Centre for the Study of Global Development

Annual Report 2024 – 2025

The Open University

Centre for the Study of Global Development - CSGD

Contents

Edited by: Claire Hedges, CSGD Manager
Designed by: Steve Hasler, The Open University

Cover images: *Top*: This is from a learning journal created by Daniel, an upper secondary student with autism. Nearly 1 in 10 children worldwide live with disabilities and transition from school to adulthood is particularly challenging. This research, facilitated by Dr Liz Smith and Dr Ben Evans in the UK, investigates how group-based music might help this transition for children with severe learning difficulties. Photo by Ben Evans.

Middle: This shows a research participant and assistant in Haryana, India. The research examines women's exclusion from land ownership and investigates the ways in which such farming sustains gender gaps in rural-to-urban labour migration and labour force participation. The research is led by Dr Ece Kocabıçak. Photo by Ojasvi Bhardwaj.

Bottom: This shows a young woman participant from the Supporting Adolescent Girls' Education (SAGE) programme in Zimbabwe. This programme has explored alternative non-formal learning pathways for girls and young women, while also helping them transition back to formal school or providing them with livelihood opportunities through vocational skills training. This research is led by Alison Buckler. Photo by Plan International.

Word of welcome

It is a funny thing to write an introduction for a report that is looking back, when you have just started a new role, and are looking to the future. Since September, the CSGD Directorate and Core Management Group have been working with our new Advisory Board to refocus our Centre Strategy for the next three years. We are excited about launching this in early 2026.

But as I flick through the pages of this report, I am repeatedly reminded of the diversity, richness and impact of our Centre's research, and of the qualities and ethos that bring coherence to this diversity and have inspired the core ideas in our new strategy.

I am writing this on a plane, on my way home from Zimbabwe. I spent two days at the Education Ministry's first national symposium for Non-Formal Education (NFE), which The Open University co-hosted with our partners Plan International, CBM Global Disability Inclusion and the Apostolic Women's Empowerment Trust. I then went straight into a two-day co-analysis workshop for a new phase of an NFE research project with a team we've been working with for six years. This team includes academics, NGO colleagues, community mobilisers, and three research assistants who we originally came to know when they joined the project as 'out of school' research participants in 2019.

The analysis workshop was deliberately scheduled to follow the Ministry event to minimise costs and international travel (core CSGD values) but these events in succession also encapsulated the qualities and ethos you will see throughout this report.

Our best research at the CSGD attempts to listen to, learn from and connect those most affected by a development challenge and those with the most influence to address it. It understands that people's lives are complex and dynamic, and that we need to look across different dimensions of the challenge (as Dr Keetie Roelen, CSGD Deputy Director, explains on p.17). It involves continually critically reflecting on our role as researchers and our relationships with the people and teams we work with, and how these relationships evolve as we learn and as the development sector shifts in response to wider legislative and ideological movements.

In a nutshell our best research is relational, it is political, and it recognises that it represents a moment in time.

I hope that you, as I have, appreciate the opportunity this report provides to look both back and forward. I hope you enjoy learning about our work at this particular moment, and are motivated to stay connected with us as we build these ideas into our new strategy, and strive to uphold them in our research and our partnerships.

Finally, I would like to thank Professor Kwame Akyeampong, the CSGD's founding Director, for his leadership over the past three years. Our new strategy builds on his legacy, and he will continue to play a significant role in the Centre leading an area of activity, and contributing to the new Advisory Board.

Professor Alison Buckler
CSGD Director

Learn more about CSGD

Explore our website to find out more about our work

Visit
open.ac.uk/csgd
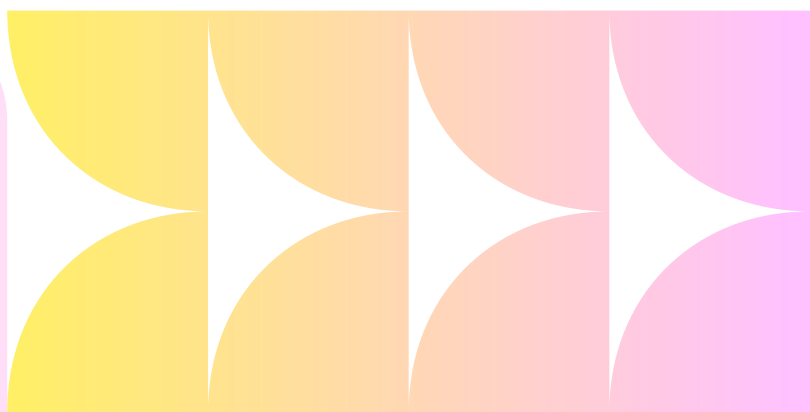
Meet the team

Director
Professor Alison Buckler
Provides overall strategic leadership for CSGD and promotes the CSGD research agenda.

Deputy Director
Dr Keetie Roelen
Focuses on knowledge exchange, public engagement and positioning of CSGD within global development networks and debates.

Centre Manager
Claire Hedges
Acts as focal point for research opportunities and collaborations; provides oversight and management of the CSGD and Hub research portfolio.

Centre Co-ordinator
Claire Davies
Coordinates CSGD events, activities and project portfolio.

Director to 31 August 2025
Professor Kwame Akyeampong
Founding Director of CSGD; leads on innovation for ethical and meaningful growth.

Meet the Advisory Board

CSGD is delighted to announce the formation of its new Advisory Board. The Board, chaired by Professor Freda Wolfenden, brings together high-level expertise and insights from a diverse group of individuals across various fields within global development.

Andy Brock

Andy worked for over thirty years for Cambridge Education including as Managing Director. He was responsible for its strategic direction and commercial performance and, with government partners, some of the largest scale education programmes in Africa and South Asia in the last 20 years.

Andy is committed to creating education opportunity for all children and believes that strong leadership, clear vision and high-quality teaching are the ingredients to delivering that opportunity equitably. Andy publishes a monthly digest, called Re Education, a platform for voices from the global south and a stimulus for debate on the pressing educational issues of our times.

Kavita Ramdas

Kavita is a globally recognised advocate for gender equity and justice. As the principal of KNR Sisters, she provides high level consulting advice and guidance on initiatives to defend democracy and protect human rights both within the US and across the globe. Whilst Director of the Women's Rights Program at the Open Society Foundations, its largest ever investment in gender justice committed $100 million in support of the Generation Equality Forum in July 2021.

Kavita now serves as the senior strategic advisor for the International Planned Parenthood Federation, providing counsel at a critical time for gender justice movements.

Laura Camfield

Laura has worked in Development Studies for nearly 30 years and currently heads the Department of International Development at King's College London. She co-convenes the methods innovation task group at the European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes, with Keetie Roelen, CSGD Deputy Director.

Laura's research interests include wellbeing and poverty measurement, interdisciplinary and cross-national research, mixed-methods approaches, and research ethics and governance. Her current work focuses on innovative and decolonial methodologies, including shaping the methodological approach of the Gender and Adolescence: Global Evidence programme, and on advancing the quality and ethics of qualitative and mixed-methods evaluations.

Moses Ngware

Moses is Head of the Education and Youth Empowerment Research Unit at the African Population and Health Research Center. His current research is on what is happening inside classrooms, impact evaluation of interventions to improve learning outcomes, and efficiency and effectiveness of education systems.

Moses was awarded Best Accomplished Educational Researcher Award 2018/19 by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa for his distinctive research on education policies and practices in Africa.

He has served on the Comparative Education Review Advisory Board and as Program Chair of the Africa Special Interest Group for the Comparative and International Education Society.

Klaus-Dieter Rossade

Klaus-Dieter is the Executive Dean for the Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies at The Open University. He is Professor of Distance Learning and Leadership.

Klaus-Dieter brings to all his work more than 40 years of studying, researching, and teaching literature, culture, language and leadership and ideology in Higher Education at Freiburg University (Germany), University College London and, for the last 25 years, at The Open University. He started his professional life as a sound editor and remains fascinated by spoken words, recorded and artistically manipulated, for everyone to hear and appreciate.

Freda Wolfenden, Chair of the Board

Freda is a Professor of Education and International Development at The Open University.

For over 20 years, Freda's professional work has been concerned with enhancing the quality of pedagogic practices and teacher development.

Freda's research aims to offer insights into how digital technologies, open practices and collaborative teams can improve the quality of pedagogic practice and support transformation at institution and system levels in low / middle income contexts. She is research lead for the Empowering Teachers Initiative, a global research programme exploring conceptions of quality, equity and scaling in teacher development, funded by the International Development Research Centre.

Kwame Akyeampong

Kwame is a Professor of International Education and Development at The Open University and Founding Director of our Centre for the Study of Global Development. He serves on the Boards of Directors of T-TEL Ghana and the Luminos Fund, is a strategic advisor to the Jacobs Foundation, and a member of the Advisory Committee of the Yidan Prize Foundation.

His research interests focus on education in Sub-Saharan Africa, with particular attention to educational change and policy, teacher development, assessment, equity, and the political economy of education systems.

