



CAPACITY TO DECOLONISE

BUILDING FUTURES LITERACY IN AFRICA



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The Capacity to Decolonize: Building Futures Literacy in Africa

Proposal for Submission

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2 September 2020



C2D

Building Futures Literacy in Africa

A Proposal

Executive Summary

The Capacity to Decolonise (C2D) is a proposition for a large, multi-year participatory action research programme focused on the role of **“futures literacy”¹ as a core capability for expanding imagination, choice and agency for people**. As such, we hypothesise that building Futures Literacy in communities can contribute to **empowerment through and for decolonisation**. In a quest for transformation, the project premise is to use the future in a capability-based approach to “development”: finding its origins, purposes and methods of implementation in local actors' own understanding of their issues to seek endogenous solutions fueled by their futures literacy. Here, Futures Literacy is understood as a capability that allows us to unearth why and how we anticipate, and thus become more conscious of the choices we make and unexplored existing alternatives.

The C2D programme proposal is for a five-year (2021 - 2025) anticipatory action research programme which involves up to six diverse grounded case studies; a shared commons for sharing, reflection and theorisation; and a systematic, experimental approach to building knowledge about novel transformative practices for community engagement and empowerment. Three cases are proposed to launch the initiative: Transforming Governance (led by Twaweza in Tanzania), Transforming Development (led by Kabakoo in Mali and Badenya in Sierra Leone), and Transforming Tertiary Education (led by the University of Gulu in Uganda). Geographically, the programme will focus on various sites located across Africa. However, Africa-based champions will work with international partners (North-South-South). The project will involve many opportunities to connect localised experiments with a global community of research and practice.



¹ Futures literacy is a capability that enables us to understand our anticipatory systems and processes.

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1. Introduction

Social and political debates in human societies are characterised by increasingly vocal calls for long disempowered populations and groups worldwide to imagine and ultimately design their own approaches and futures – even more so in a post-colonial context. These calls have profound but unresolved and under-explored implications for traditional development research, action and funding theories and practices.

As various actors and institutions are trying to figure out what shifts are on the horizon, and what transformations they may have to undergo to be in order to be relevant, impactful and responsible in those different futures - this programme goes beyond conventional, globally-standardised approaches to foresight into new and more locally -contextualised practices in anticipation based on decolonial theory (including border thinking) and futures literacy. The

Capacity to

Decolonise (C2D)

is a programme

about new

approaches, both

structured and

emergent, and

experimentation

enabling co-

production of

knowledge.

Our C2D logo is designed by young South African Lindiwe Gugushe, inspired by the Ghanaian Adinkra symbol for life-long learning and the continued quest for knowledge.

The source symbol (which we have slightly skewed to indicate a preparedness to explore even beyond tradition) is

NEA ONNIM NO SUA A, OHU

which translates to

He who does not know can know from learning

We associate this with the decolonisation of imagination which we are seeking to explore through this research.

2. Background

This programme proposal is the result of many years of hard work and reflection by a group of futures-interested practitioners which culminated in a wider community co-design process in May 2020 that was sponsored by the [International Development Research Centre \(IDRC\)](#) (see the [May Co-design Workshop Report](#) and [Project website](#)).

Acclaimed by the World Economic Forum and building on momentum of bottom-up initiatives carried out in 35+ countries, Futures Literacy is considered as one of the essential skills for the 21st century.²

Several contemporary realities give particular impetus to a programme like this being developed by, in, and for Africa:

- A time for transformation and sharp focus on the future as we face a complex of global crises - environmental (climate extinction), economic, and social, all exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic;
- Advances in futures thinking and the so-called “discipline of anticipation”, in particular as championed through the UNESCO futures literacy programme which has already been applied across Africa³;
- Interest in these developments by local and international development agencies which are seeking new insights and alternatives;
- Changing perspectives on development practices and north-south relations in both development and research;
- Virtualisation as a new reality which presents new opportunities for implementation as well as increased engagement.

3. Description

C2D is an action research programme based on the proposition that building futures literacy can contribute to decolonising thinking and action, and thus transform systems and institutions. Through experimental action research, this project seeks to build local institutional capacity and actions to initiate this learning.

Objectives

The objectives of the programme are, through a principle-led process that is both systematic and open, to:

1. Develop six action research inquiries (leading up to six distinct “cases”) in the context of each local champion/target community;
2. Build capacity to enhance, train and mobilise local champions’ futures literacy, which implies for them to:
 - a. Be able to co-design, implement and assess futures literacy activities (including Futures Literacy Laboratories);
 - b. Infuse their practice with new questions resulting from their diversified uses of futures;

² World Economic Forum, August 2020, <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/08/the-four-skills-to-make-the-world-better-after-covid-19/>.

³ Gabon (2019), Ivory Coast (2020-2021), Kenya (2019, 2020), Mali (2020), Morocco (2017, 2018), Nigeria (2018), South africa (2015, 2018), Tanzania (2014), Tunisia.(2017).

3. Develop six futures literate communities of practice that form a larger interconnected FL community of practice through an iterative process, linked to other FL communities worldwide;
4. Define and implement case-relevant development projects that mirror the reflections arising from FL activities;
5. Propose and document a project framework and research methodology that contributes to knowledge and practice more widely.

