

Policy Impact Story

Ethiopia | 2024



The Story

How PlayMatters played a leading role in the development of Learning through Play (LTP) integrated teacher training modules, and its impact for sustainable integration of PlayMatters approaches into primary Assistant Teachers' continuous professional development and pre-service training of all primary Teachers within the Addis Ababa City Administration.

In partnership with



The LEGO Foundation

The Change

PlayMatters Ethiopia partnered with Kotebe University of Education and the Addis Ababa City Administration Education Bureau to plan, co-develop, and validate Learning through Play (LtP) integrated training modules for Teachers Assistants of primary schools (grades 1-6). The Teacher Assistants are a new position and function created by the Civil Service Minister to support primary school teachers in the teaching process and to better manage large class sizes. The ambition is that each classroom, in the City Administration school catchment area, should have one Assistant Teacher.

The Assistant Teachers training modules will be implemented through a comprehensive two-month training program offered by the University, starting September 2024. During the first phase of training, approximately **2,150** newly recruited trainees will participate. Another batch of trainees will be admitted until each primary school classroom (grades 1-6) in Addis Ababa city has one assistant teacher. In addition to their technical contribution to the play-based training modules, PlayMatters Ethiopia are supporting the training of Assistant Teachers within the Addis Ababa City Administration.

In recognition of the quality and relevance of the integrated training modules for Teachers Assistants, Kotebe University has decided to adapt these training modules into their own pre-service Teacher education training for primary school. Looking a couple of years ahead, this will build a cadre of play-based primary education teacher professionals across the city administration.

Integrating LtP as a core component and approach within Kotebe's training modules for both Teacher Assistants and education of Teachers will significantly contribute to a systemized integration and uptake of play-based teaching and learning within the City Administration school catchment area. The initiative will optimize Assistant Teachers and Teachers' pedagogical skills, contributing to a safe and conducive learning environment for students to thrive, play, and learn.

Due to the innovative approaches and recognized institutions engaged, the initiative has already garnered recognition, leading to growing interest from nearby city administration education bureaus. This interest suggests a high likelihood of extending similar concept and training to the nearby Shaggar City Administration Education Bureau. Such an expansion is expected to significantly increase the reach beyond the initially planned numbers.

What did PlayMatters do to make this change happen?

PlayMatters contribution to this process is two-pronged: Firstly, through an ongoing dialogue with Kotebe University of Education emphasizing teachers' professional and continuous development as a priority investment to enhance the teaching competencies of educators and to improve the quality of student outcomes; and secondly, to provide foundational PlayMatters LtP content for reference and technical support for development of all training modules, resulting in incorporation of LtP as a guiding principle including elements of gender inclusivity and psychosocial well-being.

The following activities are not exhaustive but provides an overview of PlayMatters Ethiopia key moments that led to the collaborative development of the Assistant Teachers training modules, and planned adaptation and inclusion into Kotebe's primary teacher education training modules:

- ✓ Initial meetings with Kotebe University of Education to explore potential partnership areas.
- ✓ Follow-up meetings to deepen the collaboration focusing on opportunities to collaborate on primary education Teacher Development Programs (TDPs).
- ✓ Sharing of PlayMatters foundational play-based content for reference.
- ✓ Joint Terms of Reference (ToR) with the university, outlining shared scope and approaches for development of Assistant Teachers training modules.
- ✓ Expert contribution on play-based approaches to co-develop, review, and validate the training materials.
- ✓ Partnering on the training of 2150 Assistant Teachers within the Addis Ababa City Administration.
- ✓ Continued engagement with Kotebe University for adaptation of Assistant Teachers Trainings Modules for education training modules of Main Teachers (pre-service)

How Long did this Take?

The process began during the review workshop of the Pre-Primary Education teacher training strategy document in May 2023, which unexpectedly provided an opportunity for PlayMatters to forge a new partnership with Kotebe University of Education. Following this, the collaboration to co-develop play-based Assistant Teachers training modules was initiated. The training materials were finalized and endorsed in December 2023, with the roll-out of the training scheduled to commence in September 2024.

Other Partners and Institutions Engaged

PlayMatters Ethiopia has worked with Kotebe University of Education and Addis Ababa City Administration Education Bureau as key external partners to drive this positive change. Furthermore, the Civil Service Minister has also played a role in this initiative by ensuring that job grades are created for the assistant teachers upon completion of their training. Such institutionalized accreditation of the training is a good incentive, as it will add to teachers' credentials (job grades) and strengthen a systemized uptake and integration of Teachers Assistants. This collaborative effort underscores the commitment of all individuals involved to improve the quality of education and support the holistic development of students in Ethiopia including PlayMatters Ethiopia leadership, Kotebe University of Education leadership and staff, Addis Ababa city administration education bureau experts, and outcome leads.

What Role did PlayMatters Play?

