

The latest news, views, and announcements

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*Image 1: The KPLAY team was joined by our partners from The Scratch foundation during the October 2022 TOT session at Royal Court Hotel in Mombasa - Kenya*

## Welcome note.

Kenya Play Project (KPLAY), a holistic, systemic, gender-responsive approach to introducing and scaling Learning through Play with Technology (LTPT) in Kwale and Kilifi counties, has had a robust implementing period between October and January 2023.

The project successfully conducted its 3<sup>rd</sup> Training of Trainers (TOT) workshop at the Royal Court Hotel in Mombasa which was attended by 25 Curriculum support officers and 25 co-facilitators who are headteachers and teacher champions from 25 schools.

The Curriculum Support Officers (CSO) were then coached virtually before they embarked on classroom observations to monitor the integration of Learning through play with technology (LTPT) concepts by the teachers into the classroom. The feedback from the classroom observations showed a shift in the integration of LTPT activities with most teachers observed integrating local games and songs in the classroom. The LEGO Duplo and Playboxes were also among the resources to have been used severally in the classrooms.

KPLAY, through collaboration with Community-Based Organizations, started implementing parental empowerment and engagement sessions in Kwale and

Kilifi counties. These sessions were led by the CBO leaders who had been trained and supported by the KPLAY team.

KPLAY has continued to succeed thanks to the support of stakeholders at the National and County levels. This January, Through the support of the Kilifi and Kwale County Steering Committee, the project has been able to select 100 schools for 2023. 50 schools from Kilifi County and 50 schools from Kwale County.

We are pleased to announce that the KPLAY Team is joined by two new team members in the positions of Program Officer – Robert Omondi and Lucy Maina as the Program Director.

The KPLAY team hosted our partners from Humans Who Play at the Mombasa office in January 2023. They visited some of the PlayLabs, had conversations and tested some learning through play activities with parents, teachers, and curriculum support officers.

Finally, the project appreciates the LEGO foundation for its financial and technical support.

This newsletter, therefore, provides further details of the achievements of the quarter and highlights the next steps for February to May.

**Kenya Play (KPLAY) Team**  
**IREX**

## Training of Trainers (TOT) of System Embedded Coaches

In October 2022, the TOT focused on the CSOs re-tooling and to better leverage their existing role as Competency based curriculum (CBC) master trainers and the support they provide to teachers. The project has therefore successfully trained 25 CSOs and 25 Headteachers and Play Ambassadors who are co – facilitators to assist the CSOs during the teacher cell capacity development workshops.

The KPLAY ToT is aimed at building the capacity of school leaders to support the integration of playful learning and technology in targeted schools. In October 2022, KPLAY successfully conducted a TOT focused on Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs) and their Co- facilitators to strengthen and have them develop a deeper understanding of the LEGO Playbox. In addition, the project introduced basic coding concepts as part of the training.

The program ensured that all the participants had a device during the training of trainer’s workshop to help build their confidence in using laptops and tablets for learning activities in the CBC classroom.

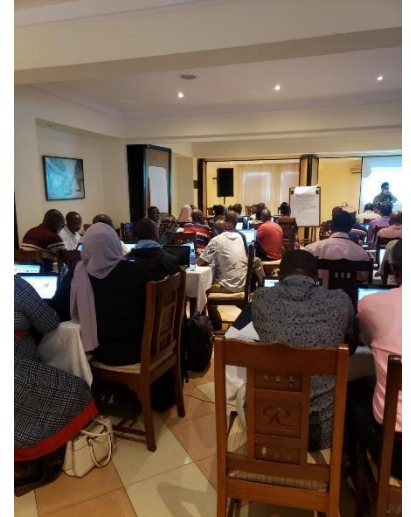
The feedback received showed that the introduction to Scratch (a computing coding software) was both exciting and challenging to implement in schools because of access to devices. The CSOs agreed to have the teachers form communities of practice on WhatsApp for shared learning among the teachers. This would help them share ideas and best practices from their integration of scratch in the classrooms.

The curriculum support officers received the training positively but challenged the project to provide more digital literacy sessions to help build their skills on the usage of the devices, they also shared the need to have more refresher sessions on digital literacy to help prepare them for their facilitation roles in the teacher cell capacity development workshops.

