

Frequently Asked Questions

Research Grants for Africa-based Early Childhood Development Researchers

With funding from the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation, [Education Sub Saharan Africa \(ESSA\)](#) and the [Research for Equitable Access and Learning \(REAL\) Centre](#) at the University of Cambridge invite Africa-based Early Childhood Development (ECD) researchers to apply for grants for ECD research. This call for research grants is part of the ECD Phase 2 project being undertaken by ESSA and the REAL Centre until 30th June 2026. The project aims to enhance the capacity of researchers in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) to undertake needed research in ECD. It represents a strategic continuation of our efforts to support and advance ECD research in SSA, building upon our [ECD Phase 1](#) project, to drive meaningful change and impact in the region.

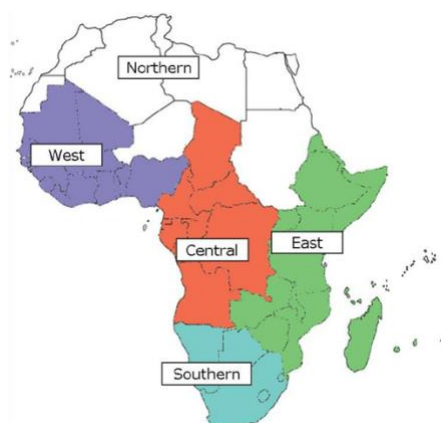
Following the webinar held on 23rd January 2025, where detailed information about these grants was shared and questions were addressed, we have compiled a list of Frequently Asked Questions to assist you throughout the grant application process. We hope you find them helpful. In addition, please see the [Concept Note](#).

Eligibility (by country)

My country was not listed as a priority country for this grant, am I still eligible to apply?

All interested ECD researchers from countries in West, East, Southern and Central Africa are eligible for the grants. However, a portion of the grants will be reserved for those from the project's focus countries including Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania and Mozambique.

Eligible countries:



Can a foreign partner outside Africa be part of the research team, even if it is being led by an African Early childhood Education researcher?

No, only researchers based in the eligible countries in Africa can lead or be part of the research team for the grants.

The study team is from five African countries. Should each country reflect its existing structures of research ethics?

If you are collecting data from five countries, you will have to check the requirements for each country.

Is it possible to apply as a consortium with another African country, for example Kenya or Tanzania with my organisation in Zambia?

Yes, it is possible. We encourage collaboration among researchers from different institutions across the eligible countries.

Eligibility (by education)

Are collaborators supposed to have a minimum of a Master's degree or even those with Bachelor's degree can collaborate?

The lead applicant must have a PhD. Collaborators must have at least a Master's degree to be eligible.

I am interested in applying for this research grant. However, I do not have a PhD, but rather an MA with over twenty years of research experience. Can I still apply?

The lead applicant must already have a PhD and since you do not have a PhD, you are not eligible to lead the application. However, you can still join a team of researchers with a PhD holder leading the application.

Can the lead applicant be a PhD holder from any field other than Early Childhood, even if he/she is a researcher in a research institution?

The lead applicant should have demonstrable interest in and competencies for research on ECD.

Eligibility (by research study)

Are there specific research topics or can we pick any area within the grant mandate?

There is flexibility in terms of the topics as long as they align with the project's focus areas with respect to ECD.

My research project is about how caregivers adapt to new technologies in ECD. Is the grant open to individual scholarly projects like to this?

Yes, individuals can apply if they meet all the eligibility criteria. However, we encourage collaborative applications.

Eligibility (by background)

Are the grants open to teachers or administrators in Early Childhood Centres?

The grants are meant to support researchers. If your work does not involve research, you are not eligible.

Does the P1 for this call need to be an Early Childhood Development Education specialist?

Yes, they need to be a specialist in the grant focus.

If the lead applicant is from a university, can they apply with different collaborators while other individuals from the same university submit separate applications?

Yes, these grants support collaborative research involving two or more researchers within the same institution, as well as across different institutions or countries. The lead applicant can apply with different collaborators, and other individuals from the same university are also allowed to submit separate applications.

General questions

How are you defining ECD?

Early childhood development (ECD) is defined in our [research protocol document](#) (see page 5). The definition for education relates to the pre-school years.

How many grants will be allocated to the priority countries?

A portion of the grants will be reserved for applicants from the project's focus countries—Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, and Tanzania. The exact number of grants allocated will depend on the number and quality of applications received from these countries.

Are there restrictions on the number of researchers involved, particularly regarding gender representation?

We do not have a strict number for gender representation. However, we will ensure a fair representation and encourage collaborative applications to reflect a gender balance.

Are collaborative projects between researchers from different countries prioritised during the selection process?

The primary focus during the selection process will be on the quality of the proposals. However, collaborative projects may be viewed more favourably, as one of the key objectives of this grant is to foster collaborative research across institutions and countries.

What are the expected uses of the grant money? Will it cover travel and materials for research purposes?

Yes, the grant money will cover travel and materials. Please see page 2 of the application [Concept Note](#) for further details.

Where there are collaborators, how will they each be contracted?

The lead applicant will be responsible for arrangements with collaborators.

What is the time frame for the research, and will there be publishing opportunities?

The timeframe for the research is ten months, including preparation and submission of final report to ESSA and REAL Centre. Applicants are expected to submit one manuscript based on the evidence generated from the funded project, and/or a related project, for peer-reviewed journal publication within twelve months after submitting the project's final report to ESSA and the REAL Centre.

What is the control number of the proposed study team?

We do not have a specific number. Applicants will determine the number of people required to complete the proposed project with justification.

Is there a budget proposal template form to use in guiding the budgeting?

No, we do not have a template for you to include in your application. However, successful applicants will be provided with a budget template for reporting.

Will the proposed budget be indicative (flexible) or mandatory (strictly adhered to)?

The budget will be flexible; however, any significant reallocations will require approval from ESSA and the REAL Centre.

Does the budget cover the cost of publication as part of dissemination?

Yes, the budget can be used for the cost of publication as part of dissemination provided it fits within the funds available and the time frame.

Is the grant paid to the university or the researcher? Institutions charge indirect costs and does the grant cater for them?

The grant will be paid to individuals, ideally with a letter of institutional support.

Should the 3-page limit apply to the combined CVs of the lead and team, or is it a maximum of three pages per person?

Everyone on the team must submit a CV, with a maximum length of three pages. CVs may be shorter but should not exceed three pages.

How many pages should the proposal be?

The proposal should be no more than 2,000 words and must include all the required components outlined in the [Concept Note](#), excluding references.

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