of youth between the ages of 12 and 14, and almost 60% of youth between the ages of 15 and 17 are out of school. Countries in the East, West, and Southern Africa region seek to promote equitable, quality and affordable education for all children from ECD, primary and secondary school. However, the disparity in access to quality education based on gender, economic status, ethnicity, and disability is prevalent in all countries in the region. Poverty levels are closely linked to disparities in access to education and learning achievement across the region as students from poor rural households and urban informal settlements often confront hunger, stigma, internal exclusion, and other factors which negatively affect their learning experiences.

Girls also face additional socio-cultural barriers, such as early marriages in many remote regions, an upsurge of teenage pregnancies, and harmful gender norms. Evidence has shown that support to girls to access and stay in school increases enrolment and retention, as is the case of Gambia’s scholarship program that increased girls’ enrolment in secondary school by 5%. Recent studies show that children with disabilities continue to be excluded from education, and those that do attend school are more likely to be excluded in the classroom and to drop out. Estimates suggest that less than 10% of children with disabilities in the region attend school, and that they are less likely to complete primary education. While an inclusive education approach is reported as the dominant strategy for
providing education to children with disabilities in most countries, there are gaps in the implementation of this approach due to factors such as a lack of relevant teacher training. While disability-specific teacher training programs can make a difference, the challenge is in ensuring the effectiveness of these programs for building teachers’ skills to meet the needs of an inclusive education system.

Social, cultural, and structural barriers continue to limit the full participation of girls, poor children, and children with disabilities’ in education. Access alone is also not leading to equitable learning outcomes with children from poor households falling below the minimum threshold.

The challenge

To increase the number of children who successfully graduate from school, increase enrolment and minimise dropouts and repetition for poor and rural children, children in informal settlements, children with disabilities, and girls by identifying, adapting, and contextualising innovative approaches.

Potential subthemes

i. What context specific, culturally appropriate approaches can be adopted to increase enrolment and retention for poor rural children and children in informal settings?

ii. What incentives for parents and communities can be adapted and contextualised to increase girls’ enrolment and success in education?

iii. What strategies increase access to quality education for children with disabilities, and how can they be contextualized, adapted and scaled?

iv. What flexible, age-appropriate programmes can be adopted to increase re-entry to school for out-of-school children who had their education interrupted?

D. STRENGTHENING UTILISATION OF LEARNING ASSESSMENTS

Despite efforts made in assessing learning, the challenge for countries in sub-Saharan Africa has been to effectively utilize assessments to design, deliver, and improve curricula to achieve learning goals and outcomes for all children. Although 60% of countries in the Sub-Saharan Africa conduct country-led assessments, harmonization and coherence between the assessments and the curriculum to impact teaching and learning in classrooms is lacking. Consequently, there is under-utilization of assessment results and absence of evaluation feedback for learners and teachers.
When used effectively, learning assessments do not just identify problems but provide meaningful feedback at multiple levels of education systems to judge system effectiveness and provide directions towards reform for improved learning. International trends show that despite an increasing level of schooling in the region, a majority of students in Sub-Saharan Africa are not achieving expected results especially in mathematics, science and language studies. Evidence from countries across the region show that a significant proportion of learners fail to attain the expected minimum mastery level in learning achievement which is essential for their continuity to the next school level and/or for their future social and economic livelihood. The pass rate for Grade 9 and Grade 12 students is reported to be below targets for students from the West African region, at 60 and 47% respectively while only a 30% student pass is noted for students at the end of senior secondary education. A high dropout rate is also witnessed for students who do not pass Grade 4 and Form 2 exams in several countries in the East African region.

There have also been reported inconsistencies in the application of continuous assessment at primary and secondary levels, partly due to the prevalence of large classes in several countries in the region. A lot of focus is on summative assessment by national examination bodies to measure student achievement, but there is also a need to strengthen teacher capacity in the utilization of a variety of formative and summative methods of assessment, and in monitoring student learning in the classroom.