Research Hypothesis

Our premise is that knowing why and how people use the future in their endeavours, whatever those may be, empowers communities to 1) understand limitations in their images of the future and therefore in their decision-making processes, 2) explore new ways of learning, being and doing, 3) reflect on their practices and develop new ones. This constitutes what is called a community of practice, more specifically one of diverse layers and scales. The development of an informed community of practice contributes to being able to identify what decoloniality applied to their context and to their anticipation means, and how it can be pursued. Actors are encouraged to think about how they think about the future, and how to explore unbounded imagination. Through this practice and enquiry, we anticipate that an increased awareness of the mechanics and purpose of anticipatory systems would help communities, organisations and individuals to challenge and diversify the contexts in which we anticipate, the ways we do so and the reasons for anticipating in the first place.

This capability to understand why and how we anticipate is called Futures Literacy.

A deliberate process of evaluation will be an important means to providing the opportunity to reflect on the hypothesis and programme principles, how it is evolving and how it plays out differently in different geographic and subject area contexts. It will also integrate reflection on the principles that guide the project as outlined in the next section (see the evaluation section for process and methods).

4. Motivation

Futures have been explored as a playground to reveal possibilities of the present (Facer, 2015), but also to democratise agency and enlarge reasons for empowerment at different levels: community and individual (Ramos & Sweeney, 2018). The evolution of decolonial studies in both Africa and Latin America, but also recently in Europe and Central and South Asia, has pinpointed the necessity to gain or reclaim our 'power to define' our own or different futures⁴. This shifts the development agenda from a focus on 'power to' (access to resources and rights:

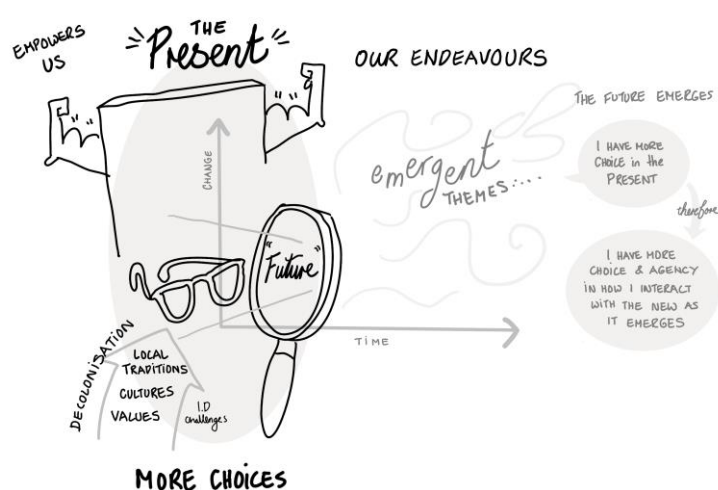
⁴ Aarathi & al, 2020; Madlingosi, 2018; Kisukidi, 2015; Tlostanova & Mignolo, 2015; Sardar, 2010; Mignolo, 2009; Chakrabarty, 2000; Fanon, 1962.

how to *have*) to negotiation of shared meanings around ‘power with’ (how to *be*). These discussions depend on a careful joint work of actors on the ground with diverse and specific understanding of the regional context.

North-South-South collaboration is necessarily encouraged to be reshaped. This transition sheds light on the difficulties for social entrepreneurial initiatives to fit into development ecosystems: they are neither fully NGOs nor profit-driven firms. Actors on the ground invited as part of the codesign process of this Capacity to Decolonise project have raised this issue: realising that the educational system encounters challenges in leading our youth to full employment: what is a learning space in Bamako that is not a school? What is its purpose? Beyond elections that suffer from disengaged citizens despite active polity, how to (re)negotiate our social contract in Tanzania? When thinking about holistic forms of education within our universities, are there subjects, methods, teleologies that we have failed to address or not even considered at all?

In light of inappropriate responses to the current complex of crises, a *capability-based approach* is a direct response to this teleological dissonance. In Europe, Covid19 has catalysed the realisation that uncertainty is a dominant paradigm that requires more resilience and humility than data-driven planning. In sub-Saharan Africa, uncertainty about the future is already a recurrent theme, not necessarily only for cultural reasons, but also due to the frequent occurrence of economic, political and ontological shocks. In both contexts, regardless of locations, what is being challenged is our ability to define problems for ourselves, especially in

dire circumstances: what matters, for whom, and how?



This acknowledgement of the necessity for local problem definition fuels local champions’ recourse to Futures Literacy design principles. For example, recently, the city council of Libreville (Gabon) which had no prior foresight capacity wished to adopt a more systematic approach to futures, directly involving its youth.

In December 2019, alongside UNESCO, it developed the first Futures Literacy Lab of the region for 35 people aged 18 to 37. They were pâtissier, scenographer, translator, architect, poet, and unemployed people, all nonetheless socially active. Articulated around four phases (see methodology section

below), this action-learning, action research workshop was the opportunity to explore their analytical skills in Phase 1 combined with storytelling in Phase 2, but also the potentialities of the present in Phase 3 and the correlation between futures and decision-making in Phase 4.

