

# ubongo



The LEGO Foundation



***PlayMatters*: LEGO Foundation backs playful learning from Ubongo, IRC and partners, to bring a brighter decade for kids in crisis in East Africa**

**An Essential Strategy for Learning is Literally Child's Play**

Ubongo is proud to join forces with the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and a consortium of partners supported by The LEGO Foundation to bring Playful Learning to nearly one million kids impacted by humanitarian crises in Ethiopia and Uganda. The LEGO Foundation is awarding a US\$100 million grant towards this initiative, termed *PlayMatters*.

The consortium, led by the IRC, includes Ubongo, Plan International, War Child Holland, Innovations in Poverty Action, and the Behavioral Insights Team.

The initiative focuses on pre-primary and primary school aged kids affected by the refugee crises in East Africa and plans to reach 10,000 pre-primary and primary school teachers and educators and 170,000 primary caregivers.

Displaced people spend an average of 10 years of their lives in refugee camps and resettlement sites, which means, a generation of kids are deprived of education and childhood. As the global population of forcibly displaced people reaches record levels, countries such as Ethiopia and

Uganda with protracted humanitarian crises have become even more neglected. The *PlayMatters* partnership brings these “forgotten crises” to the forefront in order to bring HOPE to these kids.

The grant awarded by LEGO Foundation will support playful learning experiences for kids in crisis, which in turn will develop their cognitive, social, emotional, creative and physical skills required for holistic development.

By working with teachers in the host communities, and incorporating fun learning content like Ubongo’s edutainment programs, the partnership will focus on innovations to ensure systemic and lasting impact and then sharing these approaches across aid agencies for replication.

Learning through play offers a unique opportunity to overcome barriers to quality pre-primary and primary education for refugee populations. Play is the most natural way for kids to learn; it helps them overcome trauma-related stresses and build resilience, which enables kids to be powerful agents of their own lives, cope with adversity and be positive contributors to their communities.

The *PlayMatters* Partnership also aims to inspire other humanitarian actors to act in support of education in crisis settings, drive systemic change in governments to incorporate play-based learning in their services, and bring hope for a bright future so that all kids, regardless of circumstances, can become creative, engaged, life-long learners.

UBONGO is a Tanzania based social enterprise that leverages the power of entertainment, the reach of mass media, and the insights of kid-centered design, to bring effective, localized learning to African families at low cost and massive scale. We entertain kids to learn and love learning: building brains, and building change.

Over 17 million families in Africa learn with us monthly via TV, radio and mobile phones. We broadcast on free TV or radio in 11 African countries and 4 languages. Kids who watch our edu-cartoons have 12% higher cognitive development scores, and 99% of Tanzanian parents using our products say that Ubongo’s edutainment has improved their child’s quality of life!

Our vision is to equip Africa’s next generation with the educational foundation, critical skills, and positive mindsets to change their own lives and communities for the better.

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