



Community of Practice Established to Strengthen Learning Through Play Nationwide.



CoP attendees from INGOs and partners. Addis Ababa, 2025

In a major stride toward transforming Ethiopia's education system, PlayMatters Ethiopia, in collaboration with the Federal Ministry of Education, Save the Children, Norwegian Refugee Council, Kotebe University of Education, Addis Ababa University and partners have launched a national level Community of Practice (CoP) dedicated to advancing Learning through Play (LtP) across the country.

Learning through Play is already embedded in Ethiopia's national level Pre-primary Education Teachers training strategy, reflecting the partners commitment to fostering engaging, inclusive, and child-centered learning environments. Building on this training strategy, the newly established Community of Practice aims to share best practices, standardize the implementation of LtP integration efforts, and provide a national platform for learning and experience sharing among stakeholders actively engaged in the education sector.

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PlayMatters Ethiopia in Collaboration with Kotebe University of Education Launches ToT Program to Advance Play Based Learning in Urban Primary Classrooms.

PlayMatters Ethiopia, in partnership with Kotebe University of Education, has launched its first Training of Trainers (ToT) program to promote Learning through Play (LtP) in urban primary education. The training was held over four intensive days in August 2025, the training brought together educators from selected government and private schools across Addis Ababa.

This initiative marks a pivotal shift bringing LtP practices, previously focused on refugee settings, into mainstream urban classrooms. Educators explored key topics such as LtP methodologies, child development and assessment, foundational literacy and numeracy, and effective classroom management.

The training equipped participants with practical tools to create inclusive, engaging, and developmentally



Dr. Teshome Kondale from KUE, Mr. Samuel and Mr. Habtamu from PlayMatters-ETH Providing ToT in Adama, 2025

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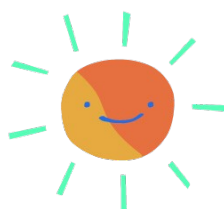
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The CoP brings together policymakers, system actors, scholars and education experts united by a common goal to enhance the quality of teaching and learning through play-based, child-centered pedagogy. Through this initiative, PlayMatters Ethiopia seeks to scale up successful LTP practices across all regions and support curriculum reviews that recognize play as a key driver of holistic child development.

The CoP will serve as a vibrant learning hub, facilitating Federal and Regional workshops and establishing mentoring networks to connect diverse system actors and education leaders across the Nation. Looking ahead, the CoP aims to implement monitoring mechanisms to track progress and impact, host workshops and discussion panels, and develop a national repository of play-based teaching resources. These efforts will support the integration of LTP into Ethiopia's education system, fostering more engaging, inclusive, and joyful classrooms for every child.



Attendees of the COP establishment event presenting various groupworks. Addis Ababa, 2025



ToT program...Cont'd from page 1

appropriate learning environments.

As the 2025/2026 academic year begins, trained educators are expected to cascade their knowledge to colleagues, accelerating the adoption of LtP across their schools.



ToT trainees in group work, Adama 2025

To support ongoing collaboration, Kotebe University has launched a dedicated Telegram channel, fostering peer learning, experience sharing, and expert guidance.

This ToT program strengthens Kotebe's leadership in playbased education and aligns with its mission to improve early learning outcomes through innovative, child-centered approaches. It also marks a major milestone for PlayMatters Ethiopia, advancing efforts to embed LtP into the national education system.

By empowering educators and expanding LtP into urban settings, Kotebe University of Education and PlayMatters are helping ensure every child experiences joyful, meaningful learning laying the foundation for lifelong success.



ToT trainees during presentation, Adama 2025





Meet Our Staffs



Bahiru Hailu,
Project manager PlayMatters
PIE-Benishangul-Gumuz Program Area

For Bahiru Hailu, education is more than a profession, it is a calling rooted in empathy and purpose. With over 14 years of experience in advancing children's rights and education in crisis settings, he believes learning has the power to transform entire communities.

Since joining Plan International in 2021, Bahiru has served as the PlayMatters Project Manager in the Benishangul Gumuz Region, leading with vision and compassion. His work promotes Learning through Play (LtP), an approach that fosters creativity, emotional growth, and critical thinking in children, while building resilience within communities.

"The idea that play can unlock lifelong learning outcomes has reshaped my understanding of what quality education truly means," Bahiru shares.

His career spans a wide range of education in emergencies initiatives, supported by UNHCR, UNICEF, and ECHO. These experiences have honed his skills in program coordination, team leadership, and crisis response. Yet, Bahiru sees collaboration as his most powerful tool.

"When diverse actors share a common goal, even the toughest challenges become manageable," Bahiru notes.

One moment stands out vividly in his journey: a community event where children spontaneously showcased the play based learning techniques they had practiced in school.

"Watching them take ownership of their learning was a powerful reminder of why this work truly matters," he reflects.

Working in remote and often unstable areas has brought its share of challenges. Internal conflicts and periods of unrest have tested his team's resilience. Navigating such environments demands patience, creativity, and constant communication. Bahiru's calm, empathetic leadership has helped his team stay grounded and focused on their mission.

Beyond his professional life, Bahiru values balance and reflection. He cherishes time with family, enjoys reading and football, and draws strength from spiritual practice. These moments, he says, help him recharge and stay centered amid the demands of humanitarian work.

His message to fellow development workers is clear and heartfelt:

"Keep learning, keep collaborating, and never lose sight of the people behind the programs. Real change happens when we lead with compassion and consistency."

In every community he serves, Bahiru strives to leave more than just completed projects, he aims to cultivate resilience, hope, and the belief that education, when delivered with heart, can illuminate the path to a brighter future.



Photo News

Stakeholders consultations and engagements

Stakeholders consultations and engagements including regional and Woreda level system actors and colleges of Teachers education at Shire, Afar, Gambella, Benishangul-Gumuz, and Melka-Dida field offices, 2025.





Photo News

Back to school campaigns and Community engagements

Back to school campaigns and community engagements including the PTSA members trainings at Shire, Afar, Gambella, Benishangul-Gumuz, and Melka-Dida field offices. 2025.





Photo News

Rehabilitation



Rehabilitation works
done in **Sheik Elmi
Gahir** primary school,
2025



Rehabilitation works
done in **Chnkuar**
Primary school,
2025





Photo News

TLM distribution

Distribution of scholastic materials in Gambella, Benishangul Gumuz, Shire and Melka-Dida field offices, 2025



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