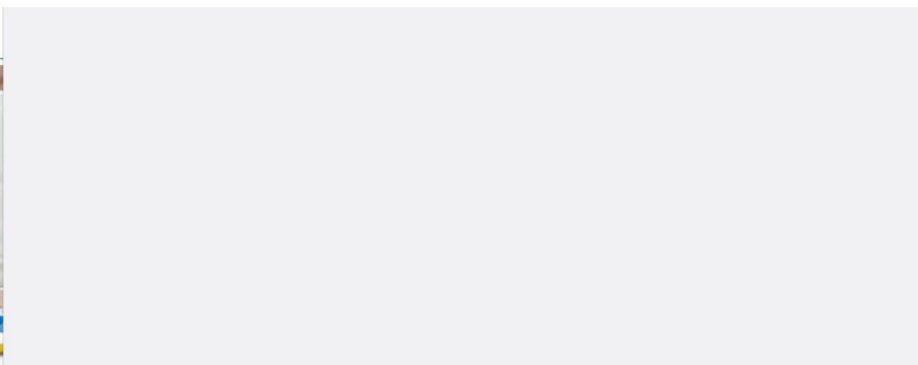


# **Play and Learning in Children's Eyes (PALICE) Pilot 1 Progress Report**

Country: Uganda

Research Partner: Luigi Giussani Institute of Higher Education

Date: 08<sup>th</sup> July, 2022



## Summary

*This section provides a summary on: dates of the pilot; number of teachers and ISS that participated in the pilot, the pilot locations; main lessons learned; and main recommendations.*

The PALICE pilot 1 was conducted from 9<sup>th</sup> May to 10<sup>th</sup> June, 2022 in 30 schools located in Kampala (2 schools), Wakiso (5 schools), and Luweero (23 schools). A total of 174 trained teachers participated in piloting the PALICE tools – FORA and CELP modalities.

The main lessons learned from the pilot include:

- Teachers perceived the PALICE tools as useful and supportive to their practices. The application of the tools has been credited by the teachers for contributing to an improvement in the way they plan and implement their learning through play (LtP) activities.
- The post-observation reflections have provided teachers with a platform to evaluate their lessons and be able to devise ways of improving on areas where they did not perform well. Most importantly, the teachers have appreciated the relevance of the coaching tips in providing them with hints on how to improve on the weak areas.
- Application of the digital FORA is partially hindered by the teachers' lack of smartphones; for those who could use the app, the online version is much preferred to the paper version.

The main recommendations drawn from the pilot include:

- A need to look into the possibility of expanding smartphone coverage in the various pilot schools so that the digital FORA can be tried by a larger proportion of teachers. Otherwise, if teachers are to share smartphones for the application of digital FORA, there is need to create different teacher profiles so that different teachers are able to retrieve their most recent coaching tips and feedback for improving on the subsequent lessons.
- A need to create space in the FORA paper version so that teachers are able to capture children's feedback from the CELP tool.
- The teacher CELP questions could be printed out so that teachers who are not using the digital FORA could as well administer the questions in case they want to collect children's feedback about the LtP activity.

## Training

*This section provides a description of the number of teachers and ISS who were trained, the training dates, format of training, challenges encountered and recommendations for future trainings.*

The PALICE pilot 1 training was conducted from 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2022 in three training sites that were virtually connected. In each training site, two facilitators from LGIHE supported the main facilitators: Mauro Giacomazzi, Institutional Development Advisor, LGIHE; and Martin Ariapa, Director of Research and MEL, LGIHE. A total of 174 teachers participated in the training to learn how to administer the FORA and CELP tools. All the 174 teachers trained were expected to implement the FORA tools as well as act as Instructional Support Staff (ISS) for their colleagues while administering the CELP tool.

The pilot training was conducted as follows:

- **Introductions:** Participants were asked to introduce themselves. Thereafter, the facilitators took the participants through the workshop programme and explained the purpose of the workshop.
- **Introduction to PALICE:** In this session, the participants were introduced to the PALICE project: the project objectives, implementing partners, geographical scope, and the three project phases. After these introductions, the participants were also taken through the concept of learning through play and how it is important.
- **Introduction to the play spectrum:** After going through the concept of learning through play, the facilitators introduced the three play facilitation styles: free play, guided play, and teacher directed play, through: (a) using the PPT slides and invitation (in plenary) of teachers to share personal examples used in the classrooms; and (ii) using the videos (one at a time) that demonstrated the different facilitation styles. The participants were then asked in plenary to share their reflections on what they observed in the various videos – the various characteristics and roles played by the teacher and children.
- **Introduction to the characteristics of play:** The five characteristics of play were explained to the participants by using the five videos. After watching each video, the participants were asked (in plenary) to identify observable behaviours demonstrated by the children. To conclude this session, the facilitators linked the five characteristics of play to the three play facilitation styles.

For these two sessions, the teachers found the videos very useful and interesting as the videos helped to clarify some of the concepts.

- **Introduction to the FORA:** After going through the different facilitation styles and characteristics of play, participants were then introduced to the FORA tool. They were divided into groups and asked to go through all the FORA behaviours by facilitation style and play characteristics. Thereafter, the 4-step process for using the tool: (1) set intention, (2) observe, (3) reflect, and (4) triangulate, was explained to them. Facilitators supported the participants during the process to ensure that they understand the steps. After going through the various steps of completing the FORA tools, participants were then introduced to the digital FORA and Paper FORA.
- **Introduction to CELP:** After going through the FORA tools, the participants were then introduced to the CELP tool and its link to the FORA tools. All the steps for using the tool were explained to the participants: preparing and planning with the teacher who is using the FORA; taking photos of the LTP activity; discussing the photos with children in a focus group discussion; filling the CELP Feedback Sheet for the selected facilitation style and characteristics of play; sharing feedback with the FORA teacher; managing the data, etc.,
- **Fieldwork planning and other logistics:** At the end of the three days, the participants were taken through the fieldwork planning phase – agreeing on the start date for the implementation of the tools, the duration of the activity, distribution of the pilot materials etc. The facilitators also created a WhatsApp group that facilitated generation of daily feedback and issues of concern from the teachers during the training and implementation of the pilot tools.

Notably, during Day 1 and Day 2 of the training, the Core Research Team connected, every evening, with the participants to check on how the trainings were going on, and to help clarify unclear issues or concepts. Among the key questions that the participants raised during these sessions included:

- What is play for children 10-12 age group? What is free play for children of 10-12?
- How do you implement facilitation styles in large classrooms?
- Please explain the Iterative and Meaningful characteristics.
- How many characteristics should the teacher select?
- How many learning goals should a teacher select? Are certain goals linked to certain characteristics?
- What is the difference between children observed and children engaged?
- Can the teachers go back and edit their entry later, after they have saved?

All these questions were answered/ clarified by the Core Research Team members. The teachers were happy with the conversations and found the responses very useful.

