

The LEGO Foundation's speech at the Opening Plenary, 17 Dec 2019

John Goodwin, CEO, The LEGO Foundation

- We are currently in a situation where millions of displaced **children grow up in refugee camps or temporary settlements spending on an average 10 years of their lives**, which means these children are deprived of education and childhood, and potentially lose their hope for a better future.
- **At the same time, teachers in refugee environments are overwhelmed by their own adverse experiences and large classes; students who have faced adversities have diverse needs;** caregivers do not always acknowledge the importance of holistic skills for children; and systems are stuck in old ways of learning. **New solutions are needed to overcome barriers to quality pre-primary and primary education for these populations and Learning through Play offers a unique opportunity.**
- The LEGO Foundation is looking to increase the size of the total money going into pre-primary and primary education by developing proven success models that show how bringing quality learning through play interventions into homes and classrooms in humanitarian settings can help children overcome the negative stresses as a result of adverse situations and help them become engaged life-long learners.
- Learning through play has a key role in developing and promoting a holistic set of skills including social, emotional, cognitive, creative and physical skills.
- The LEGO Foundation is awarding US\$100 million grant to a consortium led by International Rescue Committee to work alongside host country governments to improve education outcomes for approximately 800,000 pre-primary and primary school aged children in refugee settings in East Africa. We will do this through supporting 10,000 preschool and primary school teachers and educators and 170,000 primary caregivers. By working with teachers in the host communities, we will focus on innovation to ensure systemic and lasting impact and then sharing these approaches across aid agencies for replication.
- I want to congratulate everyone in this forum who want to stand up to support refugees. Thank you to the Governments of Uganda and Ethiopia for your support and a huge thank to UNHCR for their leadership in bringing all of us together for the first Global Refugee Forum. This is just the beginning of bringing hope for a better future for refugees, especially children.