Alison Buckler

Keetie Roelen

Claire Hedges
Secretary to the Board

Mission

The Centre for the Study of Global Development (CSGD) creates a unified space for multi and interdisciplinary research within the Faculty of Wellbeing Education and Language Studies at The Open University.

Human Wellbeing for a Better World: The core objective of research from the Centre is to advance aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals within and across all countries that relate to poverty, health, wellbeing, education, employment and transitions. To reach towards more sustainable responses, the Centre believes that development challenges should be grounded in an understanding of lived experiences and approached through interdisciplinary collaborations.

Find out more, by watching our animation

Values

The Centre is committed to conceptualising and carrying out research aligned with the broader Open University values of inclusivity, innovation, and responsiveness.

Inclusivity

We develop spaces for constructive debate, prioritising lived experiences, co-creative approaches and knowledge exchange through partnership and respect.

Innovation

We harness creativity and context-specific alternative approaches in our research.

Responsiveness

We seek to respond to global inequality and marginalisation by learning with our partners and collaborators through relevant and value-driven research.

Note: We plan to renew our mission and values in 2025-2026 as we develop the next stage of our strategy.

CSGD in summary

The research priorities of the Centre are clustered around six broadly distinct but deeply interconnected domains that we call Research Hubs:

Health and Wellbeing

We explore diversity and inequality in health and wellbeing from the cradle to the grave.

Hub Co-Leads: Dr Ayomide Oluseye, Dr Philippa Waterhouse

1. The Hub welcomed Gabriela Fernando, Assistant Professor of Global Health at Monash University, Indonesia, as a keynote speaker at the CSGD seminar 'Urgent action for gender equity: working together, what can we all do?' Dr Fernando spoke about the impact of climate change on health among agrarian communities in Sri Lanka and shared insights on how we can accelerate progress towards gender equity

2. Dr Ayomide Oluseye received Open Societal Challenges funding for Phase 2 of the project, Improving the Mental Wellbeing of Young Mothers in West Africa. In partnership with the University of Cape Coast, Ghana, this phase will include stakeholder workshops to address stigma around early motherhood and explore interventions that can enhance the quality of life of young mothers.

3. Research this year has included fatherhood, bereavement, disabilities, sexual and reproductive health with young people, early motherhood and childcaring responsibilities. The Hub produced the first episodes within the CSGD's new podcast series on 'Doing Sensitive Research' and 'Parenthood and Mental Wellbeing' (see page 26).

Language and Society

We research how language and culture enable or hinder equality, justice and fairness worldwide in times of rapid social change.

Hub Co-Leads: Professor Johannes Angermuller, Professor Kristina Hultgren, Professor Mirjam Hauck, Professor Rosina Marquez-Reiter

1. In July 2025, Professor Johannes Angermuller joined as the new Hub Co-Lead. Johannes' research focuses on understandings of how an unequal social order with its relationships and identities are constructed and deconstructed through language. Johannes believes that development challenges require context-sensitive analysis that takes language seriously and how it shapes social realities.

2. March 2025 saw the Hub and the MiRCO Research Centre host an online conversation, 'Unleashed Agency for Social Transformation'. Discussion focused on forces driving social change in contexts as varied as shelters for migrants in Hong Kong, patient-doctor relations in Argentina, immigration interviews in Belgium, and mediation processes in Finland.

3. Social Inequalities and Sustainability Challenges of Ambulant Vendors continue to be a research focus; for example, exploring faldear, a form of ambulant vending in the Buenos Aires underground. Drawing on video-ethnography, the research explores how this enclosed, mobile space is used for livelihood sustenance, where speech is minimal, and actions and products become the main communicators.

Learners and Learning

We research the learning that takes place in schools, informal and community settings and its impact on children, young people and educators.

Hub Co-Leads: Dr Jane Cullen, Dr Jennifer Agbaire

1. The Hub completed the OpenSTEM Africa Tertiary project in collaboration with the University of Cape Coast, the University of Ghana, Kenyatta University and the University of Nairobi. The research included a quantitative survey of over 1,600 students, 20 student focus groups, 20 STEM academic interviews and 3 stakeholder engagement workshops.

2. Dr Jennifer Agbaire led a UNICEF-sponsored Training of Trainers on intergenerational storytelling to support student inclusion and well-being in post-repatriation school contexts in Kazakhstan. The initiative resulted in the co-development of new local teaching resources and evaluation tools, and is contributing to ongoing conversations on integrating creative, inclusive pedagogies into national teacher development provisions and student learning.

3. October 2025 saw the launch of 'The 'ART' of Finding Hope: Indigenous Art Methods (I AM) research for promoting psychological recovery and social reintegration of children and young people with experiences of the Boko Haram protracted armed conflict and crisis in Niger and Chad. This project, led by Dr Margaret Ebubedike, is funded by the Academy of Medical Sciences.

Poverty, Inequality and Social Protection

We aim to enhance our understanding of the experiences, drivers and dynamics of poverty and how policies can meaningfully engage with these in a dignified and empowering manner.

Hub Co-Leads: Dr Emil Dauncey, Dr Keetie Roelen, Dr Thaís de Carvalho

1. Dr Emil Dauncey leads a collaboration between CHIVA Africa and Citizens:MK to explore Paediatric HIV Caregiving in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The collaboration is moving from research about caregivers to research *with* them, laying the groundwork for caregiver-led and community-owned interventions to strengthen care for children living with HIV.

2. Funded by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs and in collaboration with the German Institute of Development and Sustainability, members of the Hub published a framing paper and two country case study papers on Cote d'Ivoire and Tanzania that explored the role of coloniality and social protection. Findings from the Overcoming Colonial Continuities in the Area of Social Protection research were presented during an interactive webinar with over 100 participants from around the world.

3. Led by Dr Keetie Roelen, the Hub undertook research in Milton Keynes, UK and Laguna, Philippines, on Understanding Attitudes and Countering Stigma to Tackle Poverty and Inequality. The UK-based research zoomed in on experiences in new housing estates and was featured on BBC News and BBC Radio 2.

Professional Learning and Technology

We explore how accessible technologies can be harnessed to improve professional learning and practice for front-line workers in health and education, often in challenging circumstances.

Hub Co-Leads: Dr Kris Stutchbury, Professor Tom Power

1. The Hub's new position paper, [Professional Learning and Technology; an illustrative review of recent literature in education and health](#), explores the overlaps and differences in the ways in which professional learning and technology is understood and researched and practiced across education and health.

2. [Mobile Learning for the Empowerment of Marginalised Mathematics Educators](#) (3Mpower) project concluded its research phase with a knowledge exchange retreat with the Directorate of Primary Education and Aspire to Innovate. A shift was made away from seeing 'blended learning' as separate online and face-to-face one-off trainings to an approach where open, supported and practical learning occur together over time.

3. [Teacher Professional Development @ Scale in Zambia](#) research is exploring [extended understanding of marginalisation](#). Achieving equity and reducing marginalisation is about much more than resources and qualifications. It is about valuing local knowledge and expertise, examining the consequences of policy decisions for all and providing opportunities for teachers with the greatest needs.

Youth and Transitions

We focus on how young people manage transitions toward adulthood in diverse and often challenging circumstances.

Hub Co-Leads: Dr Justin Rogers, Dr Rod Earle

1. Persons in and transitioning from care or secure environments, and their experiences of societal challenges through poverty, are a key focus of Hub research. Critical reflections examine how people become outsiders or outliers in their own community and society and the implications of this for the young people and those around them in Ghana, UK and beyond.

2. Dr Margaret Ebubedike's research [Addressing Human Trafficking](#) with female survivors in Nepal, Nigeria, and Uganda, and in conflict-affected regions like Lake Chad, has given rise to Stakeholder Knowledge Exchange, Engagement, and Partnerships (SKEEP). SKEEP is rooted in Indigenous knowledge systems, and fosters collaborative, context-specific responses to societal challenges.

