

Policy Impact Story

Ethiopia | 2024



The Story

How PlayMatters Ethiopia played a leading role in Integrating Play-Based Learning into Pre-Primary Education (PPE) Teachers Training Strategy¹, and its importance for system level integration, scale and sustainability of PlayMatters approaches.

¹ A teacher training strategy is a framework that guides the training modalities for both pre-service and in-service teachers.

In partnership with



The LEGO Foundation

The Change

PlayMatters Ethiopia, in collaboration with key stakeholders including the Ministry of Education, Addis Ababa University, and the Early Childhood Development and Education Center, developed a comprehensive PPE teacher training strategy that integrates LtP principles and approaches by PlayMatters. The strategy is devised based on a comprehensive review of existing teacher training programs and was finalized and endorsed in January 2024.

The aim of the strategy is to ensure an institutionalized framework that guides training modalities for both pre- and in-service teachers and recognize methods of LtP as a core premise for quality early childhood care and education.

This initiative will elevate the quality of education by defining what PPE teachers should be trained in to qualify as teachers - which includes the requisite knowledge and skills in Learning through Play. The strategy is a pre-requisite to standardize and institutionalize training in play-based pedagogies and LtP approaches for all pre-primary teachers. To this end, implementation plans, training modules and materials, alongside a monitoring and evaluation framework, have been developed and reviewed by MOE and PlayMatters together with partners and stakeholders incl academics. This now needs to be validated by MOE and Regional Education Bureaus.

Such training materials should then be gradually adapted and implemented by regional education bureaus and colleges of Teacher education across the country to strengthen inclusion of LtP and quality of pre- and in-service trainings of PPE teachers.



What did PlayMatters do to make this change happen?

PlayMatters Ethiopia was able to initiate and capitalize engagement with teachers and educational leaders' department, as entry point to enhance learning through play in education policy and strategies. Subsequently, PlayMatters forged a robust cooperation with academics, researchers, and professors from various university, and designed project policy asks to strengthen play-based learning within Ethiopian educational framework.

PlayMatters conducted continuous roundtable discussions with MOE team and organized a system actors' national workshop with the aim of strengthening engagement with the Ministry of Education and others system actors. This provided an opportunity to review early grade education performance assessment, analyze the corresponding policy documents, and compose a series of reports by the FDRE Ministry of Education addressing gaps in the early grade policy education landscape.

The continuous commitment positioned PlayMatters as an innovative and technically sound partner with the Ministry of Education. As a result, the Ministry of Education and PlayMatters reached an agreement to develop a pre-primary education teacher training strategy. Following this, a collaborative effort led by PlayMatters & the Ministry of Education was set action to ensure the development, review and validation of pre-primary education teacher training strategy.

The following activities are not exhaustive but provides an overview of key moments that led to the completion of the Strategy:

- ✓ PlayMatters conducted stakeholder meetings to inquire about the interest and potential engagement to ensure sufficient buy-in and endorsement by key partners.
- ✓ PlayMatters conducted review of existing teacher training programs and backgrounds resulting in a policy assessment report.
- ✓ MOES with support of PlayMatters co- developed and reviewed PPE teachers training strategy document with national stakeholders and academics.
- ✓ MOES with support of PlayMatters and key stakeholders developed implementation tools and materials.
- ✓ MOES with support of PlayMatters and other stakeholders to roll out pilot training in select regions (planned).

How Long did this Take?

The process was initiated in May 2022, and the strategy itself completed and endorsed in January 2024.

Other Partners and Institutions Engaged

The collaboration between MOE, PlayMatters, and recognized Universities and Education Institutions including Addis Ababa University, Kotebe University of Education, Jigjiga University, 14 Colleges of teacher Education, Regional Educational Bureaus, and model pre-primary schools ensured thorough validation of the technical foundations of the strategy document. Combined with a solid review process including national and regional stakeholders such as professionals from public and private schools, this ensured a solid buy-in for the strategy itself. Based on strategic recommendations, the agreement to developing the strategy was born in partnership between the MOE and PlayMatters.

What Role did PlayMatters Play?

PlayMatters facilitated the conversation with the MOES to emphasize the gap and needs with MOES, and initiated and expedited the idea with MOES and delivered essential and ongoing support throughout the process. As a result, the definition of LtP as identified by PlayMatters is integrated into the strategy alongside key components of PlayMatters Core Package including play-based pedagogy, creating suitable learning environments, engaging communities and families in children learning, assessing learning outcomes and ensuring CPD for PP teachers.

What is the Evidence of this Contribution?

The ultimate evidence is the Pre-Primary Education (PPE) Teachers Training Strategy with LtP methodologies integrated, reflecting key elements and approaches from PlayMatters Core Package. Besides this, reports and minutes from the meetings with the MOES and key stakeholders including the validation process of the strategy are also means of evidence.