On the last day of the training, the participants were divided into eight groups to practice completing the FORA and CELP tools. In each group, the participants were asked to take roles: some as teachers to prepare and implement a mock lesson following a facilitation style and the characteristic(s) of their choice; some as children to participate in the focus group discussions; some as ISS to take photos, and some as children to participate in the lesson. All the steps for completing FORA (digital or paper) and CELP were followed.

### ***Challenges that emerged during the training***

The following major challenge emerged during the training:

- Lack of smartphones and/or technical glitches with the digital FORA. Some teachers didn't have smartphones for practicing the digital FORA, and in some cases the FORA app failed to install in some phones. The participants who were affected by these issues were asked to sit with colleagues whose digital FORA was successfully installed and working. This, however, prevented full practice for some of the participants even if the facilitators encouraged them to share the phones.

### ***Training recommendations***

- The training format/ structure was elaborate and relevant. The teachers were able to understand the various facilitation styles and characteristics of play. There is however need to dedicate more time in exploring the two characteristics of play i.e., iterative and meaningful, and the different behaviour items that contain complex words such as: enthusiasm, processing feelings, etc.
- There is also need to have some trails of the tools in the various schools with children so that the teachers can practice the steps in their classroom contexts and understand the concepts better. Otherwise, we could use context relevant videos that help the teachers to link with their classroom situation such as those with large class sizes, learning through play in upper classes, etc.

## Pilot administration

*This section provides an overall summary of the pilot administration.*

Statistic	Teachers*	ISS*																								
<b>Number of teachers, % Female/ Male</b>	174 (79% female/ 21% male)																									
<b>Number of ISS, % Female/ Male</b>		174 (79% female/ 21% male)																								
<b>Age range</b>	21 to 64 years	21 to 64 years																								
<b>Locations</b>	Luweero, Wakiso, Kampala	Luweero, Wakiso, Kampala																								
<b>Frequency for application of FORA in the past 4 weeks</b>	<table> <tr> <th><i>Frequency</i></th><th><i>Freq.</i></th><th><i>%</i></th></tr> <tr> <td>Daily</td><td>2</td><td>1.68</td></tr> <tr> <td>Twice per week</td><td>44</td><td>36.97</td></tr> <tr> <td>Once per week</td><td>56</td><td>47.06</td></tr> <tr> <td>Every two weeks</td><td>2</td><td>1.68</td></tr> <tr> <td>Once in the past 4 weeks</td><td>1</td><td>0.84</td></tr> <tr> <td>Three times per week</td><td>14</td><td>11.76</td></tr> <tr> <td>Total</td><td>119</td><td>100.00</td></tr> </table>		<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Freq.</i>	<i>%</i>	Daily	2	1.68	Twice per week	44	36.97	Once per week	56	47.06	Every two weeks	2	1.68	Once in the past 4 weeks	1	0.84	Three times per week	14	11.76	Total	119	100.00
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<b>Teacher CELP observations</b>	31 observations																									
<b>% administered Digital FORA</b>	<table> <tr> <th><i>Versions of FORA used</i></th><th><i>Freq.</i></th><th><i>%</i></th></tr> <tr> <td>FORA App</td><td>8</td><td>6.72</td></tr> <tr> <td>FORA paper</td><td>43</td><td>36.13</td></tr> <tr> <td>Both (FORA app &amp; FORA paper)</td><td>68</td><td>57.14</td></tr> <tr> <td>Total</td><td>119</td><td>100.00</td></tr> </table>		<i>Versions of FORA used</i>	<i>Freq.</i>	<i>%</i>	FORA App	8	6.72	FORA paper	43	36.13	Both (FORA app & FORA paper)	68	57.14	Total	119	100.00									
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Total	119	100.00																								
<b>Number of digital FORA</b>	401 observations																									
<b>Number Paper FORA</b>	433 forms																									
<b>Number of CELP</b>	256 forms																									
<b>Number of participants in post-pilot survey</b>	120 participants (12 interviews)	42 participants (6 interviews)																								

\* For Uganda: All the 174 teachers were as well trained as ISS.

- *Digital FORA administration:* Most (63.9%) of the teachers surveyed reported to have had experience with the digital FORA in the 4 weeks of pilot implementation. More than a half of the teachers followed-up reported to have used both paper and digital versions of FORA.
- *Number of participants surveyed:* The facilitators anticipated to follow all the 174 teachers who participated in the pilot training. However, this was not possible due to the strike that coincided with the post-pilot survey for which 54 teachers were not reachable. This therefore means that some paper FORA and CELP forms were not collected from some teachers who had not left their forms at school.
- *Frequency of FORA application:* The frequency for the application of FORA in the 4 weeks prior to the post-pilot survey, was around one to two times a week. This information helps us to plan better for the next pilot.

## Overall impressions

*This section presents findings on whether teachers liked the tools, what the teachers found most valuable, and what their greatest challenges were.*

The teachers generally perceived the FORA and CELP tools as useful and supportive to their practices: “What I can say, the CELP and FORA they are nice tools. They are good tools and they can improve the way we teach in class and they can change the way we learn”. (Teacher interview, Uganda).

The application of the FORA has been credited for contributing to an improvement in the way teachers go about their work and specifically the improvement of their LTP practices as evidenced in the following quote:

Right now, I prioritise playfulness as compared to before I used FORA because I was a bit lecturing... But if you include playfulness in the activity, the children learn a lot as compared to when the teacher is in front lecturing. (Teacher interview, Uganda)

The post-activity reflections have been pivotal in a way that the teachers are able to evaluate their lessons and be able to devise ways of improving what could have not gone well or maintain aspects that were striking within the lessons:

I've been able to check myself and see where I'm weak and where the strength is. So, it has helped me to now improve myself and touch the weak areas to see whether I'm doing the correct work for the children. (Teacher interview, Uganda).

More time is currently dedicated to the planning process to ensure that the right play facilitation spectrum is employed and the right learning materials are put in place so as to achieve the set goals in any given lesson. Furthermore, the feedback provided by the FORA has been handy to the teachers' capacity development, especially in regard to the aspect of designing play-based activities while being cognizant of the fact that the activities should be able to help them achieve the set goals. Post-activity reflections have become a common practice with an aim of improving the preparation and delivery of their lessons.

After reading [the coaching tips], I utilize what I have read in preparation to observe a particular behaviour I never observed in the previous lesson. For example, the tip could be that I need to use learning materials that age appropriate, so I prepare accordingly. Possibly, if I don't read the coaching tip, I may find it challenging to bring out such a behaviour among the children. (Teacher interview, Uganda)

[FORA] helps me to improve for example if there's a behaviour that I haven't observed in the children, in the next lesson I prepare so that I can be able to observe that particular behaviour I never saw last time... When I read the coaching tip and realise that maybe I didn't prepare well or the learning materials were lacking, these tips help by suggesting how I can plan and prepare for the next lesson so that I can be able to observe a certain behaviour that I didn't see last time. (Teacher interview, Uganda)



It has become now part of my preparation. You write what you are going to do, the activity, then you go and administer it, then you check yourself. It has been something that is very easy for me to put into my normal practice of lessons. (Teacher interview, Uganda)

Furthermore, the participants also acknowledged a shift in their attitude towards incorporation of play in the activities designed for the respective classes which they observe now as a commendable practice as explained below:

It is like, before I have never, I was not involving different games in my lessons because I saw it like time consuming. But when I started involving [play], I saw that it is helping me so that children are able to understand their content when I've not even explained so much. (Teacher interview, Uganda)

The CELP has been commended by the teachers for generating helpful feedback from the children that can be used to better the subsequent lessons. The ideas or opinions provided by the children have enabled the teachers to better understand the learners' interests and this feedback has been translated into better preparation to allow for learners' involvement in the lessons.