3. In April 2025, Dr Justin Rogers shared insights, as part of an international dialogue on child welfare and safeguarding, on child neglect for the Centre for Domestic Violence and Child Abuse Research at National Chi Nan University, Taipei. The workshop highlighted the complexities of working with families where neglect is a concern, while also emphasising the importance of relationship-based approaches.
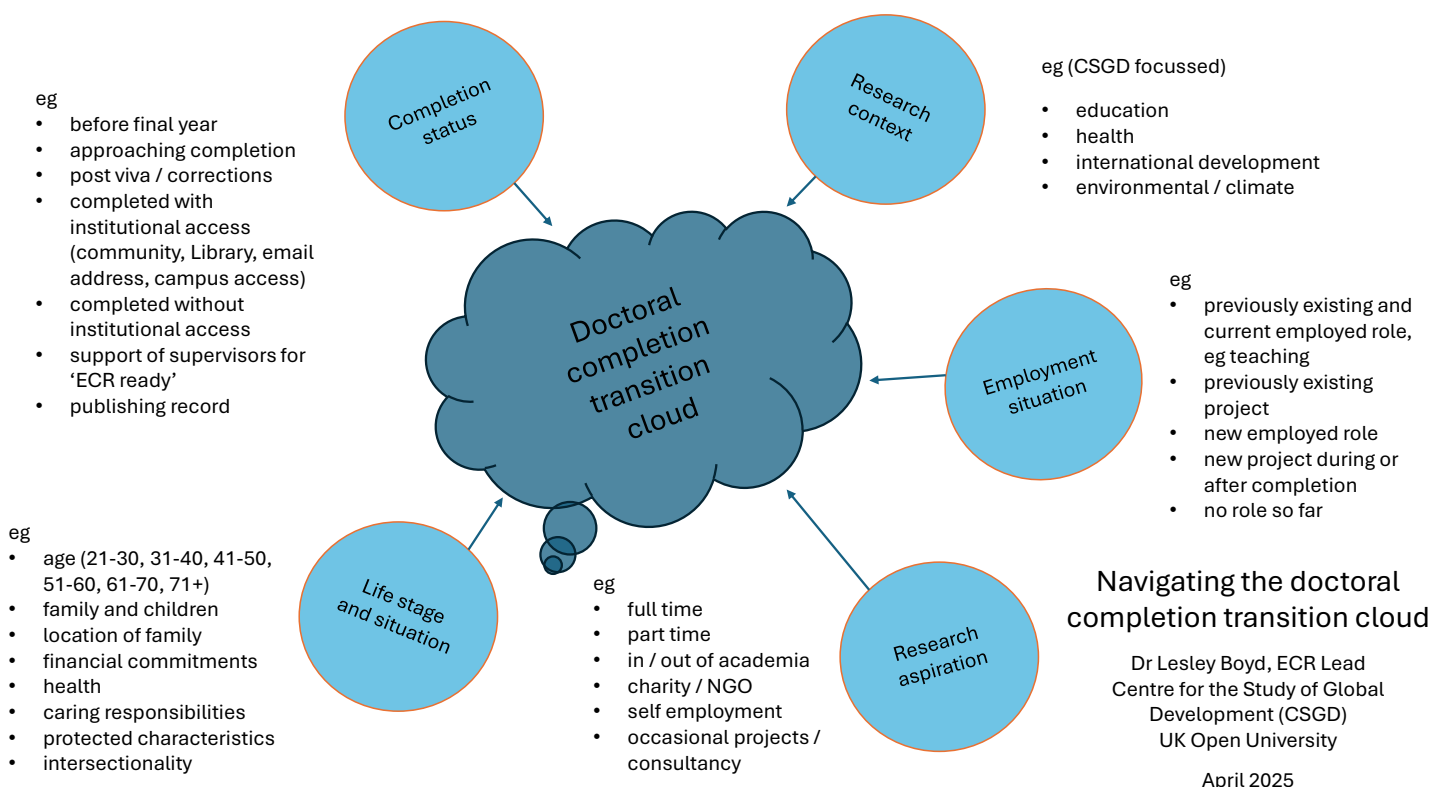
Early Career Research (ECR) Leads

Our ECR Leads work across the Hubs, with a specific focus on how the Hubs' research activities link to that of our doctoral and post-doctoral community.

ECR Leads:
Dr Jennifer Agbaire, Laud Freeman, Dr Lesley Boyd

1. ECR Forum meetings focused on challenges in the doctoral journey, particularly in navigating completion and - where next? In September 2025, Dr Lesley Boyd and Professor Inma Alvarez highlighted these issues at the Vitae International Researcher Development Conference presenting on 'Supporting later life research career trajectories' (see below).

2. Our Work in Progress seminars provide a space for doctoral students to share their research thinking. Areas explored include Enhancing STEM education for students with visual impairments, Laud Freeman; Mobility of a critical thinking curriculum in transnational higher education, Coomerene Rodrigo; Primary school teachers' use of English as a Foreign Language apps, Efrat Marcu; Stories behind the people: going beyond a deficit view of children's lived experiences in education, Portia Dery.

3. Congratulations to Felicia Boateng, winner of The Open University Faculty of Wellbeing Education and Language Studies Postgraduate Research Student Prize 2025! Felicia's research focuses on 'Classroom Talk and the Silent Voice: Understanding Student Reluctance to Speak in Ghanaian Basic Schools.'

eg
- before final year
- approaching completion
- post viva / corrections
- completed with institutional access (community, Library, email address, campus access)
- completed without institutional access
- support of supervisors for 'ECR ready'
- publishing record

Completion status

Research context

eg (CSGD focussed)
- education
- health
- international development
- environmental / climate

Doctoral completion transition cloud

Employment situation

eg
- previously existing and current employed role, eg teaching
- previously existing project
- new employed role
- new project during or after completion
- no role so far

eg
- age (21-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-60, 61-70, 71+)
- family and children
- location of family
- financial commitments
- health
- caring responsibilities
- protected characteristics
- intersectionality

Life stage and situation

eg
- full time
- part time
- in / out of academia
- charity / NGO
- self employment
- occasional projects / consultancy

Research aspiration

Navigating the doctoral completion transition cloud

Dr Lesley Boyd, ECR Lead
Centre for the Study of Global Development (CSGD)
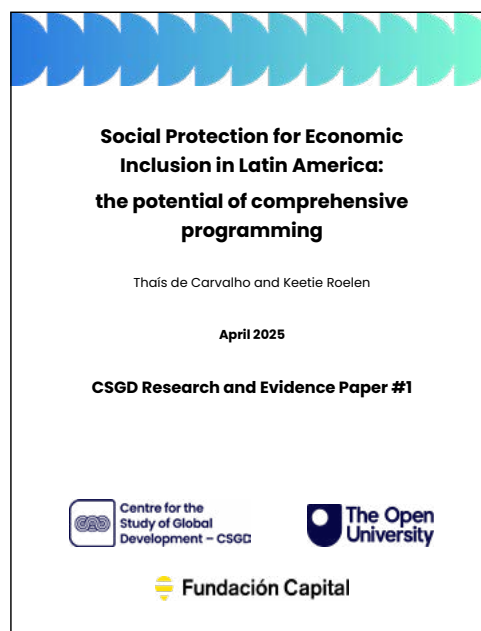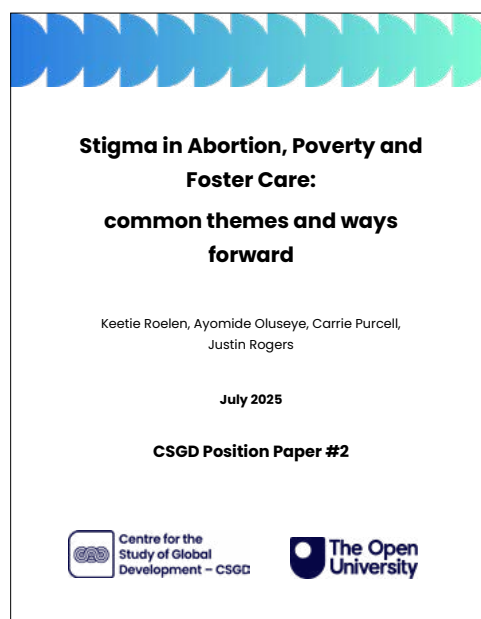UK Open University

April 2025

Note: The above includes colleagues who were Hub/ECR Leads at any time during the report period. (listed alphabetically by first name)

Special thanks are expressed to the Centre Manager, the Centre Co-ordinator and the Faculty of Wellbeing, Education and Language Studies (WELS) Global Development Team for their unstinting support for CSGD activities and projects.

Policy briefs and papers series

This series profiles our work across the field of global development and human wellbeing and our cross-hub collaborations. Highlights include:

1. Stigma in Abortion, Poverty and Foster Care: common themes and ways forward. This position paper identifies commonalities in how stigma exacerbates inequalities and restricts access to services. The paper calls for an integrated, cross-sectoral approach to addressing stigma, informed by lived experiences and policy reforms.

2. Centring Inclusive and Collaborative Research as an Accelerator for Gender Equality in sub-Saharan Africa: Insights from CSW69 Beijing+30 Parallel Side Event. This paper summarises insights from a CSW69 side event examining how inclusive, locally owned research can strengthen the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action in sub-Saharan Africa and address persistent gender inequalities.

3. Social Protection for Economic Inclusion in Latin America: the potential of comprehensive programming. It provides evidence for the benefits of providing comprehensive support over and above standalone interventions, the need to adequately account for gender, geographical context and ethnicity, and the existence of a substantial knowledge gap in terms of cost-effectiveness.

Stigma in Abortion, Poverty and Foster Care:

common themes and ways forward

Keetie Roelen, Ayomide Oluseye, Carrie Purcell, Justin Rogers

July 2025

CSGD Position Paper #2

Centre for the Study of Global Development – CSGD

The Open University

Centring Inclusive and Collaborative Research as an Accelerator for Gender Equality in sub-Saharan Africa:

Insights from CSW69 Beijing+30 Parallel Side Event

Basirat Razaq-Shuaib, Margaret Ebubedike and Laud Ebenezer Freeman

June 2025

CSGD Position Paper #1

Centre for the Study of Global Development – CSGD

The Open University

Social Protection for Economic Inclusion in Latin America:

the potential of comprehensive programming

Thaís de Carvalho and Keetie Roelen

April 2025

CSGD Research and Evidence Paper #1

Centre for the Study of Global Development – CSGD

The Open University

Fundación Capital

New faces   Hub Leads

Language and Society:
Professor Johannes Angermuller

Johannes is a Professor of Discourse, Languages and Applied Linguistics. He is known for work in discourse studies, especially French pragmatics, and his research interests centre on the discursive construction of social order. Johannes sees the Hub as representing an opportunity to examine language as a social practice intersecting across diverse global contexts.

