

# Play Learn Thrive



Grand Challenges Canada®  
Grands Défis Canada

The LEGO Foundation

Grand Challenges Canada is launching a new portfolio, **Play Learn Thrive**, to respond to gaps in current Early Childhood Development in Emergencies (ECDiE) and Education in Emergencies (EiE) approaches.

**We aim to create strong support systems for children in complex crisis settings so that they can play, learn, and thrive.**

We recognize that children's holistic development, including their physical, intellectual, psychological, cultural, and social wellbeing, is intrinsically linked to the wellbeing and capacity of their caregivers and educators, as well as other members of their community. Strengthening this support network is essential to foster children's growth and development.

In this funding call, we seek solutions that support innovators to create more robust support systems for all children from birth to 12 years of age in complex crisis settings, with a focus on those who are left behind and whose developmental and educational needs are not being met.

With funding from the LEGO Foundation, Grand Challenges Canada will award grants in two categories, proof of concept (POC) and transition to scale (TTS), through this Request for Proposals (RFP).



## APPLICANT TOOLS

Applicants are encouraged to access Grand Challenge Canada's online Innovator Toolbox, which contains materials to help researchers and innovators develop their project proposals and plan how their innovation can be sustainably scaled and have global impact. Our [Gender Equality Portal](#) provides a set of gender equality tools.

Please reference our "Frequently Asked Questions". Other questions about this Request for Proposals that are not addressed in the above FAQ may be submitted by email to [playlearnthrive@grandchallenges](mailto:playlearnthrive@grandchallenges) by April 15th, 2025.

**The following general areas of focus must be reflected in all project proposals in order to be considered for funding:**

- Innovations should either focus on:
  - a. Strengthening children's (from birth to 12 years of age) education and/or development, with a focus on those who are left behind and whose developmental and educational needs are not being met
  - b. Strengthening the capacity and/or wellbeing of the support networks around children, including though not limited to their educators, caregivers, community care providers, religious leaders etc.
  - c. Supporting children AND their support networks. While we would encourage and consider proposals that only focus on one of the first two options, preference will be given to proposals that demonstrate a dual focus on children and key figures in their support networks.
- Innovations should integrate play-based solutions in their programmatic concept (Appendix A provides illustrative examples of play-based solutions).
- Innovations should be culturally sensitive and community-driven, accounting for the complex social, cultural and environmental drivers contributing to children's early learning and development in at least one of the four priority countries (Jordan, Lebanon, Kenya, Uganda).
- Preference will be given to proposals that align with the sub-themes listed in Appendix B of the Request for Proposals document. Please note that we would still encourage and consider proposals that do not explicitly focus on these sub-themes, so long as they align with the general areas of focus described above.
- While this Request for Proposals is translated in Arabic and French, **only applications that are submitted in English will be reviewed.** Applications in any other language will be rejected without review. Note that quality of the use of English language in proposals will not play a factor in their evaluation unless it significantly affects the clarity of the information.

## ELIGIBILITY

While the Play Learn Thrive portfolio will have a broader geographical focus, this RFP will only fund projects that will be implemented in at least one (1) of four (4) countries: Jordan, Lebanon, Kenya, Uganda.

To be eligible for funding, applying organizations must:

1. Be not-for-profit organizations that are legally incorporated<sup>1</sup>
2. Have an active presence in at least one of the four priority countries (Jordan, Lebanon, Kenya, Uganda)
3. Be legally registered to do business in at least one of the four priority countries
4. Implement programming directly in at least one of the four priority countries



<sup>1</sup> Incorporated means legally formed or its equivalent in order to be a juridical person. Individuals are not eligible.

# TRANSITION TO SCALE (TTS)

Funding for more mature innovations that have already achieved proof-of-concept and are ready to be implemented more widely. These are grants between \$300,000 - \$1,500,000 CAD per project over a maximum of 24 months.

Transition to Scale (TTS) grants will be accepted on a rolling basis between **January 21, 2025–November 27th, 2025**. The first application deadline is on **April 24th, 2025, at 2 pm ET**. Subsequent TTS application deadlines throughout the year will be posted on the Grand Challenges Canada website and in the FAQ.

TTS applications will involve a two-stage process:

- Stage One: applicants complete a screening questionnaire and project summary
- Stage Two: applicants submit a full project application. Only those applications that pass stage one will be invited to submit a full application in stage two.

\*Please note that having an established Proof of Concept is a key requirement for TTS funding.

## PROOF OF CONCEPT (POC)

**PROOF-OF-CONCEPT APPLICATIONS ARE NOW CLOSED.**

### HOW TO APPLY

To apply for funding, applicants **MUST** use the online application form provided, which is **ONLY** accessible via Grand Challenges Canada's [Fluxx Portal](#). [Existing users should login to their existing account](#) and [new users must register for an account on the main application portal on Fluxx \(linked above\)](#). Please see Appendix D for Instructions for Application Portal, and see the Request for proposals for full eligibility details and proposal requirements.

### APPLICATION DEADLINE

**Transition-to-scale applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until November 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025.**

