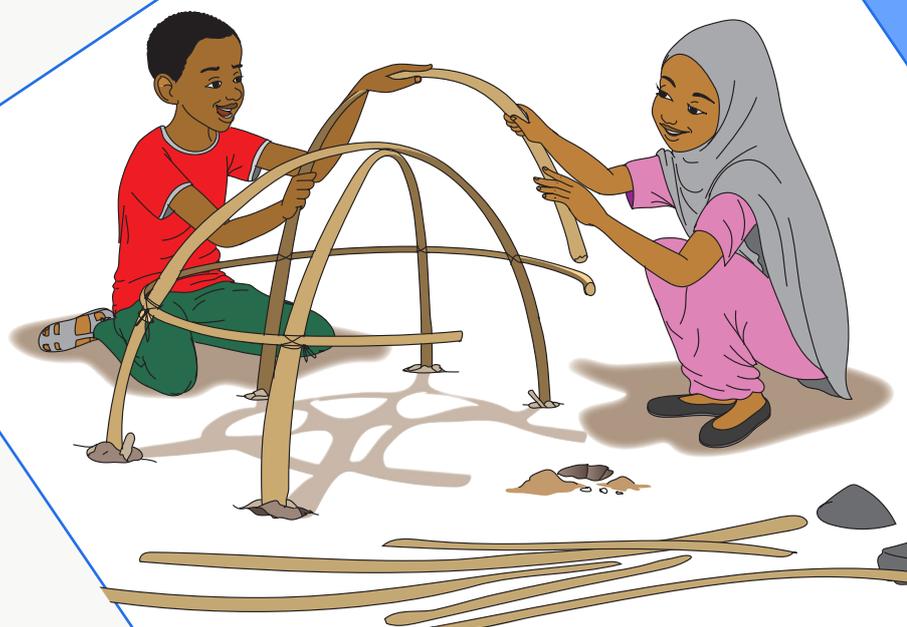


**PlayMatters**

# Core Package Intervention Description

PlayMatters 2.0

September 2023



# The Consortium

PlayMatters seeks to improve holistic learning outcomes and well-being for **800,000** refugee and host community children ages **3-12+** who live in refugee and host community contexts in **Ethiopia, Uganda and Tanzania** using **Learning through Play** methodologies.

The PlayMatters consortium is led by the International Rescue Committee, and includes Plan International, War Child Holland, Innovations for Poverty Action, and the Behavioural Insights Team in partnership with the **LEGO Foundation**.



In partnership with



The LEGO Foundation

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# Overview

## Our Goal

PlayMatters seeks to improve holistic learning outcomes and well-being for children ages **3-12+** who live in refugee and host community contexts in **Ethiopia, Uganda and Tanzania.**

## What we do

We strengthen refugee-hosting education systems' capacity to train and support pre-primary and primary school teachers and facilitators to use "**Learning through Play,**" as an active teaching and learning method in which children learn through guided, hands-on, meaningful, play-based interactions in safe and inclusive environments. PlayMatters takes a whole-school approach, training all or most school leaders and teachers to deliver and build a supportive environment for LtP methods. PlayMatters works hand-in-hand with existing education systems including school-based teacher continuous professional development structures, and also engages parents and community leaders in support of LtP.

## Our Target

PlayMatters was designed to support refugees living in protracted refugee situations, including camps and settlements, as well as nearby host communities. PlayMatters' packages primarily seek to build the capacity of adults associated with schools and learning centers, including education system actors, pre-primary and primary teachers and facilitators, school leaders, and school community leaders.

