



# Can't Wait to Learn

Closing the education gap through technology **Jordan**



# Education in their hands

Can't Wait to Learn is a proven digital game-based learning model designed with and for children affected by conflict.



It is a curriculum-based, context-specific solution, which brings together the know-how of locally based education stakeholders, such as Ministries of Education, international and community-based organisations alongside international expertise in software development, game development and design.

The result is a self-guided serious gaming format accessed on tablets that takes children through Ministry of Education approved curriculum, providing opportunity for children to work toward primary level certification. In this way, Can't Wait to Learn aims to

reinforce the education pipeline across informal and formal education, to decrease drop-out rates and encourage transition into formal primary and secondary education. In Jordan, Can't Wait to Learn is helping children gain basic maths and reading skills in host and refugee communities in a formal school system - which is under stress due to the huge influx of refugees - as well as in alternative learning centres.

**Above** — Children playing Reading 1-3 game, Queen Rania Alabdullah primary mixed School

## THE SITUATION

TOO MANY CHILDREN  
+  
NOT ENOUGH RESOURCES  
=  
A GENERATION MISSING EDUCATION



### THOUSANDS OF CHILDREN OUT OF SCHOOL

Of the 663,000 Syrian refugees in Jordan, more than one third (35.1%) are school-aged children between the ages of 5 and 17 years. Over 70,000 of these children are out of formal education.

## THE CHALLENGE

Barriers to education for out of school children in Jordan include:



### AN OVERSTRETCHED EDUCATION SYSTEM

Jordan has a clear and progressive policy on ensuring access to education for all children, however its education infrastructure is pushed to the limit due to increasing industrialisation and the influx of refugees from neighbouring countries, particularly Syria. The Jordanian education system was designed to function during relative peace and is ill-equipped to adequately absorb the huge number of school-aged Syrian children.

- Distances between home and school and insufficient existing public school facilities. A 'double shift' system has increased access to a larger number of students, however the later finishing time of the second shift also presents a concern, particularly for younger children and female students.
- Many Syrian children lack the documentation required for registration.
- Cost of transport, education materials and the need for children to contribute to the family household. 82% of refugees are living in non-camp settings.



Above — Children learning maths in Jordan

## THEY CAN'T WAIT TO LEARN... NOW THEY DON'T HAVE TO

Can't Wait to Learn offers:



Maths and reading curriculum educative game and full instructional model based on Ministry of Education curricula and requirements



A digital user interface that is adapted to context to support motivation and active, self-paced learning



Diagnostics for every learner which can be aggregated according to Ministry and sector requirements



A delivery mechanism that works across resource-constrained environments

## The game world is their world...



"I didn't know anything about math before [Can't Wait to Learn], but after I came here I improved and I started to learn, and I learned half of the Arabic letters too." — **Child, learning centre – Azraq camp**

Above — Part of the Jordan Maths 1-3 game world

One of the unique features of the approach is that the software is tailored to the relevant national curriculum requirements and, crucially, **designed with target children** to ensure familiarity.

Can't Wait to Learn offers a local interface that reflects children's reality in both the look and feel of the characters and game design and in the game's storyline, which lowers the threshold for children to engage, particularly if new to technology. Instead of learning to recognize new characters, events and circumstances, children become immersed in a world that reflects their own and focus on math and/or reading.

## ...AND THE WORLD THEY WANT TO SEE

The co-creation process for the reading game in Jordan resulted in a game world that includes familiar objects and appropriately dressed characters; for example, the headscarf is worn the right way and the grandfather character is wearing a local outfit. The buildings also represent familiar shapes, colours, and orientations; in Jordan the buildings are symmetrical to mirror the local architectural style.



**Above** — Three of the reading game characters (l) Rama doctor, (m) Intisaar sporty girl inspired by childrens input, (r) Tamer shop owner  
**Left top** — Children's drawing girl doing sports  
**Left** — Childrens co-creation workshop



At the beginning of the program we asked them what would they like to be when they grow up. Now, when you ask them the same question the answers are completely different, meaning that they have started to feel that they can do anything, can harness anything.”  
 — **Can't Wait to Learn facilitator, Jordan**

## INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR ALL

The game application can be taken to children who may struggle or be put off by education due to being over-age. In the formal education system, children who are at different learning levels but in the same classroom can learn and practice at their own level and pace. In non-formal education settings, Can't Wait to Learn is both accessible in terms of scheduling around other commitments and being appropriate for children at different learning levels, and also motivating. The game world provides high quality education in line with the national curriculum and standards, so that even the poorest children and/or those with family obligations can learn.

# Replicating success: a scalable model

Can't Wait to Learn start up in Jordan builds on positive research results in other contexts.

## PARTNERSHIPS FOR SCALE AND SUSTAINABILITY

Between September 2018 and January 2019, a mixed-methods research design was used to determine the impact of the CWTL program on learning and psychosocial outcomes for children (aged 6-13 years old) attending Learning Support Centers within and outside of refugee camps in Jordan. The controlled pre-post study of 709 children was combined with 11 FGDs focus group discussions (FGDs) and 13 key informant interviews with children, facilitators, parents, and partner staff. Our results show that **replacing 40% of mathematics and Arabic reading lesson time with Can't Wait to Learn led to learning gains for Jordanian and Syrian-refugee students** in program schools that were comparable to those of similar students in comparison schools that

received the standard government curriculum. Mixed results for effects on psychosocial outcomes were found: although there were no statistically **significant effects on children's self-esteem**, self-efficacy or well-being, the results indicate that **children's hope increased** by more for students at program schools than for students at the comparison schools, possibly because of the rewards children receive as they progress through the Can't Wait to Learn game.