Learners and Learning:
Dr Jennifer Agbaire

Jennifer is a Lecturer in Education. Her research focuses on inclusion in education, and innovative, community-centred, creative and co-creative approaches, using mixed methods and including the ethics of research practices internationally. She leads and co-leads various interdisciplinary, multi-partnership projects addressing different levels of education.

Poverty, Inequality and Social Protection:
Dr Emil Dauncey

Emil is a Lecturer in Geography and Environmental Studies, with a background in development geography, social anthropology and gender analysis. He is interested in how social identities are shaped through everyday practice and economic transformation. Current research engages with youth-focused and community-based care initiatives.

New Doctoral Students

The following students joined us in the 2024/25 academic year, researching in the following areas:

Afzal Hossain
Language Attitudes and Ideologies in Bangladeshi Television (TV) and Web Series: A Decolonial Sociolinguistic Investigation

Gulfam Tasnim
Impact of Childcare Provision and Rights-Based Support on the Lives of Women Garment Workers and their Families

Italo Rangel Lopes dos Santos
Exploring Learning Experience Design through XR Technology and Volumetric Video

Lorna Stevens
Understanding Women's Participation in Competitive Motorcycle Circuit Racing

Shreyasi Sharma
A Missing Climate - How Teenagers in India are Making Sense of Climate Challenges through Creative Writing and Arts-Based Methods

Zaharah Namanda
Teachers Navigating Professional Teacher Development in a Refugee Context in Uganda

TESSA @ 20!

2025 marks 20 years since Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA) was launched by an OU-led consortium of institutions from 9 countries. TESSA has now reached over 2 million teachers and teacher educators impacting teaching and learning!

Founding Director of TESSA, Professor Bob Moon, reflects in this blog on the origins and foundation building blocks, particularly:

• Being primarily a consortium of institutions not countries.

• Focussing on core classroom skills for primary teachers, with classroom activities for teachers to do with their learners.

• Leveraging the benefits of teacher collaboration.

• Creating a common framework for all resource development.

• Developing resources and activities as a consortium using rigorous quality approvals.

• Publishing in multilingual versions adapted to different contexts and countries.

• Making these Open Educational Resources (OERs), free for anyone to use and adapt.

• Ensuring flexibility to serve initial, upgrading and in-service teacher development needs.

In 2025, TESSA, now led by Dr Kris Stutchbury, is a network of teacher educators underpinned by a bank of OERs – resources and courses that support inclusive, active, learning and teaching. As a network we are dedicated to improving the quality of teacher education for another 20 years!

Collaboration for success: Empowering marginalised girls through collective expertise

Winner of 2025 Times Higher Education Award for International Collaboration of the Year!

Charlotte Chishava, Education Specialist at Plan International Zimbabwe

The Supporting Adolescent Girls' Education (SAGE) programme is a beacon of hope for marginalised girls in Zimbabwe. Launched in 2017, this ambitious programme has empowered more than 18,000 girls from 93 vulnerable communities by improving their literacy and numeracy skills, while also helping them transition back to formal school or providing them with livelihood opportunities through vocational skills training. At the heart of SAGE's success lies a powerful consortium partnership between four diverse organisations, each bringing their unique expertise to the table. The Open University (OU) brought international education expertise, shaping the pedagogical content and knowledge used to upgrade teachers' skills and learners' abilities and led the programme's research strand. Apostolic Women's Empowerment Trust (AWET) leveraged their deep understanding of local communities, particularly the Apostolic churches in Zimbabwe, to reach the most marginalised girls. Christian Blind Mission (CBM), with its extensive experience in inclusive education, ensured that learners with disabilities were supported and included. Plan International in UK and Zimbabwe led the collaboration and brought a critical focus on addressing harmful social norms and stereotypes, particularly child marriages, which hinder girls' education. The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (MoPSE) provided contextual guidance and structural support, ensuring the programme's alignment with national priorities and policies.

This partnership was more than just a collection of organisations; it was a collaboration of purpose. Each partner brought their passion, skills, and expertise to SAGE, complementing each other's strengths and weaknesses. Together, they created a comprehensive programme that addressed the multifaceted needs of adolescent girls and young women, from education to livelihoods and social inclusion. The result was a research and development programme that was greater than the sum of its parts. The SAGE programme's impact extends far beyond its immediate beneficiaries. The programme has influenced the rebranding of non-formal education in Zimbabwe, with the newly reviewed National Non-Formal Education Policy adopting the programme's model. This is a testament to the programme's impact and relevance.

Notably, the SAGE programme has also been recognised globally, with its work in Zimbabwe having **won the prestigious International Collaboration Award at the Times Higher Education Ceremony** in November. By working together, we were able to reach more marginalised girls and young women than we could have alone, develop context-specific responses, leverage expertise and resources, and foster a culture of inclusivity and diversity. The SAGE programme demonstrates the power of collaboration in achieving development goals. The key lessons we learned from this collaboration are that diverse expertise is essential, shared purpose drives success, complementary skills are key, and collaboration requires trust and communication. As we move forward, we must continue to foster a culture of collaboration, recognising the value of diverse expertise and the strength of collective action. By doing so, we can create a lasting impact and empower marginalised communities to thrive.

The Plan Internatioanl Zimbabwe SAGE team

SAGE consortium members at the Times Higher Education Awards.

New collaborations

Sightsavers

Sightsavers and CSGD have started to explore how storytelling with young people / children with disabilities in Sierra Leone can raise and explore issues they care about. Professor Alison Buckler, Claire Hedges (CSGD) and Dr Joanna Wheeler (Director of the organisation Transformative Story) are working with Sightsavers to research how storytelling approaches can be more accessible and meaningful to all. Our agreed starting point is to work with our Sierra Leonean colleagues to draw on local storytelling cultures and how they explore sensitive issues, e.g., through myth-telling, and to reach out to local social media storytellers that young people engage with. Sightsavers will use their extensive networks, so that these stories are heard by and impact communities and policymakers.

IncluDE partnership for inclusive, diversity and equity in higher education

The Learners and Learning Hub has formed a new collaboration with the IncluDE consortium. The IncluDE project is aiming to develop a European Reference Framework for Inclusion, Diversity and Equity in Higher Education. It is coordinated by the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU), and partners include Tampere University in Finland, European Students' Union, Universidade Aberta in Portugal, The Open University UK, Fernuniversitat in Germany, Hellenic Open university in Greece, Universidad de Educacion a Distancia in Spain.

Plan International

Our long-standing partnership with Plan International now includes a doctoral research project. Professor Alison Buckler, Dr Jennifer Agbaire (both CSGD) and Dr Kelly Worwood (Plan International) won PhD studentship funding from the UK's Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) for research into creative approaches to understanding and communicating climate change. The studentship was awarded to Shreyasi Sharma, who is working with Plan India to research how adolescent girls can co-create climate change resources through creative writing, and how creative, arts-based climate change education can be embedded into models of systemic educational development through resource development and mitigation strategies.

Taking a global and interdisciplinary perspective to advance wellbeing and promote social justice

Dr Keetie Roelen, Deputy Director, CSGD

At CSGD, we take a global and interdisciplinary approach to work towards our vision of human wellbeing for a better world. Across the globe, we witness a convergence of crises and their interlinkages in how they affect us all. From technology that advances at dizzying speed and wealth that expands ever faster among an increasingly smaller elite to climate change that threatens more lives and livelihoods every year, these pose challenges to quality of life and social justice across low-, middle- and high-income countries.

The increasingly global nature in which crises manifest and their relevance across country contexts calls for a focus away from a geographical demarcation of international development that divides the world in 'developed' and 'developing' countries to a more holistic understanding that considers the advancement of wellbeing and promotion of social justice a concern for all.

Practically, such a global focus allows for drawing on experiences across contexts, both in terms of how crises unfold and how they might be addressed. CSGD members' work on abortion care, for example, points to the universality of stigma around the receipt and provision of such care, as well as the need to address this in contextually appropriate and feasible ways. In my own work on poverty, it is striking to see the universality of anti-poverty policies around the world in how they point the finger of blame at people in poverty. Shifting the needle on this demands a shift away from emphasising individual responsibility in overcoming poverty to a lifting of systemic barriers.

The interconnected nature of challenges to human wellbeing and social justice also demands an interdisciplinary approach. From addressing learning loss following the Covid-19 pandemic, seeking ways to provide quality care to ageing populations and tackling health challenges, to overcoming persistent poverty, efforts to advance wellbeing increasingly require an approach beyond conventional sectoral boundaries. Interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral research and collaboration are often acknowledged as desired and necessary, but also commonly difficult to put into practice. Funding opportunities, academic publication mechanisms, and research award systems seem to lag behind in interdisciplinary research.