Through learning by doing, participants identified issues of their community in their restrained ability to think about solutions they could initiate without prior financial or institutional support. What they thought mattered was highly dependent on who funded it and whether it fit the previously defined agenda. Three months later, a community composed of all participants had come to be. They proposed endogenous solutions to Covid-19. In their case, this meant fighting the prevalence of mortal myths such as, "Black people are immune to Covid"; proposing water supply and local solidarity systems connecting the different districts of Libreville and acting as a go-between for protective mask supply, among other things. We shifted from probable images of the future structured around what external actors could do, to thinking about what actually mattered to them (the 'why') and how to get involved (the 'how'). In short, the development of FL capability offered the opportunity for learners to diversify their representations of the world, to diversify actors, forms of agency, and purposes of those involved.

Cases proposed as part of this project design seek to operate the same shift at their own level. Futures are about building contexts for hope, diversifying the reasons for being and feeling fulfilled. They are not an end in themselves, which is why they are so powerful.

We therefore understand that the project we take on should accompany the development of a more inclusive research inquiry leading to action, allowing actors of all levels the time and opportunity to ask themselves uncomfortable questions and reflect on why they act, and in reaction to what perception(s) of their environment. This includes, but is not limited to, local champions but also their surrounding environment. This discomfort is to a certain extent reflected in the name of the project as an uncomfortable invitation to freedom around shared and fragmented legacies.

The call was launched through a workshop launched in May 2020 around a community of mainly African professional practitioners and researchers in futures literacy, collective intelligence, indigenous and endogenous knowledge systems and participatory action research. All had included these challenges in their practice and were keen to push it forward.

5. Programme Design

C2D Programme Principles

The C2D methodology is designed to create the conditions for transformative change. It targets the formation of a research inquiry leading to the implementation of action in each local case, aligning theory with practice (“grounded theory”). Its first method is participatory action-learning / action-research, which calls for three Rs: Reciprocity, Reflexivity, Reflection (Robertson, 2000).

In order not to preempt what a “good” or “relevant” development project is, the research inquiry should be “ethical, performative, healing, transformative, decolonising, and participatory” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2014; Tuhiwai Smith, 2000). In short, it should emerge from local champions, with the humble awareness of our assumptions about tomorrow.

For these assumptions to be surfaced, we embrace Futures Literacy Design principles. The primary goal of these principles is the revelation of underlying assumptions. We also adopt a pedagogy of hope and freedom built around learning-by-doing, interdisciplinarity and iteration with different layers of actors and therefore different forms of feedback (Odora-Hoppers, 2014; Freire, 1972). The Research Support Team is encouraged to embrace servant leadership (Sendjaya, 2013).

Based on the background research conducted to inform this project, Figure 1 below represents the key elements and challenge points envisaged in connecting anticipatory action research. Anticipatory action research as defined in section 5 of the research paper is rooted in an ethos of transdisciplinarity, collective intelligence creation and co-design, with the three key decolonisation dimensions posited: learning, being, doing.

Decolonising efforts are hereby understood first as the acknowledgement of imposed pervasive alterity through the concepts of race and imperialism, and second as the expansion of choice in a community’s quest for resurgence and empowerment defined as ‘power with’ (the ability to express oneself through a variety of legacies and alternatives to pursue freedom).

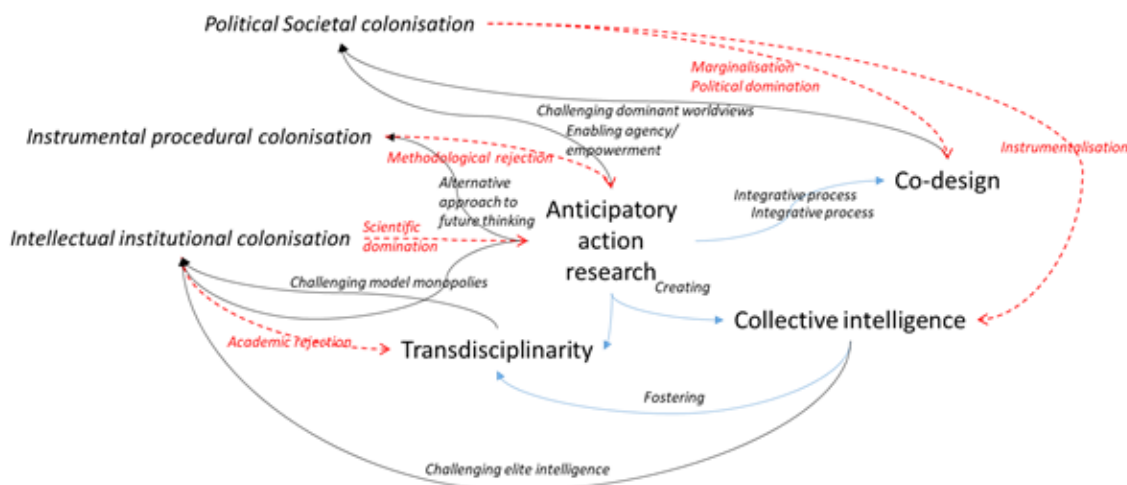


Figure 1: Connecting anticipatory action research (from C2D Research Paper)

The programme has three main components: **local cases**, a shared central network and pool of resources named “**The Commons**” offering ongoing and reflective insights on research efforts, through a flexible monitoring, evaluation, research and learning (**MERL**) structure.