[CELP] gives me room or the teacher I've observed to get ideas from the learners' responses and experience about the lesson. So, the observer and the teacher whom I've observed, we get the experience of the learners and we plan our teaching or our lesson based on the learners' experience of the previous lesson. (Teacher interview, Uganda)

Teachers further observed that the CELP discussions have equally benefited the learners in terms of improving their self-esteem, confidence and generally the way they present or express themselves.

It has helped them [learners] to develop confidence for example, there are some games that need one to come out and say anything in front of the colleagues. That coming out, there is a way it develops their confidence. (Teacher interview, Uganda).

Consequently, through these repeated interactions, the teacher-pupil relationship is improved as seen in this quote: "We built teacher to pupil relationship since we started this. It promoted pupils' involvement in the lessons and also it promoted interest. Pupils show interest in learning" (Teacher interview, Uganda).

On the other hand, the application of the digital FORA was somewhat limited by the teachers' lack of smartphone devices, yet to some teachers, working with the digital FORA is much preferred to the paper version: "Only that I don't have a smartphone. If I get one, it can help me to frequently use the FORA without worrying about photocopying papers for paper FORA" (Teacher survey, Uganda). Additionally, some of the teachers who have smartphones are constantly disrupted by the power outages in their areas of residence.

Maybe the digital FORA; now for us like here, the challenge we have, it is the network and electricity to charge these phones. So, digital FORA is not working so much on us. We always use the paper FORA of which we are also missing the other digital because

during the workshop, it was so much easier than this paper FORA. (Teacher interview, Uganda)

### Digital FORA app

Nearly two-thirds, 76(63.9%) of the participants surveyed reported to have had experience using the digital FORA.

*Table 1: Participants' usage of the FORA and smart device ownership*

Which of the following versions of the FORA have you had experience using?	Frequency	Percent
FORA App	8	6.72
FORA paper	43	36.13
Both (FORA app & FORA paper)	68	57.14
Total	119	100.00

Furthermore, out of the 68 participants who reported to have had experience using both the digital and paper versions, most of them (60.3%) stated to prefer using the digital FORA.

*Table 2: Preference of the FORA versions*

Which version of the FORA do you prefer to use?	Frequency	Percent
FORA App	41	60.29
FORA paper	15	22.06
No difference, I like both	12	17.65
Total	68	100.00

As mentioned by the participants surveyed, what they like most about the digital FORA included the following:

- It keeps the data safe compared to the paper which can easily be destroyed or lost;
- It offers feedback on how best to handle a characteristic that needs to be improved;
- The teacher can go back to relook into the data to see what he/she has done; reflect on it and plan better for the next lesson;
- It shows the teacher the characteristic(s) that he/she has used. The app also shows the teacher the percentage of characteristics, learning goals, and facilitation styles that he/she had used;
- It does not take much time to complete as the steps are very easy to follow;
- It provides information on the meaning of characteristics and many other things.

Additionally, the participants also identified the following as the least liked about the FORA app:

- The teacher cannot see what he/she has put especially when the teacher uses someone's smartphone;
- The fact that the app does not indicate that the data has been sent;
- Sometimes the app was very slow or was freezing in some smartphones;
- It needs data especially when one has to send the observations;



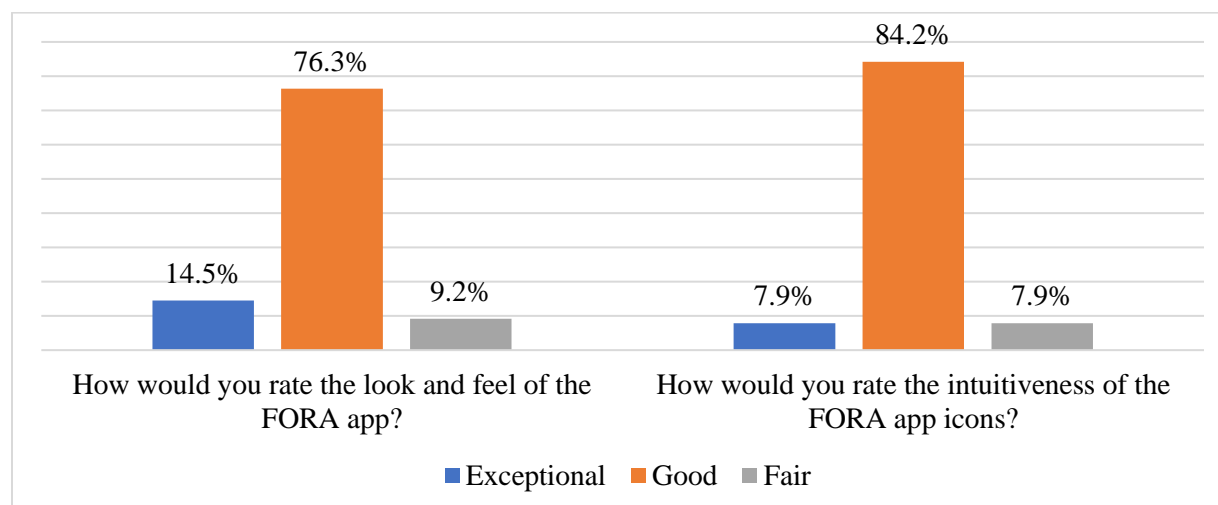
- Network challenges make it difficult to use the app when sending the data;
- It takes a long process to complete it as compared to paper FORA;
- It cannot be accessed without a smart device (phone or tablet);
- The teacher cannot separate the work done by another teacher if the phone is used by different teachers. The app does not have provision for the name for the teacher.

Almost all 75(98.7%) the participants who reported to have used the digital FORA were either reasonably or very satisfied with the easiness of navigating the app as shown below.

*Table 3: Participants' satisfaction with the easiness of navigation of the FORA app*

How satisfied are you with the easiness of navigation of the FORA app?	Frequency	Percent
Very satisfied	31	40.79
Reasonably satisfied	44	57.89
Slightly dissatisfied	1	1.32
Total	76	100.00

These participants' ratings of the look and feel of the FORA app and the intuitiveness of its icons were as shown in the figure below.



*Figure 1: Participants' rating of the feel and look; and intuitiveness of the FORA app (n=76)*

As seen in Figure 1, the majority (84.2%) of the participants rated the intuitiveness of the FORA app icons as 'good' whereas 76.3% rated it's look and feel as 'good'.