CSGD paves the way in doing things differently. Members' research on how to support transplant recipients becoming more physically active brings together social scientists, medical professionals and humanities scholars to gain in-depth insight and find novel solutions. Social policy scholars, economists and political scientists collaborated on a CSGD-led study on coloniality in social protection, and leads from across our Learners and Learning, Language and Society, and Health and Wellbeing Hubs hosted a cross-sectoral conversation on International Women's Day on gender equity.

A global and interdisciplinary approach isn't without its caveats. A global perspective might overlook contextual nuances or risk depoliticising debate. Interdisciplinary research requires time and effort for its collaborators to learn each other's language and move beyond ingrained siloed thinking. We believe these risks and efforts are well worth taking. In an increasingly polarised world, advancing wellbeing and promoting social justice requires a willingness to think out of the box and step out of our comfort zones. CSGD aims to provide an inclusive and conducive space for doing so.

Project and event spotlights
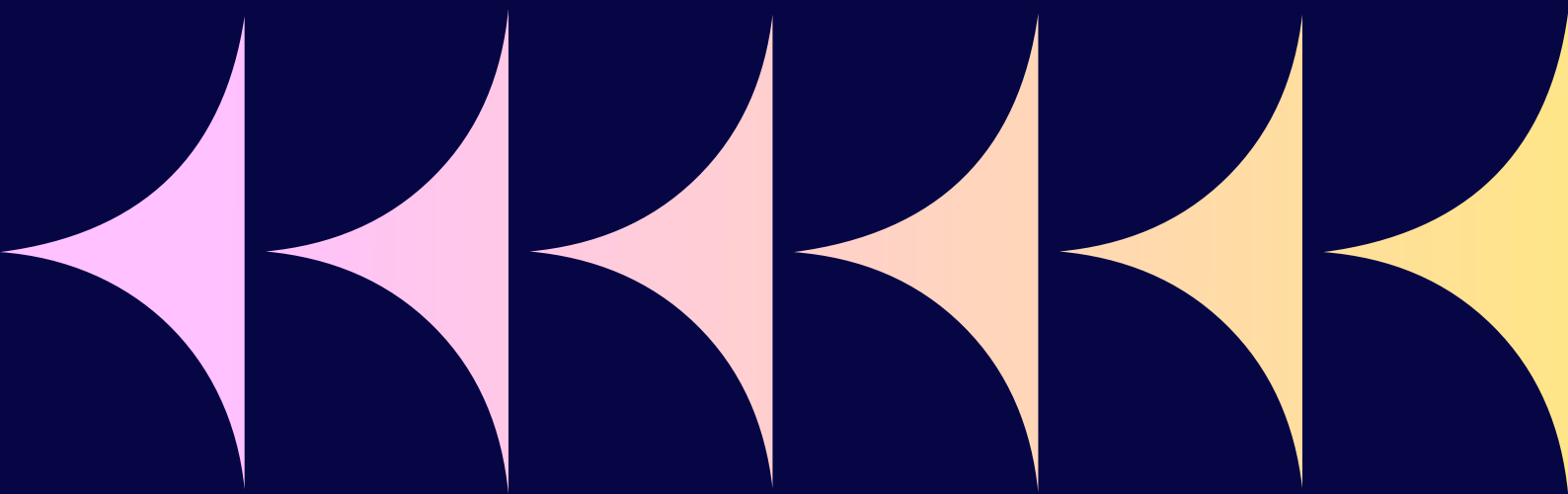
Project spotlight

Achieving quality, equity, efficiency and sustainability in Teacher Professional Development @ Scale in Zambia

An interview with Dr Jennifer Agbaire, Co-Lead of the Learners and Learning Hub

Could you tell me about the project?

The project aims to understand how the established, government-mandated school-based teacher professional development (SBTPD) system in Zambia could be locally adapted in ways that are more equitable and sustainable. It is part of the global Empowering Teachers Initiative (ETI), involving 12 countries, funded by the Foundation for Information Technology Education and Development (FIT-ED) through the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), for which Professor Freda Wolfenden, Chair of the CSGD Advisory Board, is research lead.

Our key focus in this ETI project is on historically marginalised communities. Working with middle-tier education officers, we've been listening to teachers, including volunteer and non-formally qualified ones who often set up community schools. We are interested in how SBTPD actually plays out for teachers in these settings and what we can learn from the experiences of the most marginalised teachers towards improved local professional learning cultures and outcomes.

What did you learn in the process?

Many community schools have incredibly adaptive teachers and leaders who make the most of limited resources, and when the policy environment is genuinely supportive, they really thrive. At the same time, the policy of upgrading community schools has brought both benefits and some unintended consequences - particularly the displacement of volunteer teachers whose deep contextual knowledge can be a real asset to the system.

We learned how multiple NGO initiatives in these schools, while well-intentioned, often place competing, rigid demands on teachers and constrain their TPD engagement. There are missed opportunities to align these initiatives to streamline workload, strengthen professional learning, and support teachers in synthesising and transferring their learning. We've also learned a great deal about the untapped potential of the middle tier. In Zambia, they're well-positioned to bridge policy and practice, but as their role is largely monitoring-centred, teachers focus on proving themselves rather than asking for support. Our work with the District encouraged these officers to adopt a more respectful, partnership-based approach to engaging with teachers during school visits, and we saw the beginnings of mutual trust and respect, strengthening professional learning cultures among both parties.

Was there anything that surprised you?

We were struck by how much the local expertise in community schools is overlooked. Some of the strongest examples of collaboration and problem-solving in teacher meetings that we observed came from schools with the fewest resources and least formally qualified teachers. Yet volunteer teachers are often sidelined once community schools begin to transition to mainstream schools. This is also gendered. As there's no stable financial support for this group to formally upgrade, many more male volunteer teachers than women are able to stay on.

What's coming up next for the project?

We have several outputs underway, including a policy brief and a short film, which are close to release. We're also contributing a book chapter to the global ETI project, highlighting the global implications of the equity issues and positive examples from Zambian community schools. In March 2026, we plan to hold a workshop in Zambia, bringing together representatives from the Ministry of Education, teacher educators, and NGOs to discuss the findings and potential next steps.

If you'd like to hear more about this project, you can visit the CSGD project page.

Project spotlight

Researching the role of social protection policies in Africa

An interview with Dr Keetie Roelen, Deputy Director and Co-Lead of the Poverty, Inequality and Social Protection Hub

Could you tell me about the project?

The focus of the study was to understand the role of coloniality in social protection systems in Africa and across the Global South. The project was commissioned by the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the German research institute called IDOS. The team consisted of CSGD colleagues from The Open University, as well as researchers from Côte d'Ivoire and Tanzania, the two case study countries that were included in the study. In addition to take an Africa-wide focus, we zoomed in on these two countries because they have different colonial histories and geographical contexts. Côte d'Ivoire is located in West Africa and was formerly colonised by France, while Tanzania is in the east and was colonised by England and Germany. The project commenced in mid-2024 and was completed in April 2025.

What's something you've learned whilst doing this project?

The first thing we found was that contemporary postcolonial influence plays a large role in shaping social protection programmes. For example, international organisations such as the World Bank play a large role through their lending mechanisms. Or in the case of Côte d'Ivoire, France continues to have a strong influence, such as through the CFA monetary mechanism. These postcolonial influences appear to outweigh the colonial legacy of policies, such as social pensions, that were put in place during colonial times.

The second thing we learned was that we could not separate the issues of colonial legacy and post-colonial influence from the here and now. This includes questions of what is happening in the political economy, who is in power, what is the prevailing ideology, and what are some of the social or informal practices that make certain types of social protection preferred over others. These questions have to be considered in conjunction with notions of coloniality as well as bigger global shock, such as climate change or health shocks such as HIV and Covid-19.

Is there anything that surprised you in the project?

What surprised me was the great discomfort people experience in discussing coloniality. I conducted interviews with international stakeholders, working in organisations like the International Labour Organization (ILO) and UNICEF, or donors like the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO). On the one hand, people feel uncomfortable about how the shaping of social protection is still very influenced by stakeholders in the global north in unequal ways, and that they are part of that mechanism. However, on the other hand, they strongly believe in the benefits of providing social protection. As a result, many stakeholders feel conflicted about their role and their own involvement in the process.

Similarly, our local partners, who did interviews in Tanzania and Côte d'Ivoire, shared that many country-level interviewees were also uncomfortable to speak about coloniality. There was a sense that it harks back to the past, and by doing so, it almost undermines the present. This might overlook current challenges and dynamics that would benefit from and require a broader lens beyond coloniality.

What's coming up next for the project?

We have three working papers available online. We are collaborating with the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) to create a series of blog posts on socialprotection.org, the largest knowledge platform for social protection policy. And we are in the process of transforming the working papers into academic journal articles. We are also looking to expand the project and discuss the issue of coloniality in social policy more broadly.

