



Children learning through play in Ethiopia
Photos: IRC, 2023

About PlayMatters

PlayMatters seeks to build sustainable capacity in existing education systems to integrate Learning through Play (LtP) approaches for 800,000 refugee and host community children ages 3-12+ in Ethiopia, Uganda and Tanzania. The objective is to give children the opportunity to improve holistic learning and wellbeing in contexts of crisis and poverty.

Amount

USD \$100M

In partnership with
The **LEGO** Foundation

Project timeline

Start: 1. January 2020

End: 31. March 2026

6 years 3 months

Where we work



Uganda

Kyegegwa, Isingiro, Kikuube, Lamwo, Arua, Madi Okollo, Terego, Obongi, Yumbe, & Adjumani Districts.

Ethiopia

Benishangul Gumuz, Gambella, Afar, Tigray & Somali Regional States.

Tanzania

Kasulu, Kibondo & Districts.

Our approach

Learning through Play is at the heart of PlayMatters.

We work with local and national education stakeholders to improve and secure the quality of education in schools, in refugee camps and in host communities.

We do this by training teachers and educators in play-based teaching methods that aims to strengthen children's creative, emotional, social, physical and cognitive skills.

At the same time, PlayMatters challenges a traditional approach to education based on rote learning, and works with parents and their local community to strengthen understanding of play for children's development, well-being, learning and education.

Who we are

The PlayMatters consortium is led by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and is being implemented in collaboration with Plan-Børnefonden/Plan International (Plan), War Child Holland (WCH), Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) and Behavioral Insights Team (BIT).

PlayMatters' current reach count

(September 2022 - March 2024)

650,588

Children

768

Schools

9,619

Educators

743

Education system stakeholders

3,987

Community Leaders

Learn more about PlayMatters [here](#)



What we mean by Learning Through Play (LtP)?

Learning through Play (LtP) is an **active teaching and learning method** that capitalizes on a child's natural desire to engage in play. Core elements include:

01



The adult facilitator (a teacher or community volunteer) **intentionally plans and delivers** contextually and age-appropriate guided playful experiences with **clear learning objectives**.

02



LtP experiences **promote interactions with people and/or materials** that allow children to question, experiment, practice, and discover, developing critical skills that they need to thrive today and in future.

03



The facilitator deliberately creates and maintains a **positive, safe, and inclusive environment** for children, allowing children to feel comfortable and joyful.

PlayMatters Core Package

PlayMatters applies a **whole-school approach**: to the extent possible, all teachers, non-teaching staff, and pupils in the school are targeted and reached. The PlayMatters Core Package illustrates the key inputs that are necessary to ensure that children's holistic skills improve, in line with the project framework. **All six components of the package must be delivered** in a school for the package to be considered complete.

Core Package for Schools/Centers

Expected Duration: One School Year

Skill-Building

Teacher Training



Teachers/facilitators in the school/center participate in training on LtP methods and practices. These trainings are led by highly qualified Trainer of Trainers (ToTs) through a cascade model.

Teacher Continuous Professional Development



Head teachers & other lead teachers are supported to lead and promote continuous professional development activities on LtP, including supportive supervision, coaching, peer learning, and supportive messaging. These are done collaboratively between school-based instructional leaders and local government education actors.

School Management



School/Center management committees (SMCs/CMCs/PTAs) participate in training on how to build a positive school environment and engage school communities in LtP. These trainings are led by highly qualified Trainer of Trainers (ToTs) through a cascade model.

Community Engagement



Members of the school community actively participate in supporting Learning through Play activities, concurrent with contextually relevant awareness-raising mobilization initiatives.

Materials/Infrastructure

Safe and Inclusive Infrastructure



Where possible, the school/center meets minimum LtP quality standards (MQS) for safety and client inclusion (may require some level of rehabilitation/direct service provision) based on a standardized MQS assessment.

Teaching & Learning Materials



Teachers and pupils are provided with basic teaching and learning materials (including Six Bricks for every child) for LtP and support with the local creation of TLMs.

In partnership with