### ***Impressions from the use of My Data***

Out of the 76 participants who reported to have had experience using the digital FORA, the majority of them, 65(85.5%) found it helpful to have their observations displayed under My Data, as shown below.

*Table 4: Participants' rating on the helpfulness of the My Data section*

In your opinion, how helpful is it to have your FORA observations displayed under “My Data”?	Frequency	Percent
Extremely helpful	10	13.16
Very helpful	55	72.37
Not so helpful	11	14.47
Total	76	100.00

However, some participants underscored the inability to view data from several previous activities. The participants noted that the section of “My Data” only displays feedback of the recently conducted observation yet at times they would like to use the feedback from the previous lessons/ observations to plan for the subsequent lessons. This limits the usability of the “My Data” to only the most recent activity.

The participants also expressed dissatisfaction that, with the FORA digital, they cannot see how the rated/scored in the different sections under “My Data” as the app only shows the recent experiences described by the children i.e., My CELP Data, and the Coaching tips. One of the survey participants said: “For digital FORA, you cannot see how you scored or rated the different questions under My Data.” (Teacher interview, Uganda).

### ***Impressions from receiving coaching feedback***

The majority 99(83.2%) of participants stated to have found the feedback provided by the FORA to be very helpful to improving their LtP practice. Furthermore, the majority 111(93.8%) of the participants reported that they ‘sometimes’ or ‘always’ incorporate the feedback provided from the FORA into the planning of their next Learning through Play activity, as shown below.

*Table 5: Participants' opinion and use of FORA feedback*

In your opinion, how helpful is the feedback provided by the FORA to improving your Learning through Play practice?	Frequency	Percent
Extremely helpful	15	12.61
Very helpful	99	83.19
Not so helpful	2	1.68
Not at all helpful	3	2.52
How often do you incorporate feedback from the FORA into the planning of your next Learning through Play activity?		
Always	43	36.13
Sometimes	68	57.14
Rarely	4	3.36
Never	4	3.36
Total	119	100.00

All the participants acknowledged to have improved their LtP practice as a result of using the FORA, with more than a half 69(58.0%) of them mentioning to have improved to a great extent as shown in the table below.

*Table 6: Extent of improvement of LtP practices as a result of FORA*

In your opinion, to what extent your usage of the FORA has helped you improve your Learning through Play practice?	Frequency	Percent
To a great extent	69	57.98
Somewhat	50	42.02
Total	119	100.00

### **Paper FORA**

The majority 111(93.3%) of participants reported to have had experience using the paper FORA (refer to **Table 1**). Furthermore, out of the 68 participants who reported to have had experience using both the digital and paper versions, 15(22.1%) of them stated to prefer using the paper FORA (refer to **Table 2**). As mentioned by the surveyed participants, what they like most about the paper FORA included the following:

- It gives the characteristics that the teacher has to focus on while doing the observations;
- It guides on what to do especially the characteristics to focus on while observing in a lesson;
- It is always available compared to digital FORA which is sometimes affected by power disruptions in some areas;
- It is fast and easy to complete;
- It is readily available to teachers without access to a smart device.

Additionally, these participants identified the following as the least liked about the paper FORA:

- The words are very small;
- The section on learning goals is somehow difficult;
- It is a lot of paperwork especially when there is an area you want to work on in the next lesson;
- Some behaviour items contain difficult words.

Out of the 43(36.1%) participants who reported to have used the paper FORA only, the majority of them, 41(95.4%) were either ‘reasonably’ or ‘very’ satisfied with the easiness of navigation of the FORA paper as shown below.

*Table 7: Participants' satisfaction with the easiness of navigation of the FORA paper*

How satisfied are you with the easiness of navigation of the FORA paper?	Frequency	Percent
Very satisfied	12	27.91
Reasonably satisfied	29	67.44
Slightly dissatisfied	2	4.65
Total	43	100.00

These participants’ ratings of the look and feel, and the intuitiveness of the FORA paper were as shown in the figure below.

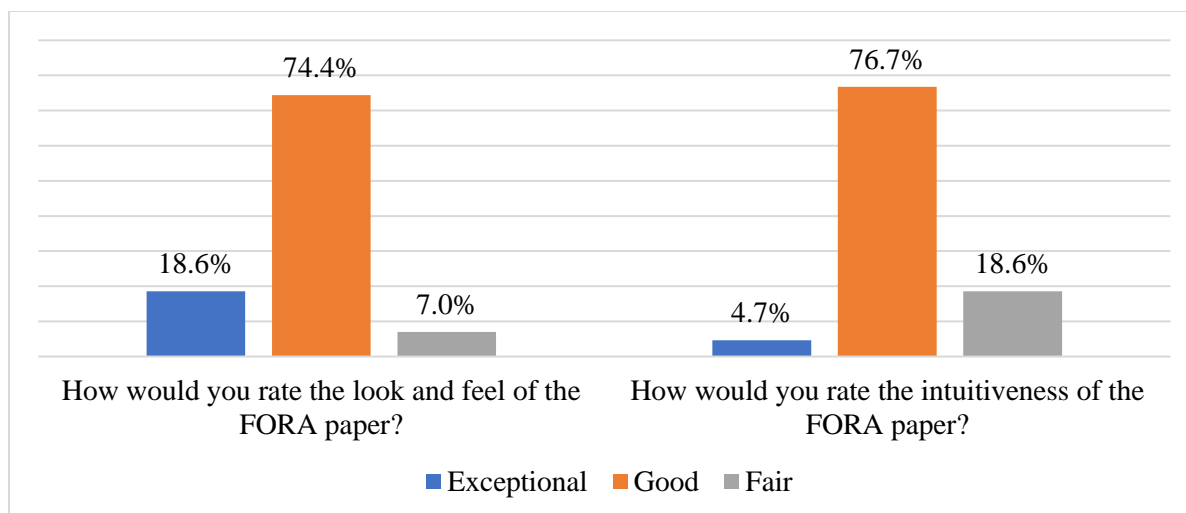


Figure 2: Participants' rating of the feel and look, and intuitiveness of the FORA paper (n=43)

As seen in figure 2, the majority (76.7%) of participants rated the intuitiveness of the FORA paper as 'good' whereas 74.4% rated it's look and feel as 'good'.

## Benefits and challenges of using the FORA tool

### Benefits/successes

The FORA tool has contributed to an improvement in the teachers' practices which the participants attributed to the evaluation and reflection conducted whenever the tool is applied, as explained below: "I have been able to evaluate myself and the methods I use in class to improve other lessons" (Teacher survey, Uganda). Other participants said:

I have gained more skills in the way of teaching as I now know what goals to focus on while in a lesson for a given activity. I have learnt how to use learning materials well and also am able to handle my learners very well. (Teacher survey, Uganda)

The FORA has been helping me to set what I want to see in the children, and it has been helping me to understand whether something is happening or it needs more improvement. So, the FORA generally has been helping me to evaluate myself and what I am doing. (Teacher interview, Uganda)

Some teachers remarked that as a result of using the FORA, they regularly conduct self-evaluation of their lessons and use of the coaching tips in an attempt to improve how they plan and deliver their lessons:

After reading the behaviours and coaching tips, I get to understand what I am supposed to do in my lesson. (Teacher survey, Uganda).