## Why LtP?

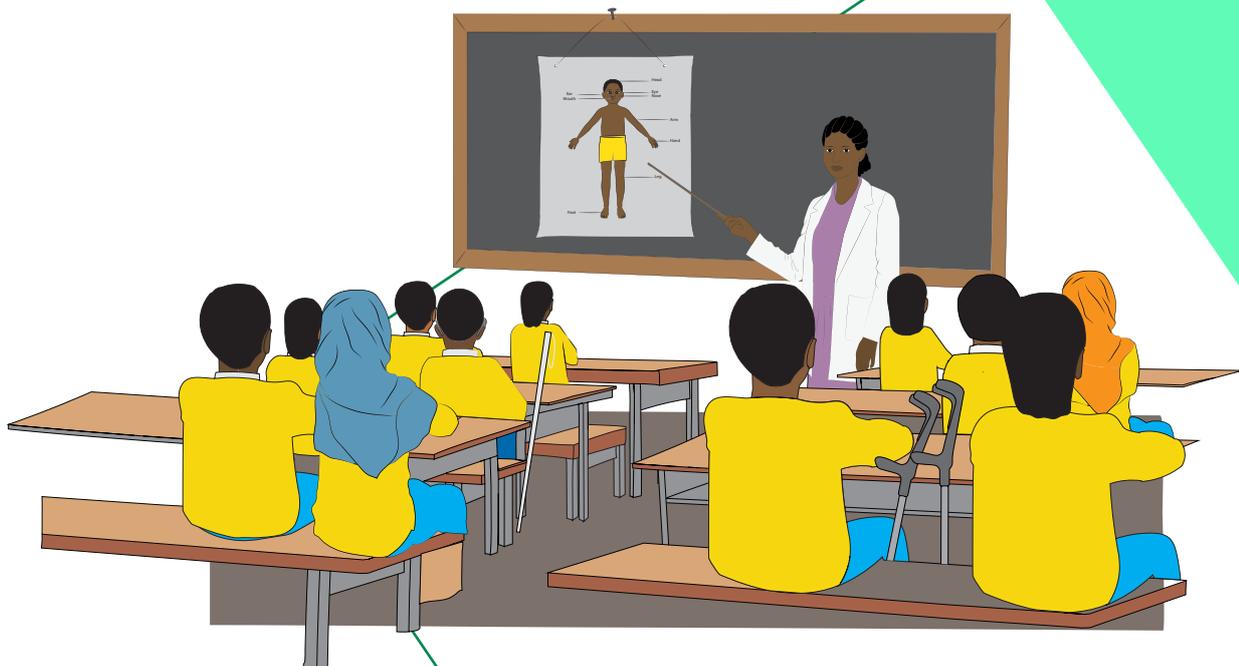
We seek a better, more hopeful future for refugee and host community children living in protracted refugee situations. We believe that if we provide these children with more opportunities to enjoy learning, enhance holistic learning (academic, cognitive, social, emotional, creative and physical outcomes), and improve their psychosocial well-being, then girls and boys can become agents of positive change and build a better, more hopeful future for themselves and the world.

## How we do it

Because PlayMatters operates in extremely low-resource and humanitarian environments, PlayMatters' core package focuses on increasing the skills and practices of teachers to deliver LtP in classrooms, and also on improving inadequate school infrastructure and materials for safety and inclusion. All elements must be contextualized and implemented in partnership with education system actors including school leaders, school community leaders, government institutions responsible for education delivery, and humanitarian service providers.

## Conditions to Implement

PlayMatters is designed primarily as an education systems strengthening program intended for low-resource and protracted refugee contexts where education systems and populations are relatively stable, regardless of which actors are responsible for education service delivery. It is not intended for acute crisis contexts or other scenarios where schools and education systems have been severely damaged or rendered non-functional.



# Core Package for Schools

The **Core Package for Schools** includes **six** intervention components as laid out in the figure below. The Core Package should be implemented in a school for one full school year (beginning of school year to end of school year), including foundational teacher

training at the beginning of the school year, a follow-up training midway through the year, and continuous professional development (i.e., observations, coaching and peer learning) provided throughout the school year.

## Skill-Building

### Teachers Training



**Teachers/facilitators** in the school or center participate in face-to-face training on LtP methods and practices (6+ days, including initial training and refresher training).

### School Leader Training



**Teachers/facilitators** in the school or center participate in face-to-face training on LtP methods and practices (6+ days, including initial training and refresher training).

### Continuous Professional Development



The school participates in **Continuous Professional Development (CPD)** for teachers on LtP, such as supportive supervision/coaching, peer learning, and supportive messaging (specifics and dosage vary by context).

### Community Engagement



**School community members** and **parents/guardians** are engaged in LtP activities with contextually relevant awareness-raising and mobilization taking place.



