



## Can't Wait to Learn research Cross-country overview

In the current climate of increasingly protracted crises and forced displacement, there is a growing demand for evidence-based, scalable education programmes. War Child Holland has been awarded the Global Partnership for Education and Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX) global grant to generate knowledge and evidence on how education technology (EdTech) innovations can be adapted and scaled to improve education access and quality for refugee and displaced children in conflict-affected countries. KIX is a joint initiative from the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), aiming to connect expertise, innovation and knowledge to strengthen education systems and accelerate progress toward SDG 4 in GPE partner countries.

**Can't Wait to Learn** provides an innovative solution to close the education gap for millions of children around the world affected by conflict. It is a digital tablet-based programme that provides children with access to quality education, in both formal school settings and inside their communities. We work with the Ministries of Education to align the learning objectives of the programme with the national curricula. It is currently operational in Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan, Uganda and Chad, and embedded in both formal and non-formal education systems. Research has shown that educative gaming can be an effective learning tool that delivers equitable results. To date, we conducted multiple mixed-methods research studies which demonstrate that Can't Wait to Learn works in different settings. Learning progress and feedback from users are monitored to improve the game content. Our KIX global grant is supporting ongoing research in Chad, Uganda and Sudan.

### WHAT IS OUR RESEARCH OBJECTIVE?

To generate knowledge and evidence on how to adapt and scale an education technology programme in conflict-affected countries.

### WHERE AND WITH WHOM?

The research, led by War Child Holland, is conducted in Uganda, Chad and Sudan. We are working in partnership with Jesuit Refugee Services in Chad, and in collaboration with the Ministries of Education.

## WHY?

Access to quality education remains a critical issue in many low- and middle-income countries, particularly for marginalized groups. 60% of the world's children and adolescents do not achieve minimum proficiency levels in reading and mathematics ([UNESCO, 2017](#)), despite two-thirds of them being in school. EdTech has the potential to tackle this issue, however, the evidence on EdTech effectiveness and cost-effectiveness is lacking, as well as a comprehensive understanding of the necessary conditions for scale-up. Additionally, education systems around the world have faced the worst shock in decades as the COVID-19 pandemic has caused the longest school closures. It is simply not enough for schools to be reopened, as children will need tailored and sustained support to help them catch up after the pandemic ([World Bank, 2021](#)). Can't Wait to Learn is well-positioned to support catch-up education, as the programme's self-paced design ensures that children's knowledge gaps are filled and their foundational knowledge is strengthened, which will allow them to benefit from formal education.

## HOW?

In **Uganda**, one focus of the research is evaluation of the effectiveness of Can't Wait to Learn. While positive evidence for Can't Wait to Learn exists, a rigorous evaluation of its effectiveness is still needed, which we will do with a **cluster randomised controlled trial** (cRCT). To safeguard the quality of this evaluation it will be preceded by a **cRCT feasibility study** to test and finetune both programme and research processes and tools, including the academic and psychosocial wellbeing outcome assessments.

The other focus of our research is the development and evaluation of an add-on intervention aiming to strengthen caregivers' engagement in children's education to increase children's attendance and retention. The **formative research** will be integrating a community-based system dynamics approach and findings from previous Can't Wait to Learn research. The appropriateness, acceptability and feasibility of this intervention will be evaluated in a **caregiver engagement pilot study**. We aim to design this intervention to not only positively impact programme adherence and learning outcomes in Uganda, but also be adaptable and applicable to other contexts and education programmes.

In **Chad**, our research aims to produce tools to support the adoption of Can't Wait to Learn by partners and its sustained impact at scale. We are developing a workshop design for the contextualization of the programme's standard operating procedures, evidence-driven quality standards and quality assurance tools, and guidelines on generating programme engagement and ownership.

Additionally, a **value for money analysis** will be carried out in **Uganda and Chad**, to allow comparison between different implementation models and levels of scale. Finally, a cross-country research study, planned for **Chad, Sudan and Uganda**, is a **policy network analysis** which examines the route from education technology policy development to implementation. It aims to identify pivotal factors, actors, roles, individuals and conditions in the successful development and implementation of policy, the roadblocks that stand in the way, and the needs to achieve EdTech programme scale-up.

## CONTACT DETAILS

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