If you'd like to hear more about this project, you can visit the CSGD project page.

Event spotlight

Event for International Women's Day - Urgent action for gender equity: working together, what can we all do?

An interview with Dr Jane Cullen, Co-Lead of the Learners and Learning Hub on a cross-hub collaboration

How did the event come about?

I've had a long-standing interest in the crossover between the different elements of CSGD, which you can really see in the Hubs. I lead a project called OpenSTEM Africa, which has been running for eight years with partners across Africa, and we've increasingly adopted a gender perspective. The idea for the event was to bring together colleagues and collaborators to reflect on how we understand gender approaches in our programmes.

In late 2024, my colleague, Dr Philippa Waterhouse, and I discussed events for the following year, and we thought that International Women's Day could be a good opportunity to bring together ideas about health, wellbeing, education, language, and culture. Then it was a matter of connecting the three Hubs, considering which speakers would complement each other, and how to integrate the conversations across disciplines.

We invited speakers who crossed global contexts: Professor Kyria Finardi from Brazil on language and culture; Professor Elsie Effah Kaufmann from Ghana on STEM education; and Professor Gabriela Fernando from Indonesia on health and wellbeing (pictured left to right).

What did you learn in the process of doing this event?

Online events can make people passive, and the focus can be on listening rather than participating. We designed a two-hour structure, consisting of one hour of plenary sessions and another hour for breakout rooms. I think that worked in giving people a smaller, more comfortable space to talk, and it did open up the conversation. However, it only worked to an extent. Some attendees stayed only for the talks. That's food for thought about how we organise future events; how we promote participation and make it genuinely interactive so all voices can be heard.

Is there anything that surprised you?

When planning the event, we deliberately chose to focus on equity rather than equality. Our thinking was that there needs to be a disproportionate focus on supporting girls and young women, because equality alone hasn't enabled progress at the pace needed. So, we went for a slightly provocative title centred on equity.

The surprise was that most participants, and all three speakers, wanted to talk about equality. And what emerged was a much kinder, more inclusive debate than we had anticipated. Ideas surfaced around shared parental leave and men and women working together on all aspects of care and responsibility, which participants felt was essential to furthering women's progress. So, the direction of the conversation shifted, but in a positive way. We might have expected something more strident, but our participants said 'no' and the conversation unfolded differently.

What's coming up next?

I look forward to more cross-hub working to nurture inclusivity within CSGD and break down the silos that can shape thinking about development. As we move forward with Open STEM Africa, we'll also be focusing more on the minority language perspectives, that intersect with gender equity.

Project spotlight

New research into parental mental well-being and postpartum anxiety

An interview with Katie Jones in our Health and Wellbeing Hub

Although maternal mental health problems are the most common serious complication of pregnancy and the postnatal period, the field remains chronically underfunded, jeopardising progress toward the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health.

Would you tell us about how the project came about?

For my PhD research, I wanted to investigate postpartum anxiety. The project began with a cross-sectional survey in 2021 with 500 women and birthing people to see how anxiety fluctuated across the postpartum period. Most research focuses on the immediate weeks after birth, but I could see that problems often emerged later, once people were no longer under the care of midwives and health visitors.

I completed a systematic review looking at risk factors for postpartum anxiety across Australia, Europe, and North America. I collaborated with Early Career Researchers from each region to improve reliability, and we've since published the review in the Journal of Affective Disorders. It's already being cited, and I'm now working on sharing the findings with perinatal care providers to support earlier identification of risk and improve outcomes.

What did you learn?

I explored the preliminary study data with an expert-by-experience group, including a parent of twins, someone who'd experienced perinatal loss, a parent of a baby who spent time in neonatal care, and people with specific disabilities. The data showed us that we need regular data collection across the full 12 months after childbirth to properly capture fluctuations and spot opportunities to intervene. Together, we developed a set of multiple-choice questions for the longitudinal study to focus on modifiable social and cognitive factors, things like repetitive negative thinking, perceived parenting self-efficacy, and social support, while also exploring the events that may trigger shifts in anxiety over time.

Is there anything that surprised you?

I think I wanted to be surprised, but in the end I wasn't. Social factors came up repeatedly, including abuse, victimisation, negative work environments, difficult childhood experiences, alongside things like unsuitable housing, income, employment, and immigration status. These are obviously much harder to modify during the perinatal period, which makes improving outcomes more challenging.

What did surprise me, in a good way, was some of the feedback from the experts-by-experience. For instance, I assumed slider-style survey tools would improve accessibility, but one participant with ADHD said it turned the survey into a kind of game. That reminded me how important it is to include people with neurodiversity and visual impairments in survey testing.

What's coming up next?

I'm currently obtaining ethical approval for the longitudinal study and hope to begin recruiting in January 2026. We've also received funding from the Open Societal Challenges (OSC) programme to create a perinatal anxiety website to raise awareness of how to support postpartum anxiety among healthcare professionals and peer-support providers. Longer term, we're seeking funding to develop an intervention and explore collaborative research ideas that emerged from the stakeholder and expert-by-experience groups.

If you'd like to hear more about this research, you can visit the OSC project page.

A cornucopia of research approaches

CSGD is a home for research using all types of methods and innovation.

Curating methods conversations

Dr Keetie Roelen, Deputy Director, and Professor Laura Camfield, Advisory Board member, are Co-Convenors of the European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADi) Task Group on Methods Innovation. The Task Group aims to support innovation in the current and next generation of researchers, specifically in relation to interdisciplinary research approaches, and to critically explore the ways in which the methods used in development research reflect their colonial heritage and might continue to perpetuate power imbalances.

Making the most of numbers

Turning to quantitative research, two highlights are:

- Mobile Learning for the Empowerment of Marginalised Mathematics Educators (3Mpower) project, where 200+ lesson observations and 2,000+ foundation numeracy skills assessments of learners in Bangladesh led to the development of Policy Brief: Blended learning for teacher development: Evidence of impact.

- Supporting Adolescent Girls' Education (SAGE) programme, which has developed context-appropriate assessment practices integrating both assessment for learning and assessment of learning, generating a dataset of the learning and aspirations of 18,000 girls and young women in Zimbabwe.

Exploring creative approaches

Alongside these, creative approaches are offering rich insights. Next, we showcase how four of our doctoral students are driving methodological innovation and embedding creativity throughout the research process.
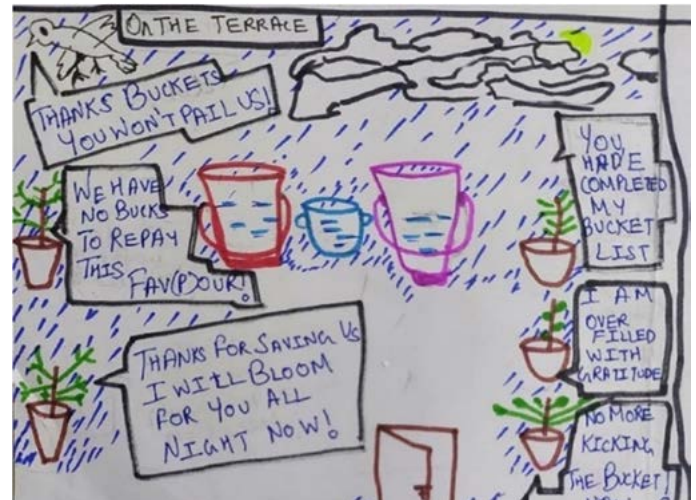
A Missing Climate: How Adolescent Girls in India Make Sense of Climate Challenges through Creative Writing – Shreyasi Sharma

I am using creative writing as a data gathering tool and thinking creatively about a problem for my study on climate education in India. This study will adopt a qualitative approach of ethnography involving storytelling. Within the approach of storytelling, I focus on creative writing *(Hanley, Cooper and Rowntree, 2024)* and drawings *(Dai and Katz, 2017)*. This comes from the choice of location of my study. My field site is a resettlement colony in Delhi. I will be working with school-going teenage girls to understand how they make sense of their lives in the context of climate experiences. Creative works like fiction and poems could be an interesting way to talk about something so personal and debilitating as climate change while probing directions for solutions. The stories produced will be based on what they have been reading in their school prescribed textbook but also other locally observed realities in their surroundings that are not part of their curriculum currently.

"I made a comic during the floods of Delhi 2023 titled 'Buckets Save The Day'. It was an exercise to do something and imagine better while not being able to do much."

You can find out more about Shreyasi's work here.

Re-imagining reading for pleasure: An ethnographic life history study of the reading lives of Ghanaian children. Portia Dery

My research study aims to understand children's lived experiences of reading. Hence, for my data generation methods, I opted to use creative participatory methods to ensure that my participants' voices were at the core of my data generation process. For example, we use drawing as a reflective tool to explore reading memories and experiences. We did storytelling and co-created stories around the major themes from their reading journeys. Instead of structured interviews, we had in-depth conversations individually and as a group, which helped the children feel at ease and open up. The design of my methods was iterative and very flexible, meaning it was based on what participants wanted to do rather than what I, the researcher, had planned. In that way, I, the researcher, also became a learner, which I believe made my participants trust and relate to me more.