The project decided to prioritize digital literacy as part of the refresher content for the CSO coaching in the next quarter. The CSOs committed to practicing some of the coding concepts as they prepare their school teams for the capacity development workshops.



*Image 2 The CSOs and their Co-facilitators participating in the October Training of Trainers workshop.*



*Image 3 The CSOs and their co-facilitators participating in the Training of the trainer’s workshop.*

## KPLAY Coaching of System Embedded Coaches

The goal of CSO coaching is to continuously support the CSO as they are to lead the teacher professional development workshops. Virtual coaching sessions took place from November 1 to November 26, 2022. We had 25 curriculum support officers – 12 from Kilifi County and 13 from Kwale county attending the sessions. We had separate coaching conversations with their co-facilitators.

CSOs selected one co-facilitator to work alongside him/her in conducting the workshops based on the experience of the July workshops. We had more coaching conversations with the Co-facilitators based on their flexibility and availability. They were able to have two sessions weekly dedicated to building their knowledge and confidence in facilitating scratch activities during the training.

These virtual coaching sessions help prepare the system coaches to provide additional support to the teachers by having the teachers reflect on their own practice and highlight their grow areas after classroom observations. The coaching conversations compliment the training activities by ensuring that there is constant engagement of the Curriculum support officers and that the Kplay team is regularly getting feedback on the integration of play in the classroom.

## Community-Based Organizations Training

Parental and community engagement remains a critical part of the project. In July and August, the project trained 36 staff and volunteers from 11 CBOs based in Kilifi and Kwale on the values of LTPT and oriented them on activities they can use when sensitizing parents and community members. The project also moved the administrative process forward for the CBOs to confirm their work plans and milestones in advance of their signing agreements with IREX. 8 community-based organizations were able to conduct parental engagement and Empowerment sessions across Kilifi and Kwale Counties where parents and the community were sensitized on the importance of play in learning.

From these sessions the KPLAY team has learnt that the school leadership plays an important role in mobilizing parents to attend the CSO led community engagement sessions.

## Classroom Observations

Classroom observations are key in determining the extent of classroom integration of learning through play with technology. The observations were conducted by CSOs based on the agreement that they would each visit a minimum of three participating schools in their zone and, in each school, observe two teachers. Using the KPLAY Classroom Observation tool, CSOs were able to observe over four weeks 100 classrooms with approximately 7200 learners from PP2 TO Std 8.

The results of these observations show that Mathematics, Science and Technology, and English Language are the areas where LTPT is most implemented. This is demonstrated by the graph below which shows the number of lessons observed in each learning area.

The CSOs have identified some areas that teachers need to improve, including encouraging learners to work more collaboratively especially in settings with high student enrollment, mobilizing more locally available resources for the various activities, and integrating ICT in the lessons. The classroom observations show that local games, local songs, drawing with me, and the LEGO Duplo and Playboxes were among the resources and LTPT activities that were more adaptable and easily implemented in the classrooms.

## Announcing New Hires

### Project Director: Lucy Maina

Lucy Maina joins IREX as the Project Director for the KPLAY Project with over 2 decades of experience in education and health programs in the context of relief, rehabilitation, and development in Kenya, Uganda, Somalia, South Sudan, and Tanzania. She comes on board with vast experience in research, budgeting, and finance, designing and managing programs, capacity building of community-based organizations, strengthening foundational and numeracy skills and project monitoring and evaluation.

### Project Officer: Robert Omondi

Robert Omondi joins IREX as the Project Officer for the KPLAY Project with a decade of experience in education stakeholder management. He champions education systems that nurture learners as leaders for tomorrow, improving their education outcomes and giving them the edge to compete at different levels.