What is the Potential Impact of this Change?

It is too early to assess the direct impact of this achievement, but it is expected to be significant as it will improve the pedagogies across the country for all PPE teachers. However, it is worth noting that the very development of the strategy followed by development of training modules itself is a tale of 'from nowhere to somewhere' – as there were no standardized guidance for training of pre-primary teachers let alone guidance on play-based learning and how to provide an enabling environment in which children learn and develop through play. Hence, the development of the Strategy is significant on its own.

Who Benefits?

Pre-primary Teachers: are expected to gain skills on how to apply LtP in their professional capacity.

Children: will experience better learning and holistic development

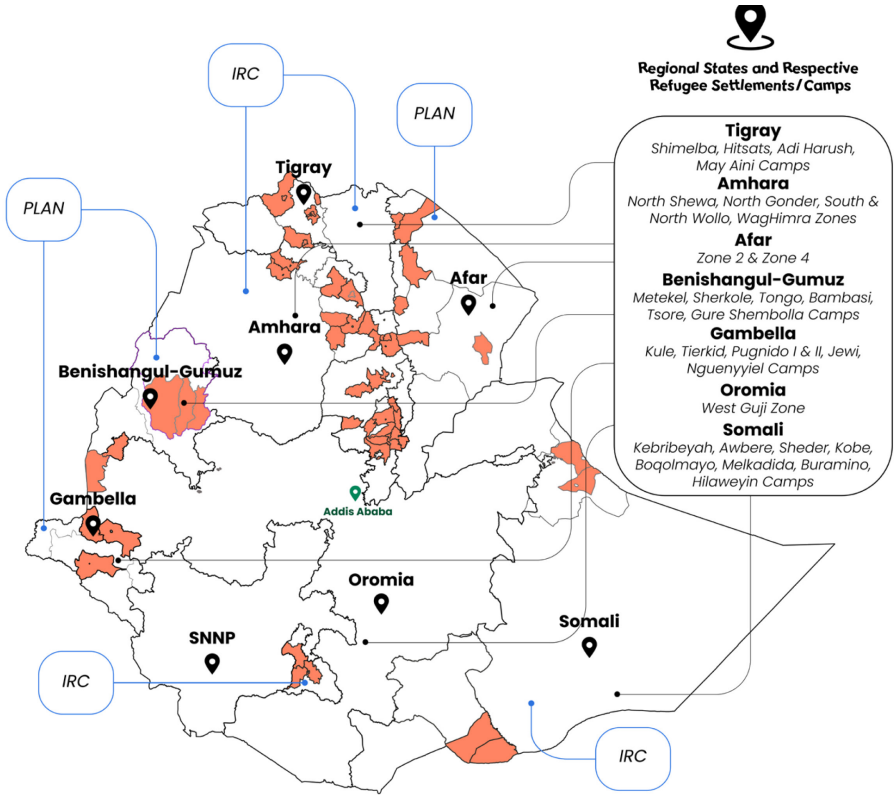
Ministry of Education: now has a standardized strategy to guide quality training of PPE teachers and corresponding training modules and materials. This combination will ensure the delivery of standards as identified under Strategy and strengthen LtP integration in pre-primary education across the country.

What's Next:

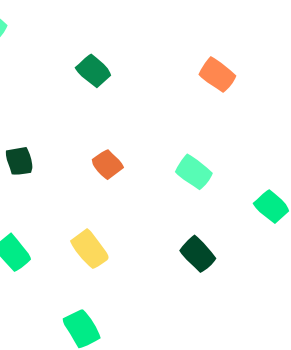
- ✓ The strategy is expected to be implemented through different training materials and modules. Such materials are currently being co-developed and reviewed with the Ministry of Education, regional level education bureau, college teacher education and key stakeholders. Following this, a final validation process will ensure high level approval. The Pre-Primary Education Teachers Training Materials and Modules are developed to equip PPE teachers with necessary competencies including play-based learning to promote children's holistic development.
- ✓ Support MOES to implement roll-out trainings for in-service pre-primary teachers in select regions or teacher training colleges, including 42,000 pre-primary education teachers.
- ✓ Encourage and support MOES to integrate the roll-out training to teacher's colleges pre-service training modality, thereby institutionalizing and integrating quality professional development education of aspiring pre-primary teachers across the country.

Pre-primary education curriculum and guide (age 5-6 years) previously developed by MoE is under revision to include four-year-old children to allow them access services in Ethiopia. While co-developing the PPE teachers training module with the team from MoE, AAU, KUE, and Holt International (NGO), linkage between the training module and the curriculum was maintained to ensure alignment.

Ethiopia



International Rescue Committee (IRC)
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