In addition to providing technical expert contributions, PlayMatters Ethiopia spearheaded the initiative to partner with the Kotebe University on teachers' continuous professional development. PlayMatters further supported training of 2150 assistant teachers from the Addis Ababa City Administration Education Bureau, planned the co-development and validation of training materials, shared reference resources, and assigned reviewers to ensure the integration of PlayMatters' core initiatives. The collaborative engagement and support for roll-out of the training underscores PlayMatters Ethiopia's significant contribution to this change.

What is the Evidence of this Contribution?

The fruitful results of the partnership, including the LtP-integrated training materials, reports, and the upcoming roll-out plan with Kotebe University of both the Assistant Teachers and Main Teachers training modules, serve as tangible evidence of PlayMatters contributions. Additionally, the recognition PlayMatters have received from Kotebe University, as a result of our ongoing collaboration with the University, are all testimonies of PlayMatters contribution and strong engagement in this initiative.

What is the Potential Impact of this Change?

Considering the national teacher-to-student ratio of 1:50 in primary schools, these assistant teachers will positively impact the learning activities of approximately 130,000 students across Addis Ababa City Administration school catchment area. Furthermore, the training materials developed through this collaboration are designed for future use in similar training sessions, with plans to extend this practice beyond the Addis Ababa City Administration.

Who Benefits?

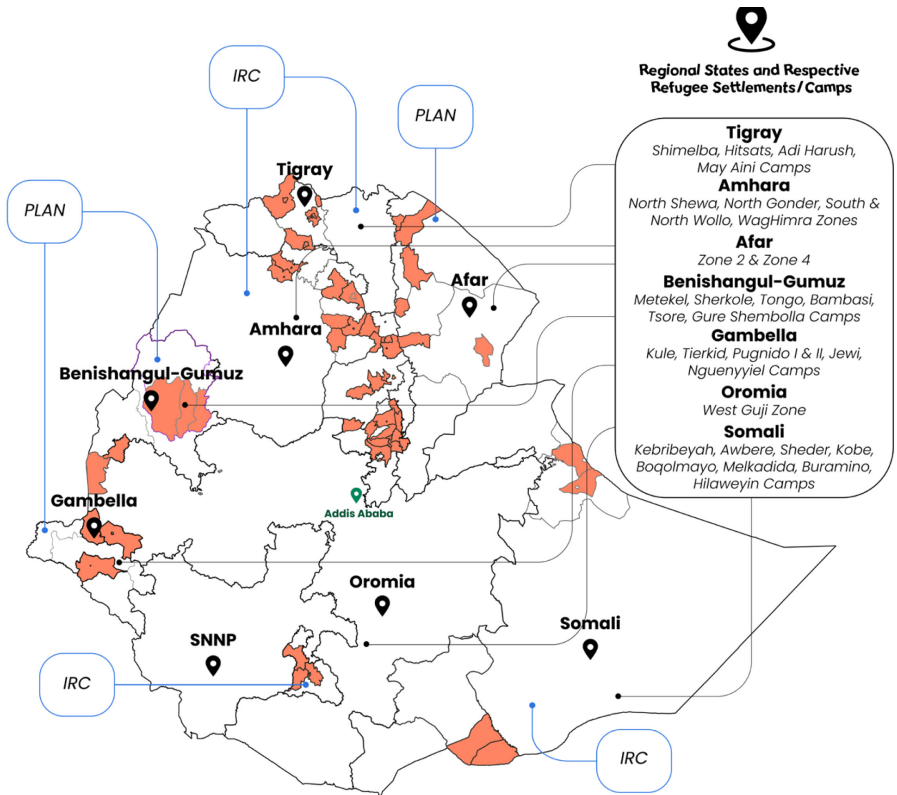
The primary target group for this initiative includes Assistant Teachers working under the Addis Ababa City Administration Education Bureau and their students. These Assistant Teachers will benefit from the training designed to enhance their pedagogical competencies and help them effectively fulfill their roles and responsibilities. Students will directly benefit from well-structured lessons that incorporate engaging Learning through Play (LtP) strategies, supporting holistic learning outcomes. Additionally, the Addis Ababa City Administration will gain significantly from this engagement. By developing practice-based, play-oriented, and interactive training materials, the administration will be better equipped to prepare competent Teacher Assistants for primary schools in the city. This initiative supports the city administration's goal of improving education quality and ensuring teachers are well-prepared to deliver effective instruction. PlayMatters Ethiopia will also benefit greatly from this change, as it advances the project's scaling plan.

What's Next:

- ✓ Collaborate with Kotebe University of Education to facilitate the implementation of roll-out training for primary school assistant teachers in the city, as outlined in the plan.
- ✓ Monitor the increasing interest from neighboring city administration education bureaus in arranging similar training for their primary school educators, to identify additional opportunities for scaling the initiative.
- ✓ Support the adaptation of the teacher assistant materials for integration into main teachers training materials under Kotebe University.



Ethiopia



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