## Materials/Infrastructure

### Enabling School Environment



The school/center meets **minimum LtP quality standards** for safety and client inclusion (may require some level of rehabilitation/direct service provision).

### 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.

The tables below include the objective of each component of the core package and also dosage recommendations, which are used to develop detailed PlayMatters implementation plans in-country.

## Skill-Building Packages

**\*Please note** that the specific content areas, skills and associated outcomes that we are targeting are detailed in Section 3.

Component	Target Audience	Objective	Package Description	Dosage (Time Allocation)
<b>Training of Trainers (TOT) package</b>  Delivered by Lead Trainers (PM staff system actors).	Local education authorities who are responsible for training teachers and school leaders.	Trainers have the skills, tools and motivation to roll out the training cascade with quality.	Facilitation guides, tools, and associated materials for TOTs to and supporting teachers, school leaders (admin) and school leaders (head teachers and lead teachers). Articulation of differences for pre-primary and primary training delivery.	8-12 days of training over the course of a school year and follow-up supportive visits from PlayMatters staff over the course of project implementation. Note that the number of days may adjust depending on the prior experience of the TOTs.
<b>Supportive Supervision package</b>  Delivered by Lead Trainers (PM staff, system actors).	Local education authorities who are responsible for providing supportive supervision to teachers.	and provide supportive supervision to schools.	Facilitation guides, tools, and associated materials for carrying out supportive supervision at schools.	Every school receives a supportive visit from local education authorities at least once per quarter.
<b>School admin leadership training package</b>  Delivered by TOTs (Local education authorities who are responsible for training teachers and school leaders).	School and Center Management Committees (which includes the Head Teacher or a delegate).	School leadership and management structures support and incentivize inclusive LtP (administrative focus).	Facilitation guides, tools, and associated materials for training administrative school leaders to build a positive school environment for LtP, with a focus on roles and responsibilities of administrative school leadership around TLM management, referral mechanisms, and related issues.	1 day of focused training with follow-up visits, coaching and support from system actors (trainers, tutors, supervisors) approximately monthly.
<b>Teacher training package</b>  (two versions: pre-primary and primary).	All teachers in the school.	Teachers use inclusive LtP methods in the classroom emphasizing psychosocial well-being	Facilitation guides, tools, and associated materials for training teachers to use LtP methods in their classrooms. Materials for Trainers of Trainers	8-10 days of training over the course of a school year, including one 4-5 day foundational training at the beginning of

Delivered by TOTs (Local education authorities who are responsible for training teachers and school leaders).

(TOTs) are also included in this package.

the school year, followed by a 4-5 day follow-up training midway through the school year.

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**School head and lead teacher CPD training package** (two versions: pre-primary and primary)

School head and lead teachers targeting all teachers in the school.

School head and lead teachers have an understanding of how to implement LtP in the classroom, plus strengthened coaching and peer learning mechanisms supporting LtP.

Facilitation guides, tools, and associated materials for school head and lead teachers on how to assess what LtP looks like in practice and facilitation of school-based coaching and teacher learning circles for teachers.

3-4 days of training over the course of a school year for school head and lead teachers, followed by virtual or in-person peer learning and support among head teachers (troubleshooting). Every teacher receives coaching support at least once per quarter. Every teacher participates in a teacher learning circle at least once per month.

Delivered by TOTs (Local education authorities who are responsible for training teachers and school leaders).

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**Community engagement package**

Delivered by PM staff, system actors.

Community Leaders with a formal mandate to support children or schools as Facilitators, School Committee members, Parents of children in PlayMatters schools as participants.