Through the three initial cases Africa is pioneering more holistic and participatory ways of thinking, learning and doing with different layers of involvement and a series of hyperlocal, continental and extra-continental actors. We recognise local specificities which inform the learning, while connecting it to the whole through an umbrella project.

The Actors

Participatory action research is initiated by an endogenous inquiry that engages a community’s agency rather than objectifying communities. The project is the articulation of the work of five (05) actors: local champions, community (ies) and a research support team composed of allies, elders and co-design team.

Local champions is a term used in Futures Literacy design principles to describe communities or members thereof, of different kinds in relation with the geographical diversity, themes or institutional structures, that act as direct initiators, designers and facilitators of a Futures Literacy activity (Miller, 2018). They are the direct actors of the present project. These local champions are building alliances, offering hindsight, resources and another layer of reflexivity as part of this umbrella project (see local cases section).

Communities are context-based groups of individuals surrounding the respective teams of local champions.

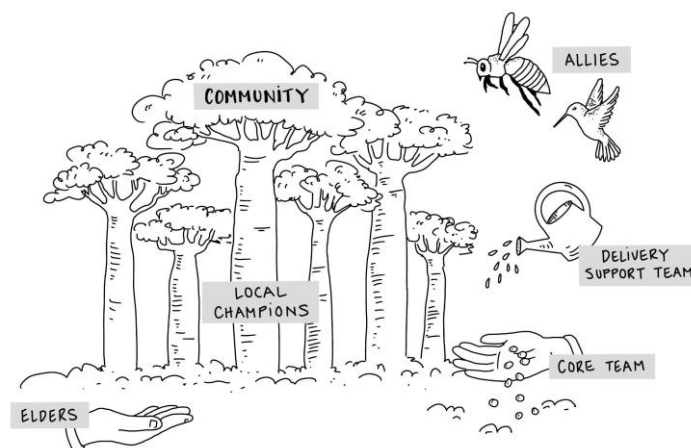


Figure 2: C2D actors in an ecosystem (© Sonja Niederhumer)

Elders are intellectual support that are distinct from programmatic local champions, but remain involved so as to provide insights. In short, they do the work without offering the case. They can also provide support for funding and research. In addition to the local champions, the C2D team is already working with, the researchers which compose the Commons are from:

- Wits School of Governance (South Africa)
- Global Institute of Applied Governance (Uganda/Africa)
- The Emergence Network (global)
- UNESCO's Global Futures Literacy Network composed of 20 UNESCO Chairs, including 4 in Africa (Carthage University, Dedan Kimathi University of Technology, Stellenbosch University, Université Alassane Ouattara).

Allies hold support roles for Futures Literacy training and are indirect resources on a case-by-case basis. They intervene after Year 1. Two UNESCO Chairs, one in Hanze (Netherlands) specialised in FL design training and another on collective images of the future at Erasmus University (Belgium), were part of the co-design and will co-design FL training of local champions.

The **Core organising team** is comprised of researchers from Witwatersrand School of Governance (South Africa), UNESCO's Futures Literacy team and Using Evidence's MERL specialists.

The Elders, Allies, Core team, and some researchers from the local teams come together into a shared space of mutual support and learning that we call **The Commons**.

There will also be additional delivery contractors brought on board to support the overall programme on specific management, administrative and technical aspects.

Structure

Over the span of five years, the objective of the project is first articulated around the formation, challenge and fine-tuning of the research inquiry (Months 1-18), leading up to the determination of a way forward to be funded and implemented (Months 19-36). Aware that we cannot preempt what will come from the research inquiry, the pathway envisaged below focuses on the interaction between the different actors and the objectives of each phase. The approach is more specific about the inception phase (see Annexure 3), and then maps out a fuzzier pathway into plans for the outer years to allow for co-design and emergence.

In **Year 1**, local champions will organise a series of community conversations with the three pre-selected cases to negotiate what an endogenous, decolonial project or initiative means in their hyperlocal context. These conversations will take two forms: dialogue series (Months 1-6), and Futures Literacy Labs (Months 6-18).

