

Interview with

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Interview conducted by Daniel Ergetachew, Gabriel Mekbib, and Kaoru Yamauchi

IICBA: Thank you so much for joining us. Would you please tell us your name, your organization, and what it is that you do.

My name is Joy Nafungo and I work for the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) as a senior program officer in the Global Partnership for Education Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (GPEKIX) program.

IICBA: IDRC has supported research in Africa for almost 50 years. In addition to the KIX project, what other programs is IDRC engaged with in the region?

In addition to the KIX Africa 19 Hub and the three other KIX Hubs – IDRC, through the GPEKIX program, funds applied research at different levels and regions. We have global projects that look at research in education across different regions and countries. Then we have regional projects that look at education innovations, particularly, within specific regions and countries.

We are now launching calls for proposals for multi-country projects focusing on different types of thematic areas in education but also different countries. We are also going

to launch single country projects across the various thematic areas.

IDRC also funds other projects. In addition to basic education, we also have a focus on sustainable and inclusive economies, global health, climate change, resilient systems, livestock vaccine initiatives and we also have a focus on governance and justice. IDRC focuses on a range of topics and the idea is to fund innovative solutions to problems globally.

IICBA: How does IDRC funded or supported research impact policy?

The focus of IDRC is funding development research. The idea is to make use of the evidence that is being generated across projects and see how this evidence can influence policy at a national level.

What we are seeing is that it is important for key policy makers to be involved in evidence generation so that they can uptake that innovation into policy. That is a very important aspect and that is something that we are doing with KIX. We want to directly work with policymakers from the Ministries of Education so that they understand the

Geographic Coverage of the KIX Africa 19 Hub



The KIX Africa 19 Hub comprises the following 19 partner countries in Anglophone Africa: Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia (Somaliland and Puntland), South Sudan, Tanzania (mainland and Zanzibar), Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

This interview is part of a series conducted in May 2023 on the occasion of the inception meeting held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, for the extension (phase 2) of the KIX Africa 19 Hub project. The transcript of this interview has been slightly edited versus the video version, which is also available on the UNESCO IICBA website.

The Global Partnership for Education's (GPE) and the International Development Research Center (IDRC) Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) project aims to meet the needs of national education systems for evidence-based policy. KIX creates spaces for GPE partner countries to share information, innovations, and good practices. Knowledge exchange is facilitated by four regional hubs, including two for Africa: the KIX Africa 21 Hub which covers francophone and lusophone GPE-eligible countries and the KIX Africa 19 Hub which covers anglophone countries. Both hubs function as regional fora within the framework of the KIX project to bring together countries with similar educational, socio-economic and linguistic characteristics for exchanges of experiences.



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importance of evidence, that they are part of generating this evidence and they can be part of scaling it up into policy.

IICBA: Has there been anything surprising to you in terms of the development of the Hub, from the inception to where it is at now?

I would not call it surprising but one aspect of the development of the Hub that has been inspiring -- is seeing the level of participation of countries and seeing ownership of KIX at national levels by Ministries of Education. That is quite inspiring.

That is what we envisioned when we started KIX, it was meant to respond to country demands and that is exactly what has happened. That is the reason we have a KIX extension so that we have a program that continues to respond to country demands and needs and priorities.

IICBA: Looking towards KIX 2.0, what are your hopes and expectations of what might and can happen?

I hope that more countries get involved. I hope more people at national level get involved in KIX and not just to share learning, but to use the knowledge from KIX research and apply it to their policy systems.

Of course, we continue supporting countries, but we continue listening to countries responding to their priorities and demands and engaging them in a range of activities. We hope KIX can move away from GPE and IDRC to countries, so that it can be owned and driven by countries. That is our hope for KIX 2.0.

IICBA: What other projects or program areas are you most excited about with your work with IDRC?

My passion is education, broadly. My expertise and where I have a lot of experience is early childhood education and that is something on which I am keen. We are funding a range of projects focusing on early childhood education, early learning transitioning from pre-primary to primary and the participation of parents.

Most importantly, I am happy and excited that we are seeing research on how we can ensure children with disabilities are engaged in early learning and there is a lot of focus and advocacy on that. I am glad KIX is a part of this and that we are funding research on this and that is something I am really excited about amongst other topics and thematic areas, as well.

Disclaimer& Acknowledgment

The opinions expressed in this interview are those of the interviewee only and need not reflect the views of UNESCO, its Executive Directors, of the countries they represent, nor do they necessarily represent the views of the UNESCO International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa.