

**Title:** Learning session on using dual generation approaches for early childhood education and development in refugee contexts

**Time:** 2 hours

**Format:** Side Event

Over the past decade, emergencies have become frequent, affecting millions of people worldwide (UNESCO, 2022). Young children are the most affected by these crises. Between 2018 and 2021, over 1.5 million children were born in refugee settings, representing an estimated 380,000 young children born into displacement each year (UNHCR, 2022). Emergencies are detrimental for both children and their parents due to limited access to preventive and curative health services, high risks of malnutrition, elevated levels of insecurity and violence, and socioeconomic adversity (World Health Organisation, 2020).

A crucial element in safeguarding young children ages 0 to 6 from the effects of severe adversity is a positive, and responsive relationship with a parent ([Kabay and Smith, n.d.](#)). However, existing interventions focus on either adults or children. Interventions that address both children and their caregivers simultaneously have higher potential to show sustainable impact compared to interventions targeting only one of these two groups. Dual generation theory for early childhood development advocates for this type of innovation across policy, practice, and research. ([Shonkoff and Fisher, 2013](#)).

However, discussion of dual-generation theory is limited to the US context, and there is a need to consider the relevance of the theory for different settings (Innovations for Poverty Action, n.d.). Most pertinently, applying the dual-generation theory in the context of forced displacement presents a unique opportunity, recognizing that forcibly displaced children ages 0-3 and adolescent caregivers are among the world's most vulnerable, underserved, and under researched populations ([Kabay and Smith, n.d.](#)).

The [Global Schools Forum](#) (GSF) and [Innovations for Poverty Action](#) (IPA) are availing the opportunity at the East Africa Regional Early Childhood Conference to host a learning session on dual-generation approaches tailored for displacement contexts. The session will showcase innovations in this area from within its member network and the wider ecosystem from the Africa region that are working with displaced families and children ages 0 to 6 years. GSF is currently a community of 111 non-state actors delivering education across 60 low-middle-income countries, while IPA is a global research and policy nonprofit that creates evidence, promotes its use, and equips policymakers and programme implementers to use evidence to improve policy and programme.

The session will showcase the close connection between the well-being of caregivers and the outcomes of child's development, thereby bridging a crucial discourse gap. The main objectives are:

- learning about the underpinning theory of the dual-generation approach and its criticality for refugee settings.
- highlighting innovative programming strategies and models using dual-generation approaches for improving outcomes for children and their caregivers living in adversity.

- discussing persisting gaps that warrant further research to develop scalable dual-generation approaches including defining measurable outcomes
- discussing opportunities and implementation challenges faced by practitioners including issues of regulation and policies and identifying ways to build an enabling environment.
- brainstorming ways to build the field in the short and long term through global advocacy

The session will spotlight on the following innovative dual generation programming approaches, alongside discussions on enabling conditions and policies to scale such programming:

- **UNICEF Uganda:** UNICEF Uganda works with local and global organisations to implement integrated ECD tools/interventions. Among these are the UNICEF ECD Emergency Kits which has been recently revised to be disability inclusive; the Care for Child Development (CCD) intervention which is a well-tested tool focused on early stimulation and responsive caregiving used to support early detection of disabilities and developmental delays; and the Caring for the Caregiver Package (C4C) which has been tested and validated in many countries including Rwanda and is currently being implemented and tested in Uganda. UNICEF is also currently designing the STRYDE Initiative which will provide demand-driven skills for young people (especially young mothers) to become accredited ECD caregivers and entrepreneurs.
- **BRAC:** The Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Ultra Graduation Project (UPG) by BRAC is implemented in Rhino and Imvepi refugee settlements of Uganda. The dual-generation approach integrates ECD and UPG targeting 4050 refugee children and 700 households in West Nile, Uganda. In the panel, our focus will be on three integrated objectives (a) improving refugee and host community children's holistic development through BRAC's Humanitarian Play Labs (b) supporting the families of refugee and host community children living in ultra-poverty through BRAC's Ultra Poor Graduation programme, and (c) building the fields of ECD and Graduation in humanitarian settings through capacity building, research, and advocacy.
- **Children in Crossfire:** Children in Crossfire works in partnership with local organisations in Tanzania and Ethiopia to improve the lives of the most vulnerable young children. We will highlight their dual-generation model in the Oromia region in Ethiopia where they are providing school-readiness support at pre-primary education levels, and livelihood support to women caregivers through a savings and loan scheme programme enabling them to set up small enterprises.
- **Children on the Edge:** Children on the Edge supports marginalised children by providing positive parenting support, early childhood development opportunities, and presenting community transformation initiatives. We will highlight their Cluster Learning Approach operational in the Kyaka II refugee settlement in Uganda, which uses communal spaces to teach children with the support of local refugee teachers thereby opening access to ECD to all children. The programme also encourages parental engagement by providing them with simple, and easy activities to practice with children at home. They also provide stipends and small business loans to teachers to support with sustainability of the programme.
- **Kulea Watoto:** Kulea Watoto is an initiative aimed at early childhood development and transforming livelihoods of their caregivers (including host families) in Uganda. In the panel, we will focus on the four strategies embedded as part of the programme (a) empowering households with responsive caregiving & early learning skills, (b) improving economic wellbeing and household income generation opportunities, (c) increasing the availability of quality ECD services, and (d) advocating for an enabling environment for quality ECD provision.

- **Learn to Play:** Learn to Play harnesses the power of play to provide high quality and culturally relevant early childhood education. Learn To Play works in the Dukwi refugee camp where it trains and supports mothers from the community on Early Childhood Education, First Aid, Mindfulness, Child Protection etc. allowing them to run community playgroups of their own for young refugee children. Learn to Play also has a Parent Playbox developed in partnership with Kids Collab as part of their multi-generational approach to early learning. The Parent Playbox provides parents/caregivers of children ages 0-5 with knowledge, and resources on how to purposefully interact with their children, focusing on playful parenting, relationship building and early education, especially in low-resource and crises settings.

Our panel will be moderated by Dr Joan Lombardi, a longstanding champion for children in early years, PhD director for Early Opportunities, and Adjunct Professor Stanford Center on Early Childhood or representatives from GSF and IPA will be moderating the session.

#### **Details of the panelists:**

- UNICEF Uganda: Nada Elattar, Team Lead, Early Childhood Development
- BRAC: Joseph Kabanda, Project Manager, Early Childhood and Graduation Programming in Refugee Settlements in Uganda
- Children in Crossfire: Temesgen Zeleke, Country Programme Coordinator, Ethiopia
- Children on the Edge: Winnie Biira, CEO of Children on the Edge Africa
- Kulea Watoto: Godfrey Mwesigye, Senior Policy & Advocacy Manager, International Rescue Committee
- Learn to Play: Priyanka Handa Ram, Founder and CEO

#### **Agenda**

- Opening and overview of the session – 10 minutes
- Overview from each organisation about their 2-gen programming – 40 minutes
- Q&A with audience and moderators – 20 minutes
- Small group discussion with partner organisations – 30 minutes
- Reflections from the session – 10 minutes
- Closing from moderators – 10 minutes

The session will begin with an introduction to the dual generation theory and its importance for refugee settings. Each organisation will then get an opportunity to share more about its programme and approach for dual generation. This entails describing (a) what are they doing for children and (b) what are they doing to improve the economic or social conditions of adults in children's lives or families. The moderators will follow this with a Q/A delving into specific aspects of the programme like why the practitioners chose a particular approach, what are they learning both in terms of successes and challenges, and key partnerships to successfully implement this approach, amongst others.

There will be various opportunities for the audience to engage with the panelists throughout the session. The audience will be able to ask questions to the panelists in the large group. The panel will also be broken into 3 small groups of two panelists each thereby providing the audience an opportunity to learn about the programmes in a deeper manner.



The session will close with panelists giving final advice to others interested in this approach and closing remarks from the moderators.