The challenge

To better utilise various learning assessments to improve the curriculum and pedagogy for better learning outcomes.

Potential sub-themes

i. How can education systems better integrate formative and summative assessment results to improve curriculum design and delivery?

ii. How can learning assessments be better utilized? How can teacher capacity be strengthened to develop measurable and valid learning outcomes, align these outcomes with the curriculum, develop assessment processes and utilize assessment results for improved student learning?

iii. How can learning assessments be adapted to meet students’ different learning styles, and support active and experiential learning?
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 strengthen 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 wide-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 stakeholder 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?\(^1\)

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\(^1\) 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 31 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.
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 sensitive\textsuperscript{2}, gender responsive\textsuperscript{3} or gender transformative\textsuperscript{4}. Proposals that are gender blind\textsuperscript{5} 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.

\textsuperscript{2} 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.
\textsuperscript{3} Gender is considered in the research project’s rationale, design, and methodology and is rigorously analyzed to inform implementation, communication, and influence strategies.
\textsuperscript{4} 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).
\textsuperscript{5} 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 objectives 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.

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6 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Criteria</th>
<th>%</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relevance and likelihood of impact</strong></td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ The proposal responds to the identified shared policy challenges outlined in the call</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ The proposal speaks to the guiding questions of the regional grant.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ 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.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>□ 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.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ The proposal identifies the gender, equity and inclusion challenge and presents a convincing strategy on addressing the challenge.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>| <strong>Project design and methodology</strong>                                                 | 30 |
| □ The proposal presents a convincing design to achieve relevant and important results within the (maximum) 33-month funding period. |    |
| □ The project has an appropriate methodology to address research question(s)        |    |
| □ The proposal includes clear strategies for adaptive management and mitigating risks. |    |
| □ The methodology clearly states how gender, equity and inclusion will be incorporated in the project. |    |
| □ The proposal identifies key ethical issues and ways of addressing them, including how ethical oversight will be managed. |    |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Gender, equity, and inclusion considerations</strong></th>
<th>15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Gender, equity, and inclusion are considered at all stages of the project, including design, intended results, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and knowledge mobilization processes.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Organizational capacity</strong></th>
<th>15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Applicant demonstrates a strong track record that is suitable to the task proposed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The team demonstrates capacity in education systems, gender equality, equity and inclusion issues and applied research.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- The proposal explains how the team will coordinate their multi-country work, ensure fair and equitable partnerships, and</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- In the case of consortia, effective governance and coordination mechanisms to be used.</td>
<td></td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Monitoring, evaluation and learning</strong></th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- The proposal includes a theory of change and results framework with outputs, outcomes, and intended impact.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The proposal includes a monitoring and evaluation strategy to help the team monitor progress, adapt, achieve results, and report.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<tr>
<th><strong>Total</strong></th>
<th>100</th>
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8. SUBMISSION AND REVIEW PROCESS

Proposals must be submitted no later than November 6, 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 English and French, will take place on September 17, 2020 (7:30 AM EDT) to answer questions about this call for proposals. Questions must be submitted in advance; the question submission deadline for the webinar is September 10, 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 in advance (https://forms.gle/SHyJDDybXWLCkqa98). 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Call launch</td>
<td>August 28th, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Webinar</td>
<td>September 17th, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadline for submitting proposals</td>
<td>November 6th, 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of proposals by IDRC</td>
<td>November 10th - 24th 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review of proposals by IAP</td>
<td>December 1st - 15th 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposals selected for funding receive feedback from IAP and IDRC and make amendments if necessary</td>
<td>January 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applicants resubmit amended proposals</td>
<td>January 2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approval of proposals</td>
<td>February 2021</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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 19 region.

Eritrea
Ethiopia
The Gambia
Ghana
Kenya
Lesotho
Liberia
Malawi
Mozambique
Nigeria
Rwanda
Sierra Leone
Somalia (Somaliiland and Puntland)
South Sudan
Tanzania (mainland and Zanzibar)
Uganda
Zambia
Zimbabwe