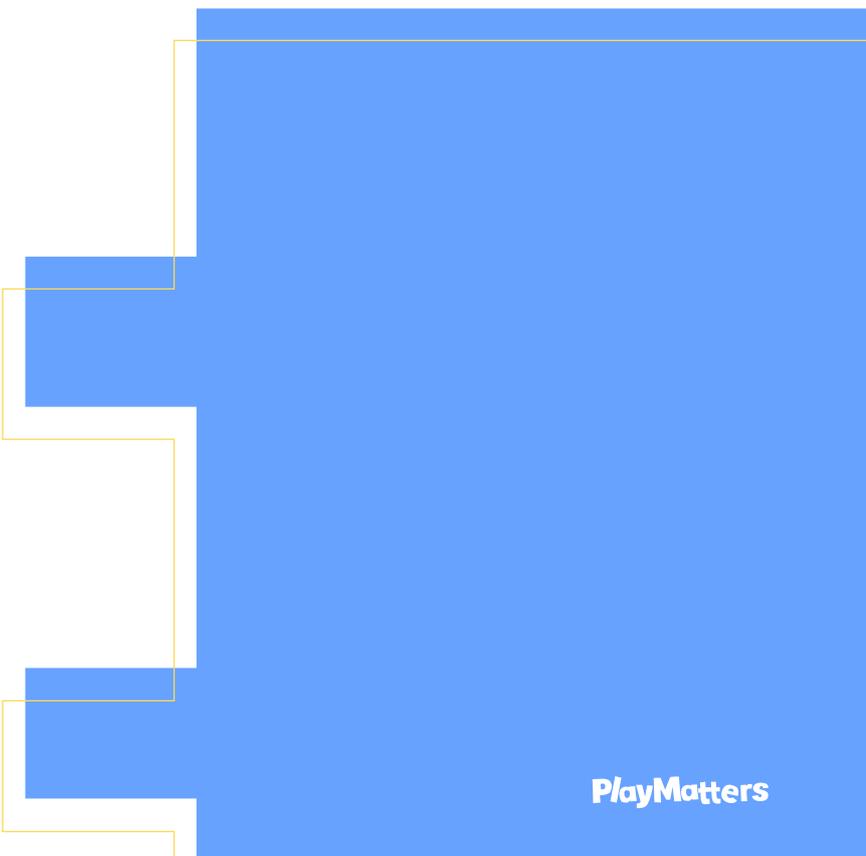
The school community is actively engaged with and supportive of inclusive LtP opportunities and psychosocial well-being for children.

Facilitation guides, tools, and associated materials for training school-community leaders on effective community engagement for LtP, including radio-based programming.

Initial 2-3 day training for selected Community Leaders (varies by country) on LtP core concepts framework topics, identification and referral, and key tasks and approaches for co-facilitating community engagement activities. Minimum 1 community engagement activity every other month co-facilitated by the trained Community Leaders, including Back to School campaigns, Awareness meetings, and Play events.

# Infrastructure and Materials Packages

Intervention Type	Target Audience	Objective	Package Description	Dosage (Resource Allocation)
<p><b>Teaching and learning materials package</b></p> <p>Delivered by PlayMatters staff.</p>	Head teachers, teachers and children in PM schools.	Teaching and Learning materials that support inclusive LtP methods are available in classrooms.	Guidance and tools for program implementers and schools on the development, procurement and maintenance of high-quality teaching aids and manipulatives that support LtP implementation in schools and classrooms, including LEGO’s Six Bricks.	Every PlayMatters-supported school receives one PlayMatters Class Kit per classroom and materials and guidance for locally creating TLMs.
<p><b>Minimum LtP Quality Standards package</b></p> <p>Delivered by PlayMatters staff.</p>	Head teachers, teachers and children in PM schools.	School environments meet minimum quality and inclusion standards.	Guidance and tools for program implementers and schools on how to assess school and classroom needs to build a positive environment for LtP and make decisions around what infrastructure needs to be prioritized with limited funds.	Every PlayMatters-supported school is surveyed and supported to meet “basic” level requirements for school infrastructure and safety facilities, school WASH facilities, referral mechanisms, storage and security for teaching and learning materials, and age-appropriate school furniture.



# Targeted Concepts, Skills & Expected Outcomes

PlayMatters’ skill-building packages target adult stakeholders (trainers, teachers, school leaders, and school-community leaders) to implement learning through play methods in schools and classrooms.

These skills and associated outcomes are articulated as follows, with more detail provided in our core and stakeholder-specific core concept outlines (**See Annex 2**).