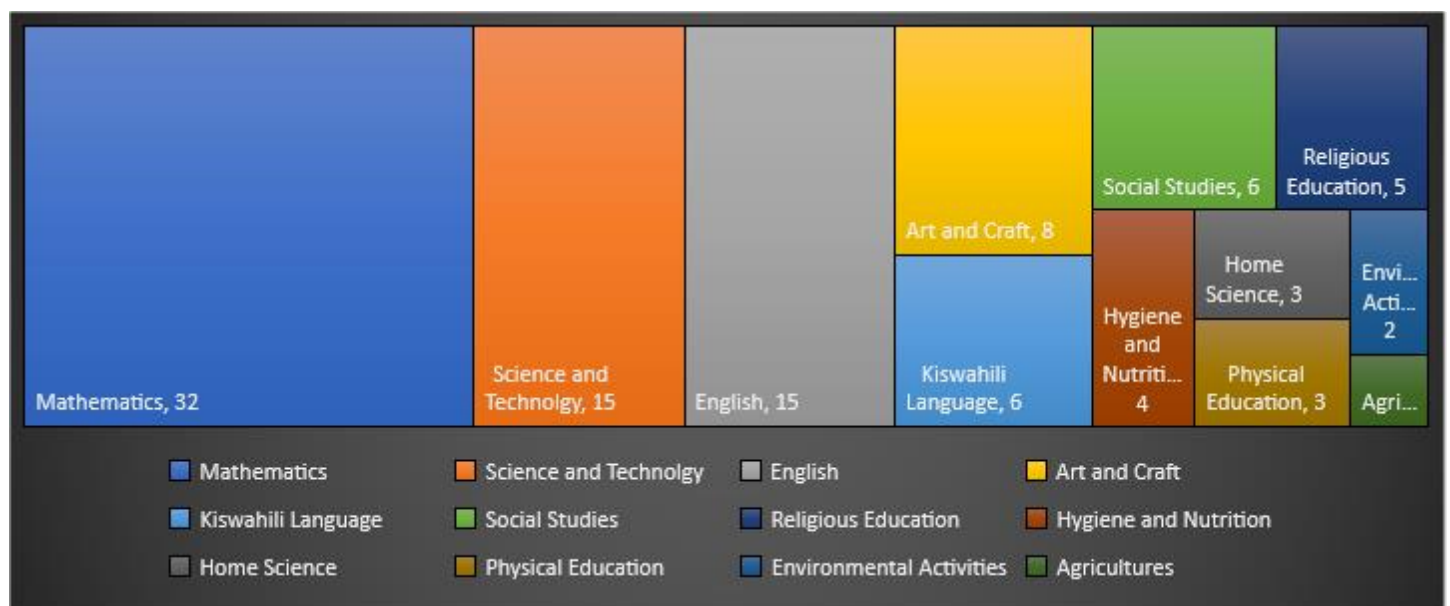


Figure 1: Learning areas where LTPT was used during Classroom Observations

## School Selection

The program has received immense support from National and County government stakeholders. The year started with renewed relationships with the stakeholders with visits and successful conversations held between the County MOE and TSC officials with our technical advisor and the project director, this has led to the successful selection of 100 schools 50 from Kwale and 50 Schools from Kilifi County. The selection process ensured that we had an inclusive school selection process that considered the special needs education schools and private schools within the selection process. At the meeting, the county authorities appreciated the support KPLAY has been providing in schools in ensuring that learning through play is integrated in the classrooms.



*Image 4: The Kilifi County Steering Committee listening in to the 2022 program updates and plans for 2023.*

## HWP In-Country Visit

Our content development partners Humans Who Play visited the country this January. Together with the KPLAY team, they visited three PlayLabs in Kilifi County, namely: Dera Tumaini Primary School, Fumbini Primary School, and Malau Primary School. They tested some curriculum activities with teachers from Burani and Tiribe Primary schools. They also had conversations with school leaders, parents and Matuga arts community-based organizations.

They met 4 curriculum support officers from Kwale county and had a chance to share ideas on how to improve teacher support in the schools.



*Image 5: The HWP sharing ideas and feedback from their conversations with the teachers and parents with the KPLAY team. Our research partners EDU Design were also present in the meeting.*

## Next steps

The following activities are planned to take place between February and April 2023:

1. Onboarding of our Sub-awardee EDUTAB: The project will work with the new sub-awardee to ensure the schools are better supported.
2. 3<sup>rd</sup> Zonal Teacher Cell capacity development workshops for cohort 2.
3. Headteacher Induction Sessions for cohort 3 Schools selected for 2023.
4. System-embedded coaches' coaching conversations
5. Classroom Observations for training academy 3 activities.
6. PlayLab burst material deliveries to 47 cohort 2 schools.
7. Revitalize the steering committee meetings at county and national level.