

About PlayMatters

The PlayMatters project aims to improve holistic learning and wellbeing outcomes for **800,000+** refugee and host community pre-primary and primary school going children **aged 3-12+** in Uganda, Tanzania and Ethiopia using learning through play methodologies.

PlayMatters is being implemented by a consortium 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.

Approach

The Learning through Play (LtP) approach is intended to transform how children learn and demonstrate play as a solution to strengthen and improve learning outcomes for children.

The methodology is characterised by learning that is joyful, actively engaging, socially interactive, meaningful to children and iterative. Consequently, children learning is enjoyable, less stressful, participatory, and improves children’s wellbeing.

Benefits for children include:

- Children acquire a breadth of skills they need to thrive today and in future.
- Children grow stronger bonds with each other, their parents, teachers and the community at large.
- Children are motivated to learn, stay and perform well in school.
- Children have high quality and holistic learning experiences.

Problems Addressed

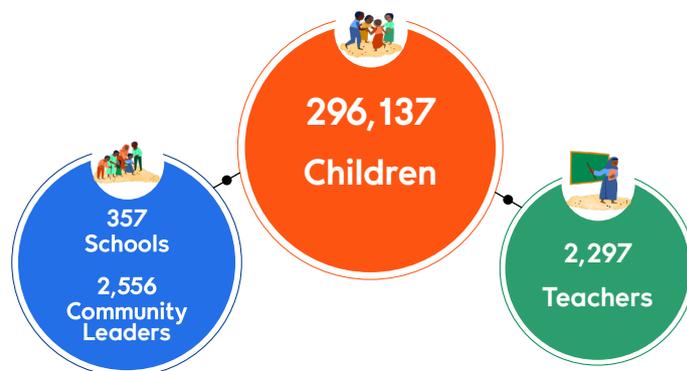
In refugee and host communities, varied challenges impede the quality of learning children experience at home, school, and in the community. These include crowded classrooms, inadequate teacher skills and work overload, limited access to essential teaching and learning resources, parental stress and resource constrains in the communities.

Desired Results

The desired results include:

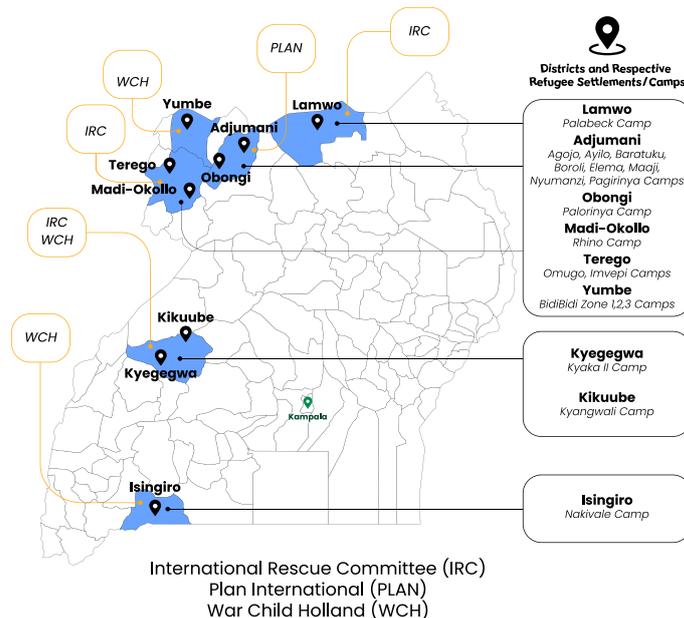
- Holistic learning outcomes (cognitive, social, emotional, creative and physical) by increasing access, enrolment, and retention of children in school.
- Change in teacher behaviours (to apply LtP in their work) through improvements in teacher professional development and teaching quality.
- Change in parent/caregiver behaviours (motivation to engage in LtP) through reducing stress, and wellbeing of parents, teachers and learners.
- Integration of LtP in education policy by host governments and humanitarian actors through demonstration of innovative, play-based solutions to overcome barriers to education opportunities.

Targets/Reach



- 357 Schools
- 296,137 Children
- 2,297 Teachers Trained
- 2,556 Community Leaders
- 365 System Actors

Where we work



PlayMatters is being implemented in **9** Refugee Hosting Districts where consortium members have a presence:

International Rescue Committee (IRC) – Madi-Okollo (Rhino Camp), Terego(Imvepi,Omugo), Kyegegwa (Kyaka II) and Lamwo (Palabeck).

PLAN International (PLAN) – Yumbe (Bidibidi), Adjumani (Nyumanzi, Pagirinya, Baratuku, Elema, Ayilo 1, Ayilo 2, Boroli, Maaji 1, Maaji 2, Agojo, Mvepi, Omugo).

War Child Holland (WCH) – Obongi (Palorinya) , Yumbe (Bidibidi), Kikuube (Kyangwali), Isingiro (Oruchinga, Nakivale).

Innovations for Poverty Action (IPA) – Based in Kampala, supporting in policy and advocacy.

Delivery Strategies

Developing LTP and wellbeing library of resources

This includes creating teaching and learning resources, using testing and scale up approach to add LTP to existing interventions.

- Simple and easy to adopt (least labor and less material-intensive).
- Strengthen knowledge, skills and motivation for using LTP and wellbeing support.
- The resource library includes a combination of LTP workshops, guides, Play Kits and multimedia.

Expansion of LTP evidence base

This focuses on demonstrating the effectiveness of LTP approaches in crisis or refugee education settings. It includes:

- Behavioral science to inform intervention design. Target and influence actions, behaviors and practices of adults who surround and interact with children at home, in school and in the community.
- Rigorous formative and implementation research -investigating existing good practices, what works and does not and necessary improvements for adults to take up and sustain LTP in their interactions with children.

Integration of LTP in existing educational policies and services for refugees

This involves working with and through existing education systems and service to institutionalize LTP.

- Communications to share evidence and successful interventions.
- Advocate/influence for uptake of LTP at home, in school and community.
- Partnerships to expand scale and impact.



Robert, 35, playing a "guessing game" with his children. Palabek Refugee Settlement, Uganda, October 2021



Participants from various departments in the Uganda Ministry of Education during a PlayMatters content review and validation workshop. Jinja, Uganda, December 2021



PlayMatters Learning through Play resources for teachers.

Project Activities

The activities include but are not limited to:

- Teaching and learning materials development.
- Parent/ guardian and community engagement.
- Teacher professional development activities.
- Provisions for an enabling physical environment for LTP (in schools & classrooms).
- Support LTP experiences for out-of-school children.
- Evidence gathering, documentation and learning.
- Support towards LTP in policy related activities.



For more information, please contact:

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In partnership with



The LEGO Foundation