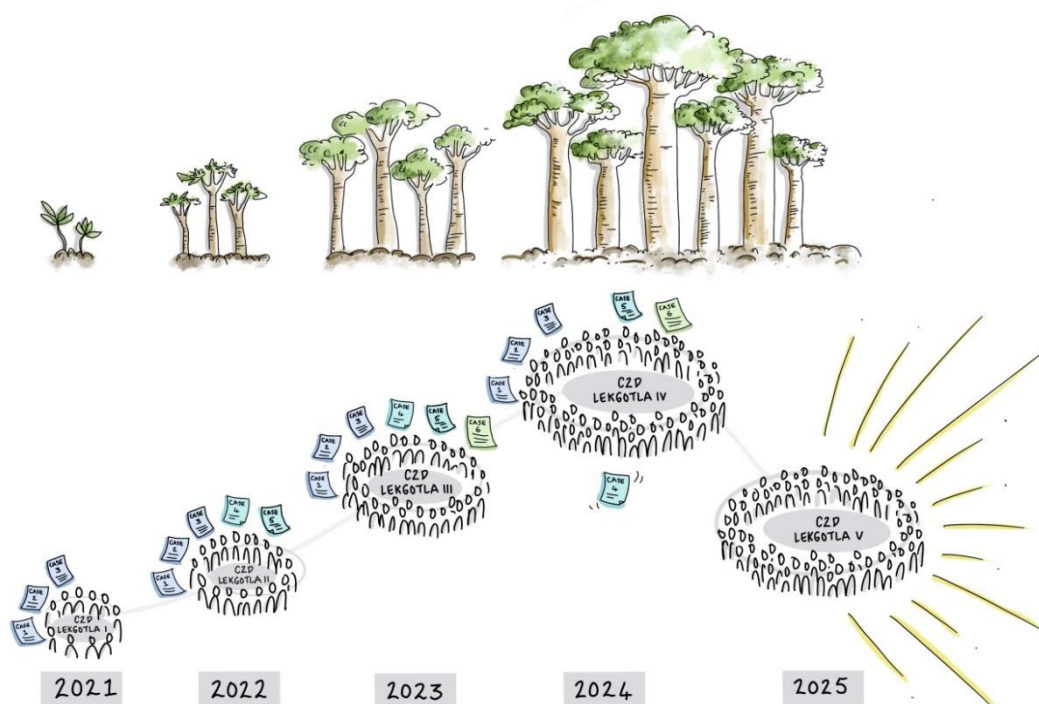


Figure 3: Yearly programme (© Sonja Niederhumer)

Y1 - Inception	Y2- Growth	Y3 - Maturity	Y4 - Resolution	Y5 - Composting
3 Local Cases initiated 6 Dialogues 9 FL training sessions 6 LC-led FLLs 1 Forum (Lekgotla) ⁵	2 Local Cases added Ad-hoc Dialogues 2 FL training sessions 1 Forum	1 Local Case added 3 Local Cases concluding Dialogues 1 Forum	All Local Cases concluding Dialogues 1 Forum	Production: - How to build FL capacity (training, doing) - Dialogue series report (oral/written/performance) 1 Forum

Dialogue series are the opportunity to provide traction around the five concepts of C2D: collective intelligence, critical indigenous methodologies/post-activism, decoloniality/resurgence, complexity theory, and Futures Literacy.

Local champions will first determine the attendants, format (e.g., could be caravan in Mali, community conversations in Tanzania and Sierra Leone, conferences in Uganda), and structure (use of visuals, silent thinking, community-building activities, harvesting). For this, the Commons offer a variety of resources: activities of the kind organised by the Emergence Network, researchers and specialists in the five concepts.

The expected outcome of dialogue series are the formulation of a research inquiry based on the eight questions of indigenous action research⁶:

1. What research do we want done?
2. Whom is it for?
3. What difference will it make?
4. Who will carry it out?
5. How do we want the research done?
6. How will we know it is worthwhile?
7. Who will own the research?
8. Who will benefit?

Futures Literacy being a prerequisite for project implementation, local champions (LC) will go through a minimum of six Futures Literacy Labs and a **two-week training session** overall to be able to codesign and implement Futures Literacy Labs. This is also the opportunity for them to meet and build a community of practice. These Labs and training sessions will be codesigned by

⁵ A Lekgotla is a gathering or convening, or collective conversation to resolve something. Traditionally (in Tswana culture) it was - and still is, in Botswana - in a physical space that every village had, a circle where the elders met with communities. In South Africa, it is also used to refer to government or community forums.

⁶ Smith, L. T. (2000). Kaupapa Maori research. In *Reclaiming indigenous voice and vision*, ed. Marie Battiste, Vancouver, British Columbia University Press. (pp. 225-247)

the pool of C2D researchers. As one C2D Researcher is assigned to each LC team, researchers also gain a fair understanding of potential connections to be made. This is both useful for the training and the **yearly forum gathering (lekgotlas)** of local champions, C2D elders and allies.

At the end of these two activities (dialogues and FL training sessions), **six Futures Literacy Labs** will be organised for participants in each for their respective communities, with the potential to impact hundreds of individuals. Futures Literacy Labs are composed of four phases: *Reveal* (probable and preferred futures), *Reframe* (reframing scenario to explore new assumptions about tomorrow), *Rethink* (new questions about the potentialities of the present thanks to the exploration of tomorrow), and *Next Steps*. The last phase will be the opportunity for communities to challenge the research inquiry formulated during the dialogue series. The whole process will be documented by local champion teams.

A second round of dialogue series can be organised just between them and the central support team (the Commons) to reflect on next steps proposed by participants, particularly changes to be made to the research inquiry.

Year 2 will welcome the occurrence of a bigger Forum of LCs and actors of the Commons, progressively inviting peers and partners more widely. It is the opportunity to inform and challenge the research inquiry, to discuss methods, outcomes and foreseen actions, but also to pause in order to reflect on the path pursued both as learners who have become more futures literate and as project implementers. Year 2 marks the transition from FL training to FL implementation as FLLs are still being implemented until mid-Year 2.

At the same time, Year 2 welcomes two new cases which will begin to go through the same process as Y1. Changes are expected to emerge from past experiences documented throughout. In addition to this, one to three local champions from the earliest years can act as an external researcher (elder) for one of these two new cases.