The coaching tips have helped me prepare my lessons in a way that has really helped me to improve the way I teach. Evaluation of my lessons has become a normal practice for me. (Teacher survey, Uganda)

The use of FORA has contributed to an improvement in the teachers' LtP practices as they reported to specifically prepare their lesson activities while incorporating play:

It has also helped me to promote the learning through play and improving how I include learning through play in the activities I prepare. (Teacher survey, Uganda).

I have gained experience in incorporating play in lessons. Also, I didn't know some of the behaviours that can be observed in a lesson but now, I understand them. (Teacher survey, Uganda)

Likewise, participants acknowledged to dedicate more time in the preparation to ensure that a variety of materials are available for the designed activities. Some stated to have become more creative and tend to think widely:

FORA [tools] help a teacher improve on their preparation for the lesson that is a teacher becomes more creative, and makes sure there are materials available for play. (Teacher survey, Uganda).

Proper planning, because if you are to use the FORA, first of all you need to know; What am I going to do? What am I going to observe? Which type of play am I going to include in the lesson: and then what materials am I going to use? Not like before, you would come anyhow to class. But this time round you plan. (Teacher interview, Uganda)

The presence of a variety of learning materials has contributed to children's happiness while attending the lessons. Some teachers also reported to have witnessed reduced absenteeism among learners as a result of the LtP activities that they employ in their lessons.

FORA has enabled my learners to articulate words, it has helped them [to] engage actively, physically and has limited absenteeism. The learners tell their parents about the [photo] capturing that took place in the class and when the absentees get to know about this, they attend the next day. (Teacher interview, Uganda)

It has led to motivation of learners towards learning because of the activities that incorporate play. They are always eager for the next lessons. (Teacher survey, Uganda)

It made the lesson so enjoyable as learners don't get bored. The activities keep them engaged. My work has also been simplified as the learners now participate more than I do. Learner's interest in the lessons has been improved. (Teacher survey, Uganda).

To some participants, the mastery of the application of FORA and the meaning of the various aspects such as characteristics and corresponding behaviours has been a milestone:

I have managed to fill the FORA app minus someone else helping me. (Teacher survey, Uganda).

I have acquired knowledge on using it [FORA] by knowing some of the behaviours exhibited in class which I didn't know existed" (Teacher survey, Uganda).

Some participants have also been able to support their colleagues in using the FORA.

I have managed to create awareness of the importance of FORA among other colleagues who had not yet known about it and I also support my colleagues who had received training but still had challenges in some areas. I find this a success to me because I can train others on the purpose and importance of FORA to a teacher. (Teacher interview, Uganda)

Before using FORA, some participants attested to have not prioritized observation of learners during the class activities. Now, when using FORA, the participants reported to have got an opportunity to observe and understand their learners better and plan well on how best to support them. This has also helped to improve on the teacher-pupil relationship:

Personally, I used not to observe the children as they do activities and didn't know well their challenges. (Teacher survey, Uganda)

It has helped me to understand the learners I teach. It has helped me to think of different ways to support the learners. (Teacher survey, Uganda)

It has helped me know my children very well and give them more attention as compared to the other time. It has helped me to build a strong relationship with my learners hence they share with me their minds. (Teacher survey, Uganda)

There is an improvement in the way I handle children because before I started using FORA, I had very few learning materials but when I started using FORA, after observation and discussion with children, their suggestions are put into consideration by me. (Teacher survey, Uganda)

### **Challenges**

The incorporation of play in planned activities is hindered by the inadequacy of teaching learning materials, especially when the classes are large. This has consequently affected the use of FORA as explained by some participants:

Like here we are handling big numbers in our classes. So, materials to be used may not be enough for these learners ... and if the materials are not enough, it may hinder the successfulness of my lesson. (Teacher interview, Uganda)

Less materials or inadequate materials. So, you plan thinking that you are going to have a designed or a suggested number of materials, then reaching the classroom, comparing the materials with the learners, the materials are fewer than the learners. You end up not getting what you thought at first would come out because if you have targeted like, if you want to engage thirty or forty children, and then in the long run you find the materials that you are having are only engaging twenty, then the rest will be nowhere. (Teacher interview, Uganda)

Language difficulties as mentioned by some participants presented a comprehension challenge in some behaviour items ultimately affecting the observation of such behaviours (refer to **Table 14**):



Some behaviour items are difficult to understand and observe because of the complex language used. (Teacher survey, Uganda)

I think FORA can be improved in terms of the language. Some of the vocabularies can be a little disturbing to understand or you read a statement that you cannot simply understand quickly when you read it. (Teacher interview, Uganda)

According to the participants, learners' distraction during play incorporating activities has been another challenge in the application of the FORA and CELP. Some alleged that learners are "not used to activities involving play" especially in upper primary classes:

Classroom control is really a challenge especially with these children in upper classes. They always want to do their own [things] especially if the play activity is familiar to them. (Teacher survey, Uganda)

But when there is someone who is looking at me at the back, ... some children tend to be distracted thinking that what could be the other teacher doing behind our classroom? So that little destruction has been the only barrier in the classroom setting during the use of the FORA. (Teacher interview, Uganda)

To some participants, application of FORA is quite a demanding process yet the teachers have a lot of responsibilities to fulfil in their school. This makes it hard to complete reflections on time and at times forget the observations made when it takes long to evaluate such lessons:

I go to another lesson or class before completing the reflection. Therefore, at times it's not easy to remember everything I saw in the many lessons I had in a day. (Teacher survey, Uganda).

It requires time yet you have many lessons in a day. It's not possible to do a reflection right after that particular lesson because you have other lessons right away and this leads to forgetting of what could have happened in the lesson. (Teacher survey, Uganda)

Difficulty in the storage of the FORA materials as mentioned by a few participants was another challenge: "Storage of the papers completed is a challenge since there's no specific file. At times they get lost and this makes it difficult to follow-up on what was observed" (Teacher survey, Uganda).

Lack of smartphones and/or power shortages barred some participants from experiencing the use of FORA digital

I don't have a smartphone and also data needed to send the observations made on digital FORA. (Teacher survey, Uganda).

Like for us, we are in the village. Sometimes we have issues with the battery so it might take a week when you have not got the money to charge the phone. So, you can take a week without even using the app because it needs you to be with the phone that is charged. (Teacher interview, Uganda)

## Use of Teacher CELP

Overall, 31(26.1%) of the participants reported to have used the Teacher CELP integrated into the FORA digital app. All of these participants stated to have found it either very or extremely helpful to have the perspectives of children collected during the focus group discussions. Furthermore, less than a half 15(38.7%) of them found it easy to conduct focus group discussions as shown below.