Concepts	Skills	Expected Outcomes
Introduction to Learning through Play.	Stakeholders can explain the PlayMatters definition of learning through play and how it looks in their classroom or community.	All stakeholders understand and support PlayMatters activities.
	Stakeholders can explain how play in classrooms supports teachers’ work and children’s holistic development.	
Creating an LTP-supportive teaching and learning environment: <i>Gender and Inclusion.</i>	Stakeholders can identify different scenarios how their behavior, values and bias affect children’s experience of LTP in a classroom, school or community.	Schools and classrooms (via teachers and school leaders) are more gender-responsive and inclusive.
	Stakeholders have strategies for promoting and taking accountability towards gender responsive activities in their classroom, school or community.	
	Stakeholders have strategies for promoting and taking accountability towards inclusive classrooms, schools and communities.	
Creating an LTP-supportive teaching and learning environment: <i>Psychosocial well-being.</i>	Stakeholders understand the importance of their own well-being for the teaching and learning process.	Teachers have improved well-being.
	Stakeholders have strategies for understanding their own emotions and engaging in self-care practices as needed.	
	Stakeholders are able to control their behaviors to facilitate LTP experiences.	Children (via their teachers and school leaders) have an improved social and emotional climate and improved well-being.
	Stakeholders have strategies for behavior management and integrating social-emotional learning into formal and informal learning processes.	
	Stakeholders have skills for identifying, signaling, and making child protection/PSS referrals.	



Creating an LTP-supportive teaching and learning environment: <i>Minimum LTP Quality Standards.</i>	Stakeholders can explain PM MQS and how it applies to them (i.e., classroom, school, community). <hr/> Stakeholders have strategies for maintaining safe school environments.	Schools meet Minimum LTP quality and safety standards (via school leaders).
Use of Teaching Aids and Learning Manipulatives.	Stakeholders have strategies for safely integrating TLMs into lessons/activities. <hr/> Stakeholders have strategies for sourcing and creating local TLMs. <hr/> Stakeholders have strategies for integrating Six Bricks into lessons/activities. <hr/> Stakeholders have strategies for storing and maintaining TLMs.	TLMs of all types are available, safely stored and integrated into lessons (via teachers and school leaders).
Learning through Play in the Classroom.	Stakeholders have strategies for managing playful classrooms. <hr/> Stakeholders have strategies for integrating age-appropriate, inclusive LTP activities into lesson plans. <hr/> Stakeholders have LTP facilitation skills for different ages, ability levels, subject areas and well-being. <hr/> Stakeholders have strategies and practices for playful assessment and assessment of LTP activities. <hr/> Stakeholders have strategies for self-reflection and planning.	Classrooms are better managed and more playful (via teachers). Teachers are better at planning, delivering, assessing, and reflecting on LTP.
Learning through Play in Schools and Communities.	Stakeholders have strategies for creating and reducing barriers to school entry. <hr/> Stakeholders have facilitation skills for engaging in LTP at home and in communities. <hr/> Stakeholders have strategies for taking actions to support LTP within their roles and responsibilities in homes, schools and communities.	Barriers to school entry are reduced (via school communities and school leaders).  Community members practice more LTP (via school communities).

In addition, it is key that the system actors responsible for delivering and sustaining continuous professional development for teachers (head and lead teachers, trainers, and supportive supervisors) also build the following skills:

Section	Skills	Expected Outcomes
Trainer Facilitation Skills.	Trainers deliver information using playful learning techniques. <hr/> Trainers deliver information using adult learning techniques.	Training cascade is high quality.
Continuous professional development skills.	Trainers have strategies for classroom observation, supportive supervision, coaching, mentoring and other means of continuous professional development for teachers.	Continuous professional development for teachers is high quality.

# Teacher Professional Development Model

PlayMatters' takes a levelled approach to **Teacher Continuous Professional Development (TCPD)**, focusing on trainers/supervisors (local level system actors), school leaders, and teachers.

## Level 1: Trainers/Supervisors

Within every education system there are different actors responsible for training teachers, inspecting schools, providing supportive supervision, and quality assurance. Through discussions with key stakeholders, PlayMatters identifies the most relevant local education authorities to serve in relevant functions for LtP delivery, including training teachers in LtP, training school leaders in creating an enabling school environment for LtP, and providing supportive supervision to school leaders and teachers.