These first 18 months provide different layers of reciprocity and reflexivity: twice by the community (dialogue and FLLs), twice by LCs (FL training & Forum) and throughout by C2D researchers. This guarantees process ownership and reflection before action.

"The group as a whole acts as a midwife for new ideas to be born and original points of view to emerge"
(Catherine Odora-Hoppers)

By **Year 3**, C2D project is coming to maturity: local champions are expected to advance their actions, and some cases are already beginning to culminate. For some, the renewal of undertaken activities is already the project that taps into three dimensions of decolonisation:

- *Learning* (especially joint African universities): focus on the choices made locally for activity, including decolonial references made to learning to unlearn;
- *Being* (especially Kabakoo/Badenya): particular focus on the notion of value creation. What does the time spent on dialogue series and FLLs mean to the communities who took part in the process? Y3 for this case will be about improving participatory processes on the basis of questions and learning outcomes that emerge from dialogue series, FLLs and challenged research inquiry.
- *Doing* (especially Twaweza): how to keep on involving the community in the conceptualisation and implementation of the case. We understand that participatory case-building is not only in the interest of “decolonised being”, but also to sustain activities undertaken by LCs.

Year 3 welcomes yet another new case which will follow the same inception and support process. The initial three case studies also begin “cycling out” - completing their C2D-specific engagements, concluding about their journey and learnings, and exiting from the financial support of C2D. They however maintain their own new and/or ongoing missions and activities, and continue to be part of the C2D community.

In **Year 4**, no new cases are taken on while current cases are following the same progression as Year 3, with third year projects preparing to cycle out. We expect, however, that the lekgotla series might have informed changes made to the Lab. In the meantime, local champions keep on building FL capacity to growing numbers of participants, developing an ecosystem where learning, being and doing can be sustained, and reporting on their activities.

In **Year 5** the final project(s) cycle out. While reporting is planned to be iterative, Year 5 will give rise to a series of reporting materials of various formats (oral, written, active performance). The community of researchers, composed of both elders and designated members of local champion teams, will work together to produce materials that:

1. Reflect the local experience of the past 3-5 years, providing room for testimonials from within their community of practice. This should also be the opportunity to share what they learned from connecting with other local champions.
2. Offers reflection on lessons learned and recommendations for the C2D project’s next steps as a whole.
3. Offer lessons on the role of Futures Literacy in decolonisation efforts to contribute to the broader community of scholars and practitioners working on efforts at colonisation.

The last forum of this project is expected to welcome external actors with the support and involvement of allies. One of the anticipated formats is a large-scale three-day FL

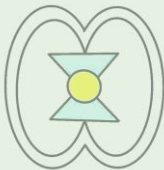


activity for 200 researchers and communities involved in the C2D project to truly explore *live* participatory action research.

The monitoring, evaluation, research and learning approach which carries on throughout is detailed in section II.

The Three Initial Cases

With the financial support of IDRC, the co-design phase (January-July 2020) was the opportunity to identify three initial cases, define the criteria for selection and determine what Commons the Capacity to Decolonise project had to offer in terms of action research methodology and design principles for the resurgence agenda.

We expect to select two additional cases by the end of Year Two.

<p>TRANSFORMING “GOVERNANCE” Twaweza, East Africa</p> 	<p>TRANSFORMING “DEVELOPMENT” Kabakoo, Mali Badenya, Sierra Leone</p> 	<p>TRANSFORMING “EDUCATION” African universities - East and Southern Africa</p> 
<p>Focused on priority sectors (education, water & food systems, ICTs), <i>Twaweza</i> (“we can make it happen” in Kiswahili) is a community-based NGO which targets young learners, citizens and local governments in mainland Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya to build a grounded negotiation of shared meanings around what it means to be a member of one’s community. Twaweza aims at accompanying this work by collecting the voice of the people (mobile data survey Transform) and providing alternative assessment tools and frameworks to evaluate the effectiveness of norms and policies through the eyes of the people.</p> <p>Our focal person is its executive director, Aidan Eyakuze (see Annex 2- C2D May Workshop report)</p> <p>Link: https://www.twaweza.org/</p>	<p><i>Kabakoo</i> (=“wondering” in Bamanankan) is a learning place for sustainability-focused tech education. It trains batches of teenagers and young adults in high and low tech with a series of projects from 3D printing to environmental sensing using endogenous knowledge, collective intelligence and experiential learning.</p> <p>Since its opening in 2018, Kabakoo has trained more than 500 Bamako-based learners who have created multidimensional value by solving local problems.</p> <p>Our focal person is its founder, Yannick Kemayou (see annex 2- C2D May Workshop report)</p> <p>https://www.kabakoo.africa</p> <p><i>Badenya</i> - an NGO serving the village of Dankawalie, Sierra Leone, is dedicated to the holistic development of solutions to the various educational, environmental and cultural needs of the</p>	<p>Built around a coalition of universities which focus on decolonising systems of knowledge, including indigenous knowledge systems, this Transforming Education project takes shape for grassroot initiatives around learning frameworks, contexts, actors and systems. It aimed to transform African educational systems, especially those recognised in the international academic community.</p> <p>Institutional leads for this case include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gulu University (Uganda), - Dedan Kimathi University of Technology (Kenya), - University of Witwatersrand (South Africa), <p>They will then work with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NUST (Namibia University of Science & Technology), -UCT (University of Capetown) African Centre for Cities (South Africa)