*Table 8: Participants' rating on the ease of conducting FGDs*

How easy was it for you to conduct these FGDs	Frequency	Percent
Very easy	12	38.71
Somewhat easy	15	48.39
Somewhat difficult	4	12.90
Total	31	100.00

## CELP administration by ISS

### *Integration of CELP with FORA*

Only 9(7.6%) of the participants reported never to have had an ISS observe their Learning through Play practice and subsequently applied the CELP.

*Table 9: Whether the participant was observed by an ISS and applied CELP*

Has an ISS ever observed your Learning through Play practice and subsequently applied the CELP?	Frequency	Percent
No	9	7.56
Yes	110	92.44
Total	119	100.00

The teachers who never had an ISS observe their lessons identified reasons such as failure to coordinate well with their colleagues and understaffing in their schools:

I failed to coordinate very well with my colleague who was supposed to observe due to many activities at school. (Teacher survey, Uganda)

There are few teachers at our school so if a teacher decides to leave their class to attend to you as an observer, then they will miss their lesson. (Teacher survey, Uganda)

Among the participants who reported to have been observed by an ISS, these observations were primarily conducted by their colleague teachers who were also trained on using FORA and CELP. The majority 99(90.0%) of them felt very comfortable with the presence of an observer in their classroom as shown below.

*Table 10: Participants' comfortability with the observer*

Overall, how comfortable were you with the presence of the observer?	Frequency	Percent
Very uncomfortable	3	2.73
Somewhat uncomfortable	1	0.91
Somewhat comfortable	7	6.36
Very comfortable	99	90.00
Total	110	100.00

Additionally, the majority 90(81.8%) of participants reported to have administered the FORA observation protocol at the same time as the CELP was administered. Some participants, 18(16.4%) stated to have had no discussion about the goals of their learning through play activity with the observer prior to the observation.

The majority 105(95.5%) of participants whose LtP practice was observed mentioned to have conducted a feedback session upon observation and conversation with the children by an ISS. Most 68(64.8%) of them acknowledged that the results of their own observation were somewhat similar to those of the external observer's discussion with children while 30(28.6%) observed that they were very similar.

*Table 11: Similarity between teachers' and children's results and helpfulness of feedback*

How similar or different were the results of your observation with the results of the external observer's discussion with children?	Frequency	Percent
Very Similar	30	28.57
Somewhat Similar	68	64.76
Somewhat Different	6	5.71
Very Different	1	0.95
Total	105	100.00
In your opinion, how helpful was it to have the perspectives of children collected through the CELP and triangulated with the FORA?		
Extremely helpful	13	12.38
Very helpful	92	87.62
Total	105	100.00

From **Table 11** above, all the participants whose LtP practices were observed found it helpful to have the perspectives of children collected through the CELP and triangulated with the FORA. One of the participants explained:

It has been very helpful because it helps us to do what the learners are interested in because this most times helps them to learn. For example, some materials and designing the class as they want it to be. As a teacher, this feedback helps me to improve on my lessons. (Teacher interview, Uganda)

## Overall CELP administration

Out of 42 ISS participants surveyed, more than two-thirds, 69.0% of them felt ‘mostly confident’ or ‘very confident’ in administering CELP. Only 4.8% of the participants were ‘very unconfident’ in using the protocol.

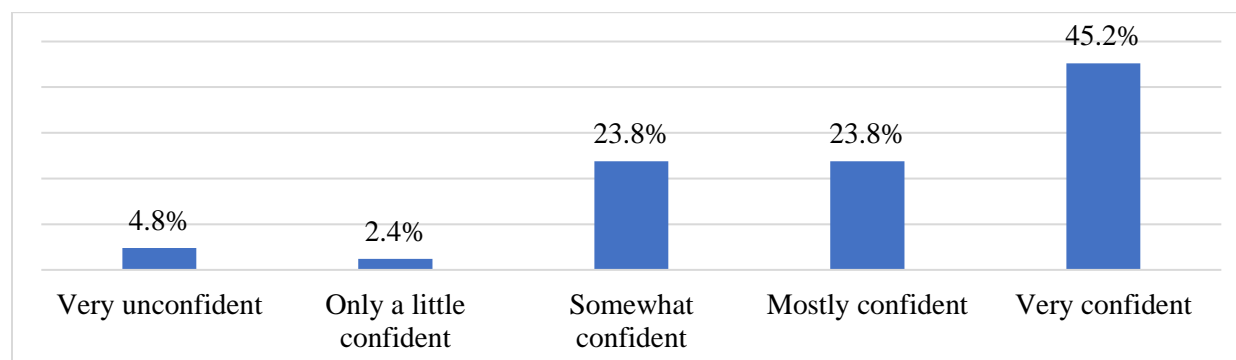


Figure 3: Participants' perception of their confidence in administering CELP

The majority of the ISS found it ‘very easy’ to take photos during the observation (73.8%); select children for the focus group discussion (83.0%); or facilitate a focus group discussion with children (61.9%). Less than a half of the ISS found it ‘very easy’ to code children’s behaviours in the CELP feedback sheet (40.5%); or write down quotes from what the children said during the focus group discussion (47.6%).

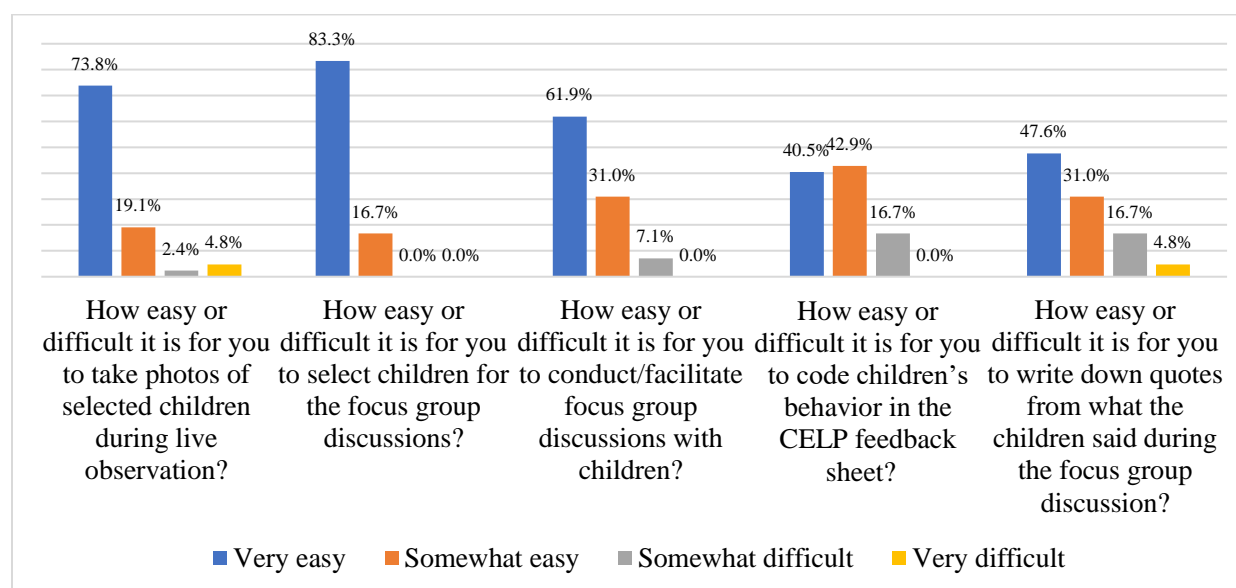


Figure 4: Participants’ perceptions of the easiness of CELP administration

The majority (90.5%) of the participants reported that most teachers were either ‘receptive’ or ‘extremely receptive’ to the children’s feedback collected through the CELP, and all of them agreed that the feedback collected through CELP is helpful for the improvement of teacher’s LtP practice.