You can find out more about Portia's work here.

"To know a person well, one must first listen. For it's in patient listening that understanding unveils from layers of places one would never have imagined. So, to know a person well, one must first listen."

Photo of a group of children engaging in a reflective drawing activity on their reading experiences by Portia Dery

Making research accessible: Embedding creative practices in participant engagement. Trixie Harrison

My research aims to explore neurodivergent experiences of interoception (internal bodily signals, such as hunger and anger) and forest bathing activities (a mindfulness immersive practice involving natural spaces). I recruited five participants, interviewing them about their experiences in nature, and they shared their experiences of forest bathing through journaling, artwork, recordings and photos.

I adopted a collaborative approach, forming an advisory panel comprising neurodivergent postgraduate researchers. They reviewed participant documents to ensure they remained accessible and inclusive. Pilot participants also helped refine layout, language, and flow.

To share ideas behind the research, I created a handbook and commissioned three illustrations to explain fractals, phytoncides, and awe in nature. Each participant received a handbook and fieldwork pack, creating a tangible anchor for the experience. The handbook explained what participants could expect, offered step-by-step guidance. By creating the handbook, a potentially dry information tool was transformed into a fun, creative, and embodied means of supporting data gathering—one that centred collaboration, curiosity, and neurodivergent ways of knowing.

You can find out more about Trixie's work here.

Crafting zines for creative reflexive research practices. Elizabeth Ascroft

My research explored arts-based research practices to co-create sexuality education materials with young people. The project was developed in collaboration between The Open University, the International Planned Parenthood Federation and Famia Planea Aruba. As a result of the co-creative process, the young participants and I developed an online zine, to house their artwork, expressions, stories and messages about sexuality education in Aruba. Through the group's creative process, I learned more about what zines are and what they can do, particularly in offering alternatives to how knowledge is developed and disseminated. This ignited my passion for zines, and I began to craft them to think creatively about research problems, data analysis, and to improve my research writing and reflexivity. I was able to unlock and connect with parts of the research process and conceptualise 'zine-ic' methodologies centred on radical collaborative crafting for social change.
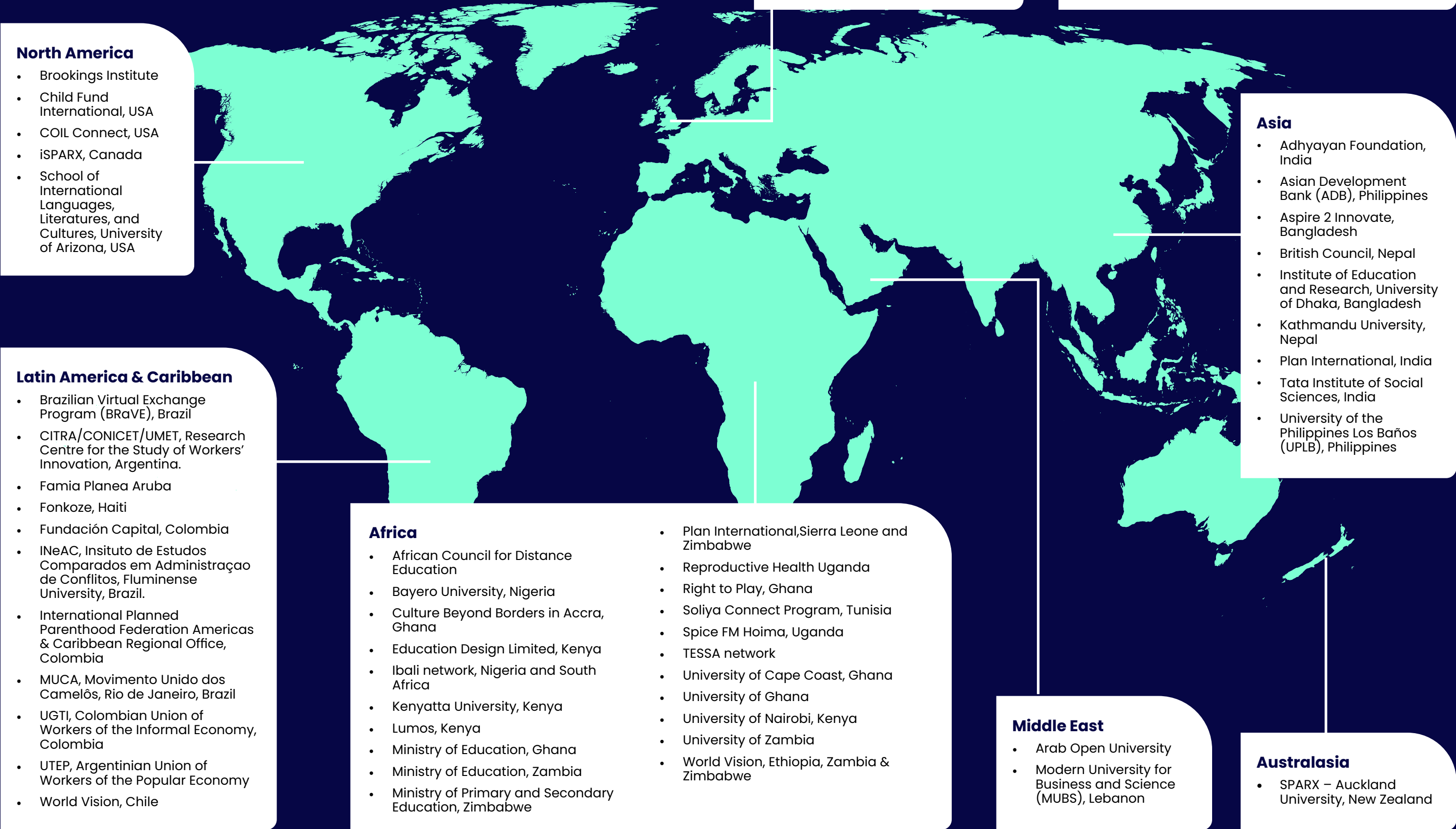
One of my favourite pieces was a zine I developed at the end of my thesis writing process (see image). As I sat to reflect on how I had changed during this research process, it served as my own reflexive exploration of researcher praxis. In the central panels, I capture the power of play and creativity in research.

You can find out more about Elizabeth's work here.

Global collaborations

The CSGD is collaborating with researchers, practitioners, policymakers and other academic institutions from across the globe. The below map shows some of the organisations we work with and the locations we work in.

Europe
- British Council, UK
- Community Action: Milton Keynes, UK
- UNICollaboration, Belgium
- UNESCO–UNEVOC, Germany
- University of Newcastle, UK

Global
- Class2Class
- International Planned Parenthood Federation
- Learning Generation Initiative
- Luminos Fund
- Sightsavers
- Transformative Story

North America
- Brookings Institute
- Child Fund International, USA
- COIL Connect, USA
- iSPARX, Canada
- School of International Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, University of Arizona, USA

Asia
- Adhyayan Foundation, India
- Asian Development Bank (ADB), Philippines
- Aspire 2 Innovate, Bangladesh
- British Council, Nepal
- Institute of Education and Research, University of Dhaka, Bangladesh
- Kathmandu University, Nepal
- Plan International, India
- Tata Institute of Social Sciences, India
- University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), Philippines

Latin America & Caribbean
- Brazilian Virtual Exchange Program (BRaVE), Brazil
- CITRA/CONICET/UMET, Research Centre for the Study of Workers' Innovation, Argentina.
- Famia Planea Aruba
- Fonkoze, Haiti
- Fundación Capital, Colombia
- INeAC, Insituto de Estudos Comparados em Administraçao de Conflitos, Fluminense University, Brazil.
- International Planned Parenthood Federation Americas & Caribbean Regional Office, Colombia
- MUCA, Movimento Unido dos Camelôs, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
- UGTI, Colombian Union of Workers of the Informal Economy, Colombia
- UTEP, Argentinian Union of Workers of the Popular Economy
- World Vision, Chile

Africa
- African Council for Distance Education
- Bayero University, Nigeria
- Culture Beyond Borders in Accra, Ghana
- Education Design Limited, Kenya
- Ibali network, Nigeria and South Africa
- Kenyatta University, Kenya
- Lumos, Kenya
- Ministry of Education, Ghana
- Ministry of Education, Zambia
- Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, Zimbabwe
- Plan International,Sierra Leone and Zimbabwe
- Reproductive Health Uganda
- Right to Play, Ghana
- Soliya Connect Program, Tunisia
- Spice FM Hoima, Uganda
- TESSA network
- University of Cape Coast, Ghana
- University of Ghana
- University of Nairobi, Kenya
- University of Zambia
- World Vision, Ethiopia, Zambia & Zimbabwe

Middle East
- Arab Open University
- Modern University for Business and Science (MUBS), Lebanon

Australasia
- SPARX – Auckland University, New Zealand

Podcasts

CSGD podcast launch

CSGD launched its own podcast this year! The Health and Wellbeing Hub led this initiative. In our first episode, host, Dr Ayomide Oluseye, welcomes Dr Jane McCarthy, Dr Ned Redmore and Elizabeth Ascroft to discuss approaches to navigating sensitive research. You can listen to Part 1 and Part 2 wherever you get your podcasts. In our second episode, host, Dr Philippa Waterhouse invites Dr Ayomide Oluseye, Gulfam Tasnim, and Dr Kerry Jones to explore parenthood and mental health and wellbeing. You can listen to Part 1 and Part 2 wherever you get your podcasts.

