

Research and Evaluation

The LEGO Playful Parenting Implementation Research

is a five-year research award studying five playful parenting interventions in Bhutan, Guatemala, Rwanda, Serbia, and Zambia. The project is helping define 'what works' for effective scaling of playful parenting interventions and what impact these interventions have on caregivers, service providers and children.

With particular attention to the LEGO Foundation's Learning through Play (LtP) philosophy, the implementation research harmonizes data collection efforts across programs and partners to distill findings for the larger early childhood development community.



As a science-driven organization, FHI 360 is committed to a continuous process of learning and knowledge sharing for improved solutions in education around the world. Our research, monitoring and evaluation specialists conduct studies and evaluations that contribute to the evidence base on the effectiveness of educational interventions in a wide variety of contexts, with particular focus on **teaching and learning, education in emergencies, capacity building, and learning through play (LtP).**

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching and learning, especially in the early grades, provides children and their families with the foundational skills needed to improve their lives and communities. Understanding how kids learn and what interventions are most effective at improving learning outcomes—with the least cost, and at scale—are critical issues that FHI 360 evaluators and researchers work to address. We currently implement large-scale early learning interventions in **DJIBOUTI, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC), EL SALVADOR, GHANA, MADAGASCAR, MOROCCO, NIGERIA, and SENEGAL.** We use early grade reading, writing and mathematics assessments, highly structured classroom observation tools, and qualitative methods to measure fidelity of implementation, time on task, teacher behavior change, student learning and community support for education. Continuous data collection for monitoring purposes is integrated into online visualization dashboards, allowing project teams and local stakeholders access to rapid real-time information from schools on their attendance, teacher observation and learning outcomes data.

We examine both teaching and learning in our research, recognizing the critical role of teachers in determining student outcomes. We use our research to develop tools that can be applied for teacher professional development in other settings. In **EQUATORIAL GUINEA, GHANA, and NIGERIA,** we developed a typology and framework on professional learning communities (PLCs) in low-middle income countries. In **EL SALVADOR,** we developed and validated a teacher well-being measurement tool, using it to conduct experimental research on teachers involved in a professional development program. Equipping researchers worldwide with these types of tools is fundamental to augmenting the technical evidence base in low-resource settings where such evidence is often lacking.

Dubai Cares Nigeria: Evidence for Education in Emergencies (E-Cubed)

From 2019-2022, FHI 360 led an experimental, longitudinal research study examining how participation in nonformal, accelerated education programs shapes adolescent trajectories and outcomes in northeast Nigeria. Our research team partnered closely with local stakeholders, working with the University of Maiduguri to design the study and engage quantitative and qualitative researchers. The study fills a gap in the education in emergencies (EiE) space by generating evidence through rigorous research to help policymakers, researchers, and practitioners better understand how accelerated education programs can be more effective.

Play & Learning in Children's Eyes (PALICE)

Through Play & Learning in Children's Eyes (PALICE) FHI 360 led an international consortium of partners under the Lego Foundation to develop a toolkit supporting teachers to engage in LTP in the classroom called Teacher RePlay. Grounded in two years of formative research, the toolkit was piloted with over 350 teachers in Bangladesh, Colombia, and Uganda, and is available in three languages, both in a paper form and in a digital app. Teacher RePlay offers teachers a self-driven set of tools, tested on constructs and usability, to assess and reflect on their LTP practice.

Learn more:
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Assessing Learning Outcomes During COVID-19

A year into the COVID-19 pandemic, programs continue to pivot to remote learning to support learners worldwide during school closures; a reality that calls for increased research on learning outcomes with these new modalities. In northern **NIGERIA** and in **GHANA**, we led a learning assessment on students receiving our radio, to evaluate whether phone/radio and home lessons as a substitute to in-person learning due to the pandemic can mitigate potential learning loss during school closures. In both countries, we found that radio and home lessons are effective for reading in contrast to the alternative where children are not exposed to either learning modality.

EDUCATION IN EMERGENCIES (EiE)

We drive research and learning agendas to guide adaptive programming and contextualize interventions for fragile settings. In southern **SENEGAL**, our evaluation of a remediation pilot found the program boosted math gains but not reading, thus informing curriculum revision for scale up. In the **DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC)**, we recently led a *Rapid Education Risk Analysis (RERA)* for which we piloted innovative methods including participatory interviewing techniques with children using images and poster boards.

We evaluate social emotional learning interventions across EiE contexts including **SENEGAL**, as well as **NORTHEAST NIGERIA**, where we conducted a cluster-randomized controlled trial to test the efficacy of delivering SEL content as a standalone lesson vs. infused with core reading and math lessons.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Data systems strengthening represents a cornerstone of our work. Through formal capacity building workshops and continued technical assistance, we drive local ownership and system uptake of data and evidence. In our recent workshops with the Ministry of Educations (MOEs) in **MADAGASCAR** and **DJIBOUTI**, we trained government evaluation and IT staff in evaluation design, sampling, data cleaning, analysis, and visualizations. In **NIGERIA**, we trained MOE staff to program mobile data collection tools, setup and maintain data collection/management hardware, and generate reports through dashboards, as part of the state and local Data Hub teams.

We also build capacity within research & analysis, leading several virtual sessions with analysts from the People's Action Learning (PAL) Network to strengthen skills in equity analysis, statistics, and data management in education.

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY (LTP)

Since 2020, FHI 360 has partnered with the LEGO Foundation on several research awards to generate robust evidence on learning through play (LTP). As the research and learning partner under the Playful Parenting Initiative, our implementation research scaffolds playful parenting interventions to inform scale-up. In 2021, we conducted a systematic review of LTP during COVID-19, generating insights into existing evidence on how play is used to promote learning during the pandemic. More recently, under the Measurement Initiative on LTP, FHI 360 developed and piloted a formative measurement toolkit to support teachers in integrating playful activities into their classrooms through self-assessment and self-reflection.

About FHI 360: FHI 360 is a nonprofit human development organization dedicated to improving lives in lasting ways by advancing integrated, locally driven solutions. Our staff includes experts in health, education, nutrition, environment, economic development, civil society, gender, youth, research, technology, communication and social marketing—creating a unique mix of capabilities to address today's interrelated development challenges. FHI 360 serves more than 70 countries and all U.S. states and territories.