*Table 12: Teachers' receptiveness and helpfulness of the CELP feedback*

How receptive are most teachers to the children's feedback collected through the CELP?	Frequency	Percent
Extremely receptive	12	28.57
Receptive	26	61.90
Somewhat receptive	4	9.52
Total	42	100.00
In your opinion, how helpful is the feedback collected through the CELP to improving teachers' Learning through Play practice?		
Extremely helpful	14	33.33
Very helpful	28	66.67
Total	42	100.00

## Successes and challenges with the CELP administration

### Successes

Feedback provided by the children through the CELP discussions has contributed to an improvement in the teachers' practices and ultimately their LTP:

Children's feedback has provided me insights on how to improve my teaching. (Teacher survey, Uganda).

It has been very helpful because they tell you what you do not think they're thinking about it, they could tell you something that was not in your ideas when you are planning for them. So, it was very helpful to have them talk to you and tell their perspective of the lesson. (Teacher interview, Uganda)

Some participants acknowledged to have gained experience and confidence in observing others' lessons as well as being observed by others:

The CELP for me, it helped me to know how to supervise others because I had not done any supervision of a colleague before. (Teacher survey, Uganda).

I have got used with observing others and also being observed. (Teacher survey, Uganda).

Additionally, observation of others' lessons has helped the observers to learn from their colleagues and transfer useful approaches to their lessons: "Improving how I teach through seeing what my colleagues do in their classes" (Teacher survey, Uganda).

Some participants noted to have gained experience in photo taking through the CELP administration process: "I've learnt how to take good photos. The photos I took recently were really good even children liked them" (Teacher survey, Uganda).

As mentioned by the participants, children's participation in the CELP FGDs has contributed to an improvement in children's self-esteem and confidence, and teacher-pupil relationship:

Learner's confidence has also improved due to their participation in the discussions. (Teacher survey, Uganda).

CELP helps children to express their feelings about the lessons ... builds on their SEL skills like confidence and communication. (Teacher survey, Uganda).

It also presents a good opportunity to interact with children, they are now freer with me” (Teacher survey, Uganda).

### ***Challenges***

To some participants, photo capture presented a challenge of distraction from the activities as some learners tried to pose for photos. Taking photos of the learners being observed was sometimes difficult especially when the activity required these learners to intermix with their colleagues: At times learners mix up which makes it difficult to observe them. Also, some learners don't like photos, they shy away while you take the photo and end up with unclear photos (Teacher survey, Uganda).

Some children were either reserved or could not express themselves clearly and this made it difficult to elicit their feedback. Furthermore, remembering what had happened in the classroom based on the photos was not possible for some learners:

Difficulty in getting information from children participating in the discussions as some cannot express themselves well. (Teacher survey, Uganda)

Some learners tend to say what is not exactly happening in the photo. At times they can't tell exactly what they were doing based on the photo. (Teacher survey, Uganda)

Selection of children to involve in the focus group discussion was at times challenging to some participants as all the learners including those who had not been observed wanted to be part of the discussions: “The only challenge is that all the learners even those who were not taken in the photos wanted to be involved in the discussions and got annoyed when not involved.” (Teacher survey, Uganda)

The administration of the CELP was regarded as a quite hectic process that requires a lot of time yet the teachers always had other lessons to conduct. This at times hindered its administration by some of them:

Time since it requires to prepare, observe the lesson, discuss with children and then also meet the teacher yet you also have your lessons to conduct on that particular day. (Teacher survey, Uganda)

The time taken with the teacher during the discussion leaves the children unattended to hence they miss. (Teacher survey, Uganda)

As a result of constraints in time presented by the various responsibilities that the teachers have, finding appropriate time to give feedback to the teachers who had been observed was a challenge.



At times, this feedback was not shared with the specific teachers: “Lack of time to give feedback to the responsible person because of the workload.” (Teacher survey, Uganda)

Some participants stated to have found some words difficult to understand as one of the participants stated: “Even CELP just like FORA has some terminologies that can be complicated to understand when you're scoring them” (Teacher interview, Uganda). Refer to **Table 14**.

## Item-level Analysis

### *Characteristics most and least frequently used*

The most and least frequently used characteristics of play as extracted from the digital FORA [dashboard](#) were: ‘actively engaging’ and ‘iterative’, respectively. The most frequently used facilitation style is ‘Free play’.

Play Spectrum	Actively Engaging	Iterative	Joyful	Meaningful	Socially Interactive	Total
Free Play	47	27	41	15	27	140
Guided Play	39	12	22	23	21	110
Teacher Directed	19	10	13	24	17	79
<b>Total</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>329</b>

Figure 5: The most and least frequently used characteristics of play

### *Challenges with understanding items - problematic items*

Less than a half 32(26.9%) of the participants reported to have found the behaviour items of the FORA tool to be either ‘somewhat difficult’ or ‘very difficult’ to understand, as seen in the table below.

Table 13: Ease of understanding the behaviour items in the FORA

In your opinion, how easy is it to understand the behaviour items in the FORA?	Frequency	Percent
Very easy (Most items are clearly written)	87	73.11
Somewhat difficult (I cannot comprehend some of the items)	31	26.05
Very difficult (There are many items I cannot comprehend)	1	0.84
<b>Total</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>100.00</b>

The behaviour items flagged as difficult to understand cut across all the five characteristics of play, and the reasons why participants felt these items were difficult are as shown in the figure below.

