

DECEMBER 2022

# NAKIVALE REPORT



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**COLORS OF KINDNESS**

NAKIVALE SETTLEMENT, UGANDA

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# INTRODUCTION



The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted the lives and development of children globally through mandatory quarantines and the closures of schools and community centers. This was especially true for already vulnerable children, including children with disabilities and children living outside of family care, who were at increased risk of infectious disease, physical and emotional maltreatment, mental distress, and violence. Governments and NGOs often lack both appropriate content to support children and their families during this time as well as distance learning tools that could work in limited-resource and limited-connectivity settings.

Social emotional learning (SEL) is vitally important for learners and caregivers during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, especially those who have experienced trauma. To this end, Amal Alliance's award-winning Colors of Kindness (Colors) program offers a comprehensive response to these extraordinary times.

Aligned to the Global Compact on Refugees and the Refugee Education Strategy for 2030, the audio podcast and digital workbook are designed to holistically re-engage the learner and develop the skills necessary to cope with the new and difficult emotions that accompany emergency situations and trauma.

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# UGANDAN CONTEXT

Uganda is home to the largest numbers of refugees in Africa, more than 1.45 million in total. The majority of those refugees come from South Sudan and the DRC. Despite some schools having re-opened in Uganda, more than 13 million children remain out of school since the end of March 2020, including 600,000 refugee children, as a result of the pandemic. Students are expected to return back to school in the future following a staggered schedule, but the date of this return is uncertain and many children are going without any instruction in the meantime.

Roughly 130,000 displaced individuals from at least 14 countries reside at the Nakivale Refugee Settlement, one of 11 settlements, located in the Isingiro District of Southwest Uganda. According to statistics from 2019, there are about 38,000 school-aged refugee children living in the Nakivale settlement. Even before COVID-19, approximately half of those children were out of school for various reasons. Schools that are reopened may have reduced capacity or shutdown at short notice. Education systems will need to maintain a level of readiness to have distance learning tools that are effective for all learners. As noted by colleagues in the field, distance learning for teacher professional development will likely remain highly relevant as teachers often do not receive the support they need in limited resource settings. Camps like the one in Nakivale are considered highly vulnerable during the pandemic. Without more innovative ed-tech solutions and access to devices like tablets, both teachers and students lack the resources to engage in education.

## OBJECTIVES

The objective of Colors of Kindness is to foster social and emotional skills in children to bridge gaps in learning interrupted by displacement.

In doing so, Amal works to grow educational opportunities for children in refugee settlements, focusing on the Nakivale Settlement in Uganda.

The Colors program also aims to enhance the well-being of caregivers and their children, supporting the development of safe and peaceful communities.





# PROJECT SCOPE

Colors of Kindness (Colors) is an innovative EdTech solution that aims to: 1) improve children's social and emotional skills, 2) increase the overall wellbeing of children and their caregivers, 3) increase access to inclusive education, and 4) present innovative and creative SEL solutions for EiE. The 10-week program provides SEL curriculum via audio podcasts, with one new episode released each week. The podcast is embedded within an interactive digital workbook with visual aids that feature brightly colored geometric creatures.

Each SEL theme is broken down into two-week segments, augmenting that particular SEL competency. The themes are Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Responsible Decision Making, Relationship Building, and Social Awareness. Within each week, activities include an opening exercise (i.e., a movement or balancing game), breathwork, a main activity (i.e., Emotions Charades or Dream Mapping), a yoga pose, an emotional check-in using a digital emotional thermometer, and a closing gratitude exercise. Children are also prompted to complete a challenge activity, which aims to give them a task to focus on before returning for the next week's session. Ensuring equitable access, our

program provides access to children that would otherwise be left behind such as refugees and vulnerable groups from the host community.

Colors was initially tested in 4 locations in Bangladesh including the Rohingya camp in Fall, 2020. The program successfully influenced learning outcomes, and children who participated in the program showed a 16.5% increase in SEL competency during the intervention. While 98% of caregivers said that their child had been more anxious or irritable since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, 99% of caregivers reported that their child's mood had improved after completing the program. In addition, all the teachers indicated that this program was beneficial for both the children and themselves. This second iteration and pilot in Uganda proved the adaptability of the program across regions.

The program was administered by all female teachers and was designed to empower women from the refugee community. The teachers completed training on how to use the application, support students, and practice self-care. In addition, the program empowered the teachers and women in the community to improve their livelihood and emotional well-being.

