A) RATIONALE FOR THE PROJECT
In the aftermath of the Millennium Development Goals, the international community agreed the Sustainable Development Goals, which launched in 2015. These goals are ambitious and multifaceted, but wrought with contradictions and complications. Nevertheless, they form a useful starting point to discuss how education can impact the international agenda, taking these 17 internationally recognised goals as a starting point. It is worth noting that, in contrast the MDGs for education (which focused largely on primary school enrolment), SDG 4 for Quality Education cites the importance of different stages and settings of education. Despite this, much of the research to date focuses on formal education classrooms and how these can contribute to development metrics and indicators. This project calls for a fresh look at the forms education can take and how context may determine the nature of this provision. Candidates should have a clear understanding of the SDGs and a working definition of non-formal education at any stage of education. Projects may look at non-formal education that is innovative or emancipatory, such as popular education, or alternative provision of education in any context that meets development goals or has a development focus.

B) REFERENCES THAT SHOULD BE READ (if you do not have access to these, please email me)

C) RESEARCH AIMS / QUESTIONS
The aim of this project is to explore how non-formal approaches to education can contribute to development agendas. The project must therefore begin with a clear framework of development that will be used to analyse the impact of any educational initiative. The role of specific examples of non-formal education will then be explored to identify how these affect their contexts in a variety of ways, using the SDGs as an initial point of reference, given their importance in the current international policy arena. Candidates are free to determine their own research questions and identify the context(s) for the proposed study.

D) METHODS
This project will be qualitative in nature and influenced by an interpretativist epistemology. Recognising of the importance of context in meeting development goals and local requirements is essential. The methods themselves may include interviews, observations, focus groups or others and may use a case study or ethnographic design. The context and participants of the research will be determined by the candidate in agreement with the supervisor.

E) SKILLS AND OPPORTUNITIES YOU COULD GAIN
You would be encouraged to join the British Association for International and Comparative Education (BAICE) and would be given access to opportunities through this network. You would gain skills in qualitative research and deepen your understanding of models of education and development that challenge the status quo.