

PlayMatters Ethiopia has Celebrated the International Day of Play 2025 at National Level featuring a vibrant exhibition, engaging conference and insightful panel discussion.

PlayMatters Ethiopia marked the International Day of Play 2025 with a vibrant national celebration held from June 10th to 11th at Kotebe University of Education (KUE) in Addis Ababa. Themed “Choose Play – Every Day,” the event brought together more than 150 participants, including representatives from government institutions, academia, civil society organizations, development partners, pre-primary schoolteachers and children.



Paolo Cernuschi, Country Director of the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and Dr. Berhanemeskel Tena, President of Kotebe University of Education giving opening speech, June 2025

The conference officially opened with keynote speeches from higher government officials: Her Excellency Hikima Keyiredin, State Minister of the Ministry of Women and Social Affairs (MoWSA); His Excellency Dr. Tola Bariso, Head of the Oromia Education Bureau; Paolo Cernuschi, Country Director of the International Rescue Committee (IRC); Peter Sweetnam, Country Director of Plan International Ethiopia; and Dr. Berhanemeskel Tena, President of Kotebe University of Education. In their addresses, the speakers underscored the transformative role of play in fostering creativity, enhancing psychosocial well-being, advancing inclusive education, and supporting equitable learning outcomes for all children.

In partnership with



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The two-day celebration featured a national conference, interactive exhibitions, and live demonstrations of Six-bricks play, locally produced educational materials, and innovative child-centered literacy and numeracy games were showcased.

PlayMatters Ethiopia, Save the Children, Right to Play, CDRT, Guwara No. 2 Primary School, and Biru Tesfa Pre-primary School exhibited their contributions, adding vibrant elements to the event. In the academic segment of the event, scholars, education experts, and partner organizations presented research papers and held reflective discussions on the implementation of play-based learning. They focused on key topics such as best



Children showcasing different games and activities to the attendees, June 2025.

practices, sustainability strategies, and challenges in mainstreaming Learning through Play across the Ethiopian education system.

The two-day conference concluded with a collective commitment from system actors and participants to develop a policy brief that captures key insights and recommendations from the event. This brief will be published by Kotebe University of Education and



Guests visiting children's live shows, June 2025

shared with the Governor of Addis Ababa and the Ministry of Education to help shape future education policies.

Looking ahead, Kotebe University of Education expressed a strong interest in partnering with PlayMatters Ethiopia to establish a model Learning through Play (LtP) school in Addis Ababa. This initiative aims to provide a practical foundation for scaling up play-based learning in early childhood and primary education across the country.