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# OVERVIEW & TIMELINE

The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) Uganda granted permission to Amal Alliance, in partnership with Humanity for All Foundation and the Rotaract Club of Nakivale to pilot Colors of Kindness within the Nakivale Settlement.

Amal Alliance sourced 4 teachers from the community, who participated in a 1-day virtual training to learn the fundamentals of SEL and how to impart the program, with a follow up training that was conducted midway. One hundred (100) primary school children ages 7-12 participated in the 10-week cycle starting March 2022 in Nakivale, which concluded in June 2022. The pilot was conducted at Nakivale Refugee Settlement in the Kashojwa zone and Base Camp Zone 1.

The 10-week SEL curriculum was delivered via audio podcasts, with one new episode released each week. Class duration was approximately 2 hours per week. The podcast is embedded within an interactive digital workbook with visual aids that feature brightly colored geometric genderless creatures.

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TASK	START DATE	END DATE
<b>PHASE 01</b> PLANNING & COORDINATION	JAN 2022	MARCH 2022
<b>PHASE 02</b> IMPLEMENTATION	MARCH 2022	JUNE 2022
<b>PHASE 03</b> EVALUATION	JULY 2022	AUG 2022

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# IMPLEMENTATION

Teachers lead students through a 10-week SEL Curriculum designed to enhance learning and well-being. Each of the 5 SEL skills were taught over the course of 2 weeks. Weekly themes included:



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# EVALUATION

The Student SEL Skills pre- and post-assessment were scored using a scale from -2 to 3. Once the data was gathered, duplicates were removed. Data from 4 classes was assessed to determine the change in SEL skills through four assessment tools.

## ASSESSMENT TOOLS

**WEEKLY TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE**

**PRE AND POST TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE**

**PRE AND POST STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE**

**PRE AND POST FAMILY QUESTIONNAIRE**

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# RESULTS

Students reported an averaged increase in SEL skills of 30% (n=92). Students scored an average of 17.71 on the Student SEL Pre-Assessment and an average of 21.76 on the Post-Assessment. However, of the four classes, one class reported higher changes in SEL competencies (116%) compared with the others, which positively skewed the data. Without the data from the forth class, the average increase in SEL competencies is 6.37%. This is still a significant change given the relatively short nature of the pilot program.

The SEL competencies in the Student Pre- and Post-Assessment that demonstrated the highest change were “I have goals and plan to reach them” (29.2% increase, n=92) and “I think about the future and believe it is wonderful (28.2% increase, n=92). In addition, families reported on the Final Family Assessment that their child’s mood and relationships with others have improved. Also, the families found that after completing the program, children were more helpful at home and were better able to focus and complete tasks to reach their goals. The activities and lessons taught in the classroom were shared by students with their families and students practiced the exercises in the home. The Final Teacher Assessment showed that teachers enjoyed teaching the Colors program and found the curriculum to be very beneficial.





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# CONCLUSION



The Colors program pilot project in Nakivale Resettlement Camp, Uganda meets the objectives of the program. The students reported improved social and emotional skills following the completion of the program. The improvement in skills was further supported by family and caregiver feedback that positive changes were evident in students in multiple settings during and following the program. The feedback from caregivers also demonstrated that students talked about the topics they were learning at school, engaged in activities learned at school, and had improved ability to complete tasks after the program. These skills and resources helped to bridge the learning gap, increase access to and engagement with distance learning, and grow educational opportunities for students in Nakivale Settlement Camp.

Other information gathered from the Google surveys provides context about the impact the Colors program had during the 3-month pilot. Students reported improved self confidence, self awareness, goal setting, decision making, relationship building, social awareness, and future outlook. Caregivers reported improvements in their child's mood, family and peer relationships, and focus and task completion. Teachers also found the program to be enjoyable and beneficial and shared commentary about their personal growth journey with the Colors program.

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# RECOMMENDATIONS

The Colors program is a great resource for schools and the community to enhance distance learning, foster family relationship building, and strengthen community ties. In response to open-ended questions in assessments completed following program completion, teachers and families requested the program be extended in three ways: duration of class, length of program, and increased catchment area.

To extend the program and remain sustainable, resources need to be put in place that facilitates ed-tech facilitated learning in under-resourced communities. Technology, instruction, and support must be present in communities using ed-tech solutions. Teacher instruction and support is also needed to facilitate the Colors program and improve livelihood and well-being in the community.

Coordination with the Government of Uganda, local NGO partners, and donors is crucial in providing refugee communities resources to improve their livelihood and well-being.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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