Based on these positive research results, the strategy for future formal and non-formal implementation in Jordan is being developed in 2019 in collaboration with the Ministry of Education.



With positive results, strong partnerships and active Ministry of Education engagement and support, Can't Wait to Learn is poised to scale up and **bring education to thousands of conflict-affected children in Jordan.**

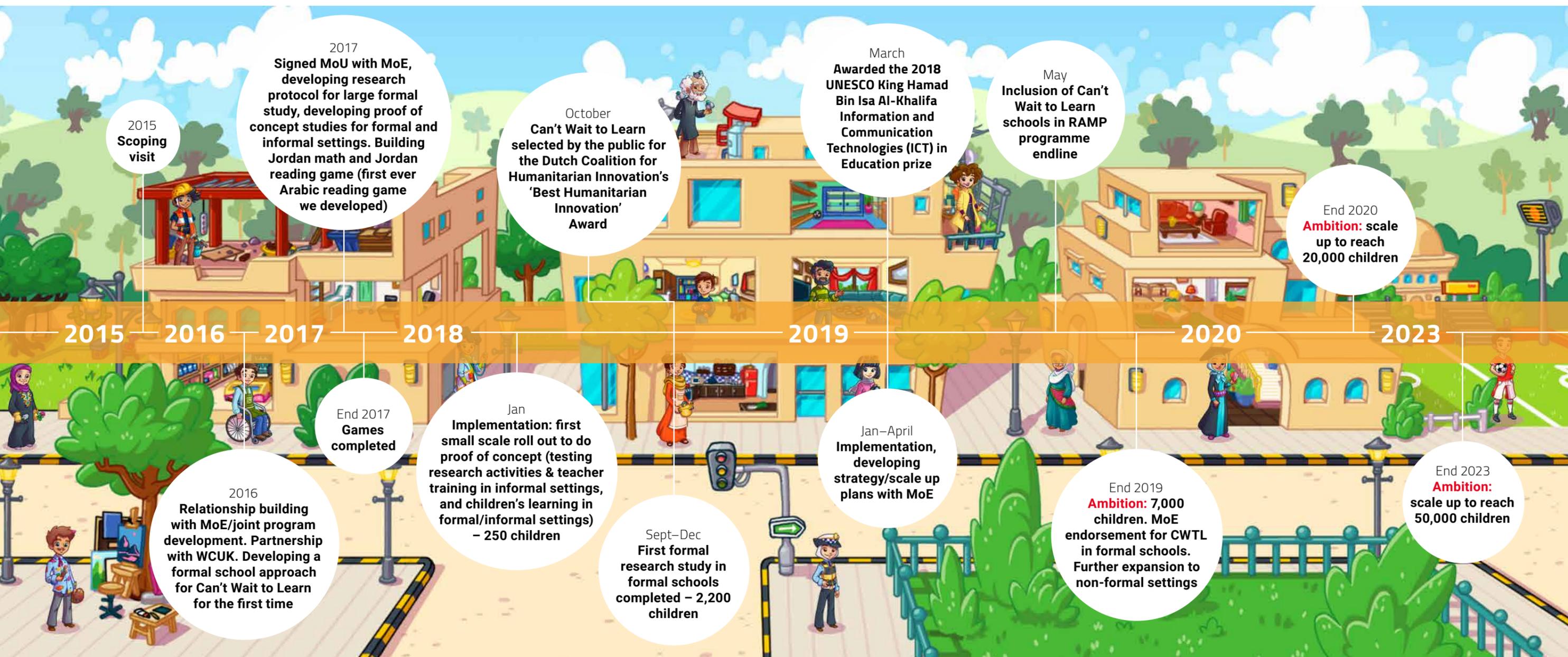
**Above** — Facilitators training Jordan  
**Left** — Facilitator assisting children while playing the reading game

# Achievements and scale up ambitions

The programme timeline below shows achievements to date and scale up ambitions in Jordan

Can't Wait to Learn commenced in Jordan in December 2017, and currently offers Arabic reading and maths (Grade 1 – 3 equivalent) targeting host and refugee communities in a formal school system, which is under stress due to the huge influx of refugees, as well as alternative learning centres. Arabic reading games are based on curricula and include significant new Arabic language learning content for which there is a global shortage.

**Below** — Part of the Jordan Reading Game world



## PARTNERSHIPS

Can't Wait to Learn is managed globally by War Child Holland. In Jordan, the War Child country team works closely with the Jordanian Ministry of Education, specifically the Queen Rania Centre, which has been heavily involved at all programme stages, including for example, the didactic framework development (translation of the curriculum learning objectives into a game format), co-creation of game narratives and maths and literacy game instructional video script development, leading to game quality improvements. UNICEF's Makani informal learning centres provided the setting for proof of concept studies in non-formal environments.



**Left** — Hussein the architect from the Maths game

Can't Wait to Learn receives funding from key supporters and implements with partners:



## CONTACT

For more information, please contact us:

**Kate Radford**

Programme Director

[kate.radford@warchild.nl](mailto:kate.radford@warchild.nl)

**Laura Miller**

Deputy Programme Director

[Laura.miller@warchild.nl](mailto:Laura.miller@warchild.nl)