Talking Story with Ibali

The Ibali project, funded by the UK Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), hosts this podcast series, focusing on storytelling in practice. The Ibali team have gathered to reflect on their three-year project exploring how storytelling can surface new ideas around inclusion and exclusion in educational settings in Nigeria, South Africa and the UK. Across three podcast episodes, host Elizabeth Ascroft is joined by young storytellers in the UK: Evidence Anene, Siddiqah Afinowi, Tracey Gunda, and João de Almeida, alongside co-investigators at The Open University Professor Alison Buckler and Dr Jennifer Agbaire, Dr Joanna Wheeler (Transformative Story), Yusra Price (University of Cape Town) and Dr Katie Collins (University of Oxford). You can listen to:

Episode 1: The Art of Inclusive Storytelling with Young Creators

Episode 2: Storytelling as Method

Episode 3: Team Collaboration: What did we learn?

Poverty Unpacked

The Poverty Unpacked podcast is a platform that explores how poverty affects the mind and emotions, human connections and the wider society, and what can be done to change this. Hosted by Dr Keetie Roelen, the podcasts' monthly episodes alternate engaging conversations with experts of all creeds – from researchers to practitioners to politicians and lived experience experts – from around the world, together with her own reflections on news and events on poverty. Recent episodes focus on tackling poverty and disadvantage in schools, a deeper look into the workings of the global coalition to end child poverty and shame is no place to live.

Events from the year

Here are examples of events and activities we have hosted over the last year.

Second OU Annual Global Development Lecture

Eradicating poverty without growth: Can it be done?

Seminars

Technology-supported teacher professional development in LMICs

Learning teams to support children's learning and wellbeing

From pilots to policy? Rural livelihoods, social protection in Malawi

Urgent action for gender equity: Working together, what can we all do?

The real "Adaptation Gap": Adapting development in a climate changing world

Feminism remains foreign - What needs to change for a new world order

World Vision & CSGD: Catch-up then what?: Aligning education systems with children's realities

Teacher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa (TESSA): 20 years of learning!

Reimagining development - Bold directions towards a thriving world

What inspires us to become who we are? Becoming a futurist, educator and storyteller

The teachers we need for the education we want

Curated Conversations

Unleashed agency: Exploring enablers and constraints for social transformation

What's happening America??? Why and what's next

You can explore our collection of recorded sessions to revisit key discussions and insights from past events here.

Publications

A selection of 2025 publications by CSGD members include:

Addae-Kyeremeh, Eric; Ebubedike, Margaret; Akyeampong, Kwame; Doka, Jane; Boateng, Felicia and Dery, Portia (2025). Empowering parents and caregivers as literacy champions to support foundational learning in low-resourced contexts. *CSGD Policy Brief 7.*

Akyeampong, Kwame and Higgins, Sean (2025). Reconceptualising the Learning Crisis in Africa: Multi-dimensional Pedagogies of Accelerated Learning Programmes. London: Routledge.

Alvarez, Inma; Ayodele-Olajire, Deborah; Burnside, Gemma; Cooke, Carolyn; Ebubedike, Margaret; Fox, Alison; Glover, Alison; Wamai, Lloyd Muriuki and Willis, Catriona (2025). "Which Voices Are Heard? Who Is Silenced?": Learning from Young People About the Climate Emergency Using Artivism as a Sustainable Pedagogy. *Sustainability*, 17(21), article no. 9825.

Antonia Nannyonga-Tamusuza, Sylvia; Evans, Ruth; Klass, Dennis; Okoth, Henry Okidi; Pendle, Naomi; Ribbens McCarthy, Jane, Jane and Riek, Jediet Jal. (2025). Contemporary responses in Africa to the aftermath of death: developments and decolonising challenges. *Mortality*, 30(2) pp. 355–376.

Ascroft, Elizabeth (2025). Intra-acting with the self: diffracting reflexivity in action-based research. *Educational Action Research*, 33(1) pp. 41–51.

Bleasdale, Catharine and Glover, Alison (2025). Sustaining a Community of Practice to Support Development of Teacher Professional Identity: A Zambian Case Study. *Journal of Learning for Development - JL4D*, 12(3) pp. 615–623.

Buckler, Alison; Agbaire, Jennifer and Oluseye, Ayomide (2025). Teaching inclusively in Nigeria: new framings of inclusion surfaced through a collective storytelling approach. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 1-24.

Buckler, Alison; Ebubedike, Margaret and Agbaire, Jennifer Jomafuvwe (2025). (Imperfectly) inclusive ways of knowing: Principles and practices for researching inclusively in the field of international education and development – An exploratory scoping review. I*nternational Journal of Educational Development,* 119, article no. 103392.

Buckler, Alison; Roelen, Keetie; Akyeampong, Kwame; Kale, Dinar; Kukulska-Hulme, Agnes; Mohan, Giles; Raghuram, Parvati and Wolfenden, Freda (2025). UK aid cuts: compromising lives, livelihoods and learning. *Centre for the Study of Global Development.*

Buckler, Alison; Twiner, Alison and Power, Tom (2025). "I had to adjust my character so I was able to help": how community volunteers in rural Zimbabwe developed as educators in a context of crisis and school closures. *Journal of Educational Change* (Early access).

Cooper, Deborah; Wolfenden, Freda; Dawadi, Saraswati and Majid, Zahid (2025). Developing an Inclusive Mindset in School Leaders, Education Stakeholders and OER Design: Lessons from Researching Networked Improvement Communities in South Asian Contexts. In: *Pan Commonwealth Forum 11: Innovative Open Education: Fostering Resilient Societies for Sustainable Economic Development*, article no. 1170.

Ebubedike, Margaret; Dawadi, Saraswati and Boateng, Felicia (2025). Preventing Trafficking of Girls Through Empowerment and Information Strategy: A Case study of Nepal and Nigeria. *The Open University, Milton Keynes.*

Fergusson, Ross and Yeates, Nicola (2025). Young People and the Global Workforce: exploitation, exclusion and unemployment. In: Ramia, Gaby; Irving, Zoe; Heins, Elke and Velázquez Leyer, Ricardo eds. *Research Handbook on Social Policy and Employment*. Elgar Handbooks in Social Policy and Welfare. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, pp. 103–120.

Hamilton, Sukhbinder; Keenan, Joseph; Pusey, Laura; Ribbens McCarthy, Jane; Stedmon, Jacqui and Taylor, Foluke (2025). Decolonising the aftermath of death in UK contexts: theoretical approaches, institutional 'constraints', and everyday experiences. *Mortality: Promoting the interdisciplinary study of death and dying*, 30(2) pp. 466–488.

Hedges, Claire; Zwier, Janelle and Okada, Alexandra (2025). Inspiring foundational learning for all children: A call for action. *World Vision; Centre for the Study of Global Development, The Open University*.

Howard, Neil; Roelen, Keetie; Ton, Giel; Espinoza Hermoza, Mauricio; Al Mamun, Saklain; Chowdhury, Kabita; Aktar, Taslima and Huq, Lopita (2025). A new approach to children's work that prioritises resilience, well-being and agency: emerging findings from a 'cash plus' intervention in Bangladesh. *BMJ Paediatrics Open*, 9, article no. e002422.

Jenssen, Runa Hestad; Earle, Rod; Davies, Bill and Patterson, Eira (2025). Education in prisons: generating hope, escaping stereotypes. *Research Intelligence* (164) p. 13.

Lambin, Roosa; Yeates, Nicola; Mackinder, Sophie; Holden, Chris; Idris, Nabila and Snell, Carolyn (2025). Legitimacy in 21st-Century Polylateralism: The Case of Global Health Funds. *Global Governance*, 31(3) pp. 284–311.

Márquez Reiter, Rosina and Sanque, Douglas (2025). Ambulant vendors' living labour on Copacabana beach. *Language, Culture and Society*, 7(1) pp. 28–67.

Mitchell, Rafael; Agbaire, Jennifer; Paulson, Julia and Tikly, Leon (2025). Endogenous systems leadership of education provision during crises in low- and middle-income countries: A conceptual framework. *Prospects* (Early Access).

Mumtaz, Zahid and Roelen, Keetie (2025). Winners and losers: class dynamics and social protection in Pakistan. *International Journal of Social Welfare,* 34(2), article no. e12700.

Nyanhete, Alois Itayi and Yeates, Nicola (2025). The effects of sending remittances on the financial capabilities of Zimbabwean migrants in the United Kingdom. J*ournal of International and Comparative Social Policy* (Early Access).

Okada, Alexandra (2025). Cartografia do conhecimento para jovens pensadores: Questões de sustentabilidade, técnicas de mapeamento e inteligência artificial. *The Open University.*

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