	<p>community. Badenya is unique in that it relies on local decision making to identify needs and aspirations.</p> <p>Our focal person is its founder, Kewulay Kamara (see Annex 2- C2D May Workshop report)</p> <p>https://kewulaykamara.com/programs/</p>	<p>Our focal person is the founder of the new Global Institute for Applied Governance in Science and Innovations (being established at Gulu University), Prof Catherine Odora-Hoppers (see Annex 2- C2D May Workshop report)</p> <p>https://gu.ac.ug/</p>
<p>Evaluation will look with and across the cases to understand - and help the teams reflect on - what is effective in what contexts.</p>		

These three cases have in common the desire to provide a framework which encourages and nurtures the imagination and emergence of futures that speak to their constituencies because they directly come from them.

C2D comes from the premise that resurgence-oriented projects require the allocation of sufficient time to a grounded research inquiry built on mutual and inclusive understanding (reciprocity), iteration for reflection (reflexivity) and action embedded in the research (participatory action research).

Prospective cases to be selected for addition in Years 2 and 3 of the project, while respectful of geographical diversity, should embrace the same characteristics.

The Commons - Research / Knowledge Support Layer

In relation to the study hypothesis, C2D offers a platform called the Commons which is composed of elders, allies, the C2D co-design team, as well as researchers from the local champion teams. This is particularly useful as part of each case: for governance, to think about reporting back for larger communities, for development, to embrace action research as a core component of African economies and for education, to empower graduate students of the six universities/centres.

Based on the two formats of participatory action research, different forms of collaboration are envisaged throughout the implementation of the C2D project. First, two elders and two researchers will directly work with the local champion team. This is the local case stream (LCS). Second, the local case stream works together to reflect on outcomes of the dialogue series and

FLLs run in Years 1 and 2. This is the Research Support Stream (RSS).

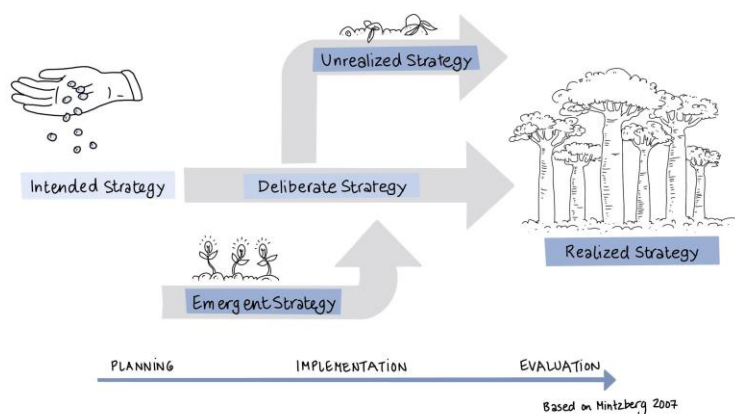
Each local champion team designates a reference person to share outcomes of research with other local champions of the C2D umbrella project between yearly forums. Monthly calls are planned to this effect with shared documentation (joint works cited lists of various formats) on a common platform to be determined at the first forum.

As the decolonised process invites an openness and methodological playfulness, the Research Support Stream is doing the systematic work of informing, capturing, and mirroring back as/when appropriate *in support of* the Local Cases / Projects Stream. Their purpose is:

1. To systematically document, analyse, and theorise about the experimental action research both centrally and discretely (for generalisation as well as appreciation of specificities) in relation to the research hypothesis...
 - a. what **decolonising** means, how it is pursued, decolonial actions / interventions/ institutions, across the [de]colonisation dimensions (learning, being and doing):
 - b. why and how people use **the future** in their endeavours - a community's abilities to expand and explore their own locally determined (or chosen) values and ideas in perceiving the world around them, including how they identify key challenges. In short, they will work on the correlation between futures literacy, narrative-building/storytelling and imagination skills.
 - c. building local capacity through and for learning and **empowerment**.
2. To observe and analyse the research process (paying keen attention to its ontological, epistemological and methodological designs, inclinations and actions) in relation to the programme's principles; to enable critical reflection; and to inform project co-design iteration / stages.

MERL - The Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting & Learning Layer

The monitoring evaluation and learning approach will follow an accompaniment model. It will join the programme from the beginning, engaging in deepening the hypothesis and identifying the theory of action with the team. It will then follow the programme and build in reflections as progress is made.