## Level 2: School Leaders

School leaders are responsible for building an enabling school environment for LtP to take root and thrive, implemented at two levels:

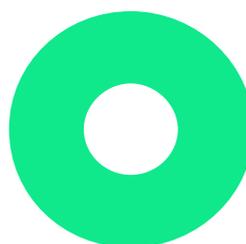
- **Level 2.1: TCPD Leadership**

Head teachers and other lead teachers are responsible for implementing school-based continuous professional development systems, including teacher learning circles and school-based coaching and mentoring.

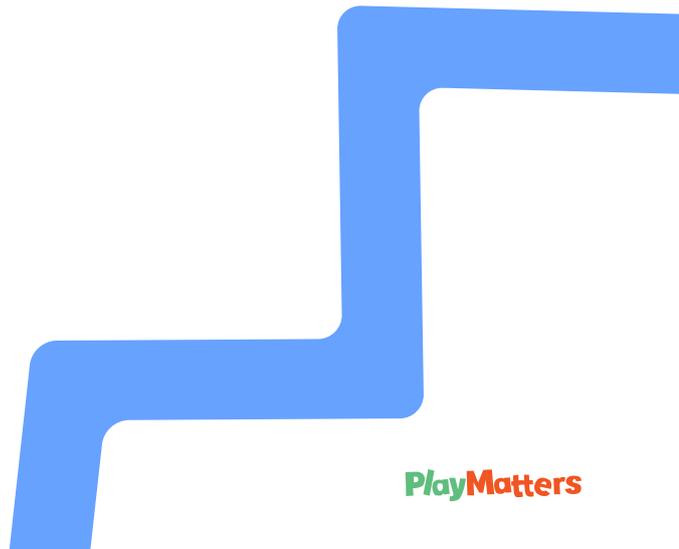
- **Level 2.2: Administrative Leadership**  
School Management Committees and Parent-Teacher Associations are responsible for oversight and management of LtP at the school, including PSS referral mechanisms, community outreach, LtP minimum quality standards for safety and inclusion, and the storage and management of teaching and learning materials.

## Level 3: Teachers

Teachers at pre-primary and primary level are responsible for engaging in trainings, teacher learning circles, opportunities for coaching, and other supportive mechanisms, using their skills and knowledge to deliver inclusive LtP opportunities to children in the classroom.



# Teacher Continuous Professional Development Model



# System Strengthening and Policy Integration

PlayMatters works with and through education systems with a goal of influencing policies related to active learning and building sustainable systems for LTP integration and uptake. PlayMatters recognizes the different mandates of system actors at different levels, working with policy provisions, education structures and existing mechanisms/systems at national, sub-national and local levels. Objectives and milestones for systems strengthening and policy integration at each level are described below.

## National level

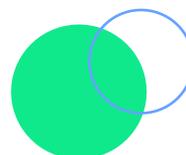
Identify barriers and opportunities for improvements in pre and primary education through identification of policy priorities for the integration of evidence based LTP good practice for scaling within education structures and national education systems.

## Sub-National Level

Align with existing institutions and technical personnel (tutors and education managers) within the system to implement (provide continuous professional development) and monitor compliance to policy priorities aligned to integrating LTP in practice. These include teacher training colleges and other education management structures that exist at regional level.

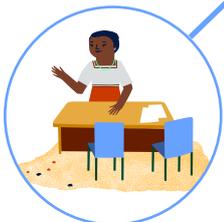
## Local Level

PlayMatters works with cohorts of schools and associated local education systems for up to 2 years each (first year intensive support, second year light support, following the school year calendar) through local education management structures, schools and school management structures to deliver PlayMatters' continuous professional development model. Each country will reach 2 or 3 cohorts of schools.



## Annex 1: Definition of Learning through Play

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:



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

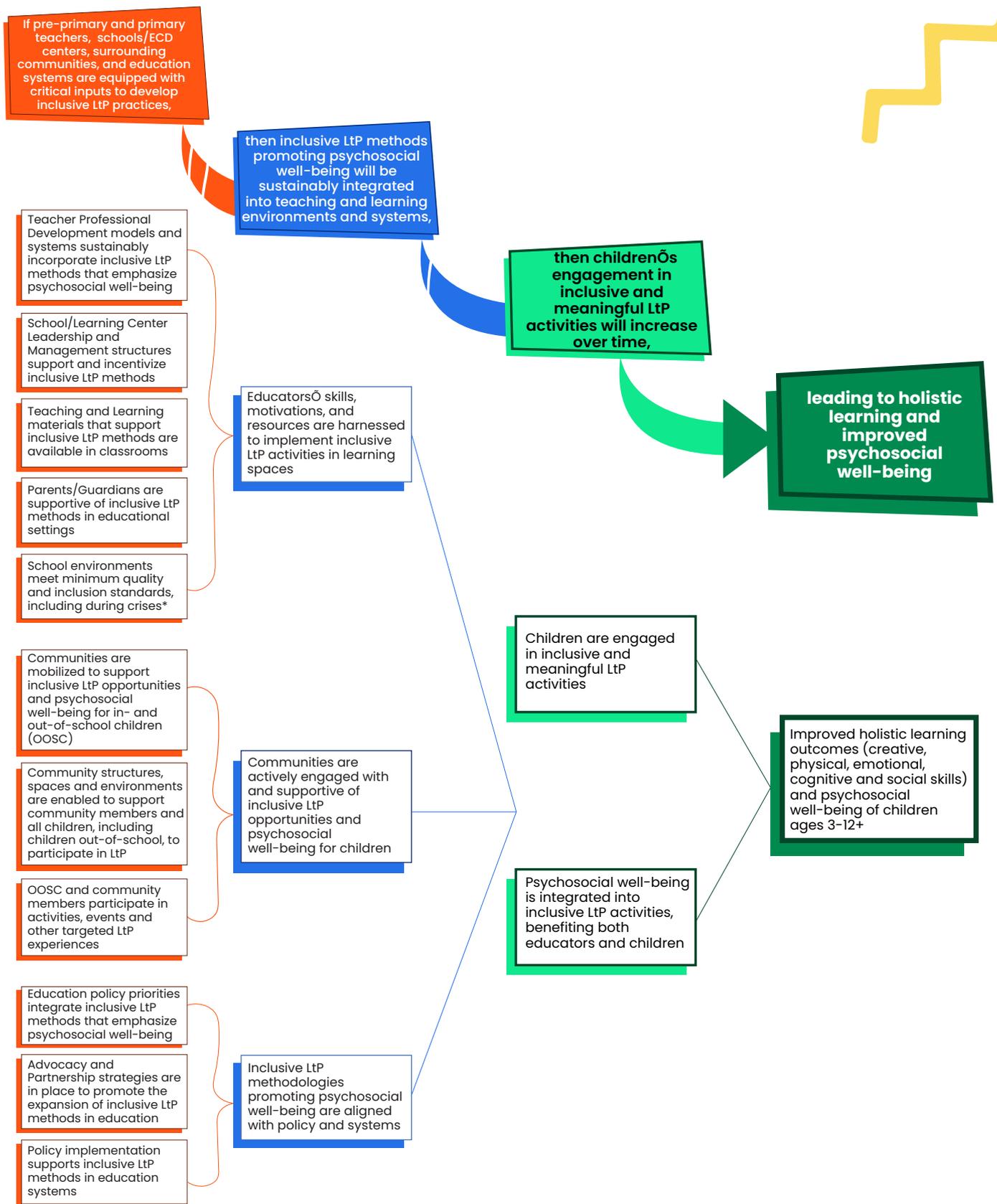


LtP experiences **promote interactions with people and/or materials** that allow children to question, experiment, practice, and discover, developing critical skills that they need to thrive today and in future.



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

# Annex 2: Theory of Change



\* In acute crisis contexts, PlayMatters will deploy the Emergency Response Mechanism (ERM), which has its own embedded Theory of Change. A contextualized ERM Theory of Change will be developed upon ERM deployment outside of Ethiopia.

\* Gender, Inclusion, Psychosocial Wellbeing and Accountability are incorporated throughout PM activities.

## Annex 3: Links to Additional Regional Frameworks

1. [PlayMatters Core Concepts Framework](#)
2. [TOTs Core Concepts Outline](#)
3. [Teacher Core Concepts Outline](#)
4. [School Leadership Core Concepts Outline](#)
5. [Re-Organized Strategies and Practices](#)
6. [Six Bricks Vision & Integration Plan](#)





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