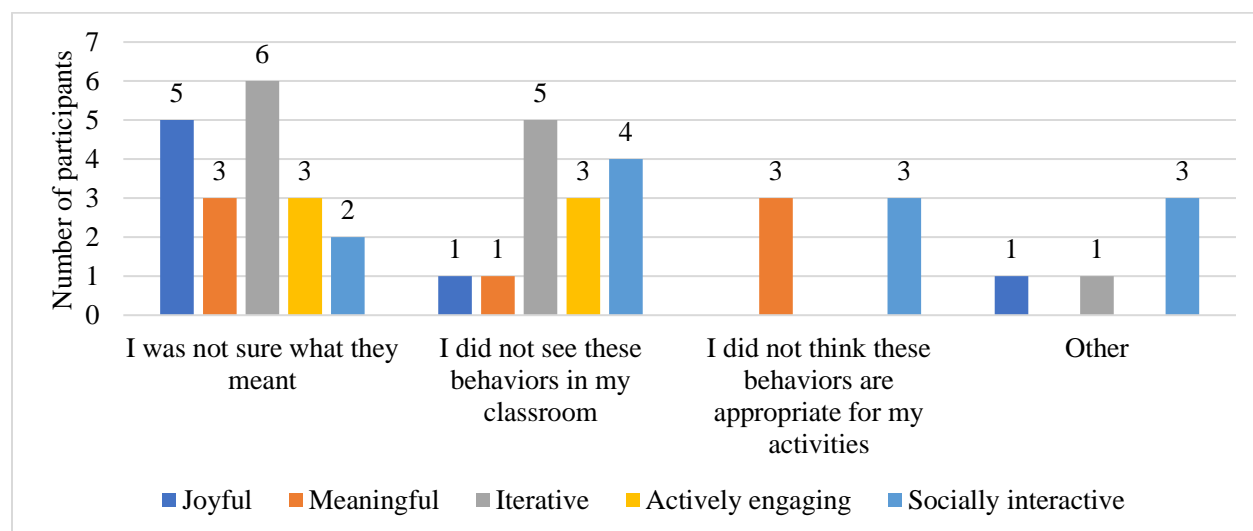


Figure 6: Why behaviour items were perceived difficult by participants

As identified by the participants, the specific behaviour items that were problematic or difficult to understand per characteristic of play are as shown below.

Table 14: The behaviour items flagged as problematic or difficult to understand

Characteristic of play	Behaviour items	% of teachers
Joyful	Children demonstrated enthusiasm (sustained or moments of enthusiasm)	5.0
	Children demonstrated enthusiasm (sustained or moments of enthusiasm) about what they were learning	1.7
Meaningful	Children's play helped them process feelings	0.8
	Children's play allowed them to try out new ways to engage in a situation	1.7
	Children's play connected with what is happening in their communities	0.8
	Children connected their play to their previous knowledge or experiences (e.g., they played using examples from their own lives)	0.8
	Children engaged with the skill or concept in the way it was demonstrated	0.8
	Children demonstrated why the skill or concept was relevant to the activity (e.g., integrated the learning goal into the play)	0.8
	Children integrated multiple skills as they participated in the activity	1.7
	Children's play was connected with what was happening in their communities and surrounding environments	0.8
	Children used their previous knowledge or experiences to participate in the activity	0.8
Iterative	Children's play was repetitive (e.g., children repeated the same actions or sequences of actions over and over)	0.8
	Children's play reflected previous knowledge or play experiences	1.7
	Children tried out new ideas within the context of the play activity (e.g., new ways of doing the activity or solving a challenge)	0.8

	Children's play changed based on their own preferences/ideas (e.g., new narratives, new rules, roles or processes)	1.7
	Children's play changed based on the preferences/ideas of other children (e.g., new rules or roles)	4.2
	Children engaged with familiar content/ideas/processes	1.7
	Children changed what they were doing in response to teachers' suggestions, questions or feedback	0.8
	Children tried out new approaches based on what other children suggested	4.2
<b>Actively engaging</b>	Children showed self-sustained engagement in the activity (e.g., were not easily distracted, children persevered, etc.,)	1.7
	Children continued their participation in the activity or were easily redirected	0.8
	Children remained engaged in the activity without redirection	1.7
	Children shared thoughts or ideas that extended beyond what the teacher presented or explained	1.7
<b>Socially interactive</b>	Children shared during the play activity (e.g., materials, roles, responsibilities, or space)	0.8
	Children responded positively to each other's requests or demonstrated respect for each other's abilities (e.g., solved minor conflicts, congratulated others for winning, etc.,)	0.8
	Children shared their own ideas, opinions or emotions while playing	1.7
	Children were willing to listen to each other's ideas, opinions or emotions while playing	0.8
	Children used each other's ideas, opinions, or emotions to create, modify, or transform a play situation	0.8
	Children took turns, negotiated narratives or rules, and settled disagreements during play activities	5.8
	Children followed classroom or activity expectations	0.8
	Children reminded each other of the instructions	1.7
	Children asked questions to the teacher or to their peers	2.5
	Children used each other's ideas or opinions as they engaged with the activity and/or found new solutions	3.3
<b>N=119</b>		

According to the participants who found the items difficult to understand, they mainly suggested that the wording of these items can be improved by using easy to understand vocabularies, as one of them said: “Change the word enthusiasm, redirection to something else because I don't understand them” (Teacher survey, Uganda).

Notably, some participants still have a difficulty in understanding the meaning of some characteristics of play:

Iterative and socially interactive can also be changed to other words. (Teacher survey, Uganda)

I just didn't understand clearly the meaning of iterative so I never gave the behaviours much attention. (Teacher survey, Uganda)

But iterative was very tricky for me to understand. In fact, I forgot what it means. (Teacher survey, Uganda)

## Recommendations for Pilot 2

### Recommendations for the PALICE tools

#### *Digital FORA*

- Since the FORA app does not display all the observations made, but instead displays the most recent observation under my data section, participants suggested to include other observations in the 'My Data' section for them to be able to view.
- Some participants expressed a need for provision of additional feedback through the app besides the FORA feedback. This feedback could be coming directly from the project team as a supplementation depending on how the submitted observation was completed.

#### *Paper FORA*

- Some participants suggested increasing the font size used in the FORA paper version to allow them effectively utilize the tool.
- There is need to create space in the FORA paper version so that teachers are able to capture children's feedback from the CELP sheet.

#### **CELP**

- The printouts of the CELP forms should be in such a way that each characteristic of play has its own front page to avoid confusion created by having characteristics with several respective behaviours but with only one cover page. This could be done like the FORA paper version.

#### *Teacher CELP*

- The teacher CELP questions could be printed out so that teachers who are not using the digital FORA could as well administer the questions in case they want to collect children's feedback about the LtP activity.

#### **General recommendations**

- There is need to look into the possibility of expanding smart device (phone or tablet) coverage in the various pilot schools so that the digital FORA can be tried by a large number of teachers. Otherwise, if teachers are to share smartphones for the application of digital FORA, there is need to create different teacher profiles so that different teachers are able to retrieve their most recent coaching tips and feedback for improving on the subsequent lessons.

- Continuous support to teachers on the appropriate application of the tools. This support could be through routine follow-up visits to the respective schools and refresher trainings of the teachers on the use of FORA and CELP tools.
- The language in some behaviour items should be simplified to increase on the usability of the tool (Refer to **Table 14**). There is also need to explore on how to simplify some characteristics of play: iterative and meaningful. This could be done by using contextualized videos that relate to the teachers' classroom contexts. Furthermore, trials during trainings could be done at school level with children so that teachers can better understand the concepts and the various steps to apply the tools.
- School leaders need to be brought on board for providing the necessary support to the teachers when implementing the tools. This would contribute to the sustainability of the project.