The approach will be a participatory one. Starting from the initial hypothesis, a theory of action will be developed with the anticipation of the core team as well as the case teams in the first six months of the project. It will operate at the two levels of this initiative: the

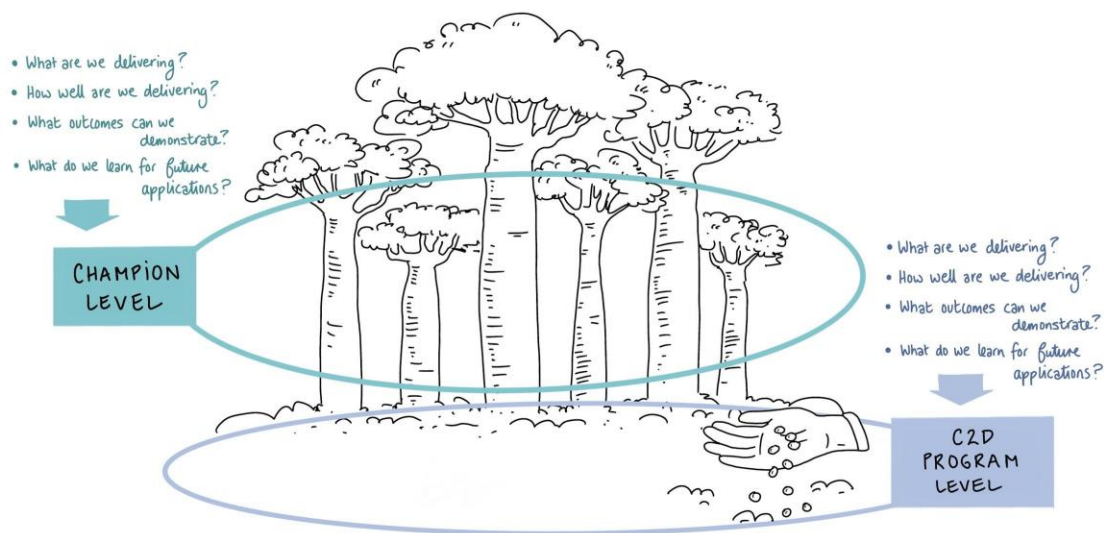
umbrella research led by the Research Commons as well as the action research led by the Local Champions.

This initial theory will be tested periodically throughout the project and will be adjusted as learning from doing suggests. As a complex, multi-country programme, we anticipate that outcomes will be heterogeneous and also that not all elements of the initial theory will be proven accurate. We will make the necessary changes to reflect what we learn. We fully anticipate unexpected opportunities will also emerge over time and will build these into our approach as they emerge (as reflected in Mintzberg's (2007) approach to realised strategy).

In order to develop our initial theory of action, the design team will make a proposal which is included below. In the first three months we will launch a discussion with the full team and prepare for the development of theories of action with each of the three teams.

In the next three months we will finalise these and develop progress markers and indicators of how we will know progress is being made. Anticipated tools vary from surveys to other appropriate, and preferably context-informed or endogenous methods.

Over the period month 14-18, a mid-point review will be carried out remotely based on the identified theory of action. This will be the first formal opportunity to adjust the theory of action based on experience (if findings or issues emerge before the formal review they will be addressed at the time they emerge). At the second annual forum, results of the first phase of the activities will be presented and further adjustments to the theory of change and theory of action will be made.



Figures 4 & 5: MERL framework for C2D © Sonja Niederhumer

Initial Theory of Action

Based on the hypothesis articulated above, the theory of action addresses the underlying assumptions in our hypothesis, i.e. what we need to address to fully test our theory of change. It articulates what the program will do to test its hypothesis and, over time, adjusts to the experience of implementation.

The C2D theory of action is based on the assumption that engaging communities in the research and reflection process is the most effective way to generate new ways to think about and imagine their futures, and that communities have a desire to move beyond the colonial models that are driving their institutions and systems.

Through agreements with Local Champions, the C2D programme provides grants to the Local Champions to address a specific issue with their community through building the capability of Futures Literacy.

Elders who hold expertise in futures literacy and possess deep knowledge of African contexts will provide ongoing support and guidance to the Local Champions.

Allies provide technical support on tools and methods once the teams have formed.

With the support of the graduate students on bursary, the Research Commons leads research and reflection across the project teams and creates opportunities for the teams to reflect individually and collectively, inviting in some global engagement to the process.

Benefits

Over the 5 year period, the C2D programme intends to deliver both practical outputs such as:

- New networks and coalitions
- Young active researchers - at least 30 postgrads at Masters and PhD levels working from at least 3 participating African research institutions / universities
- New knowledge, codified in outputs such as articles in local and international journals (5), books (1) and other popular media (10)
- Conferences and high-level retreats to be convened by the participating countries and institutions.
- Policy and practice learning through technical reviews and briefs
- Documentary artifacts that capture the tools, stories, journeys and emblematic moments

..as well as substantive outcomes including:

- **Empowerment** of actors on the ground,
 - Organisational **capacity building** for both local champions and participating communities, and
 - Systemic **insight** – rethinking fundamental issues in the ethics of development, progress, sustainable human development and livelihoods more broadly that can be used by the wider community interested in creating, testing and finding appropriate and informed endogenous solutions to local challenges and opportunities.
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ANNEXES

- 1. C2D Background Research paper**
- 2. C2D Co-design May Workshop Report**
- 3. C2D Programme timeline**
- 4. C2D Resource People / Teams**
- 5. Core Team Biographies:**
 - a. Geci Karuri-Sebina
 - b. Fred Carden
 - c. Riel Miller
 - d. Kwamou Eva Feukeu
- 6. Partner Support Letters:**
 - a. Twaweza, Tanzania
 - b. Kabakoo, Mali
 - c. Badenya, Sierra Leone
 - d. Gulu University, Uganda
 - e. University of Witwatersrand, South Africa
 - f. Dedan Kimathi University of Technology, Kenya