

PLAYFUL FUTURES

WHAT IS PLAYFUL FUTURES?

Playful Futures will seek to improve the quality of early childhood care and education in Uganda for 60,000 children aged 3-6 years so they can succeed in school and life. Despite high enrolment in primary education, learning outcomes at both the primary and pre-primary level remain low, reflecting a need to strengthen foundational skills through early childhood programs. Further, although curriculum and learning frameworks incorporate child-centred and play-based approaches, early childhood educators continue to struggle to implement these practices in the classroom. Through Playful Futures, we will work with educators and other stakeholders at early childhood centres to strengthen the delivery of play-based approaches in classrooms by delivering Learning Through Play.

Playful Futures is part of the broader Play Our Part Community of Practice in East Africa funded by the LEGO Foundation. Through the Community of Practice, Plan International is collaborating with VSO and VVOB, who are implementing similar initiatives, as well as Innovations for Poverty Action that supports the Community's learning process.

Why is Learning Through Play Important?

Research shows that learning through play builds the socio-emotional, cognitive, creative, and physical skills needed for healthy development and future success.

Learning through play can mitigate the impact of adversity on children's lives while building their resilience to thrive in the future. As such, learning through play is at the heart of Playful Futures.

Our Approach

Playful Futures follows a "think big, start small" approach, where we will start by working with 16 early childhood centres to pilot different educator and supervisor-focused interventions to strengthen the implementation of play-based approaches in the classroom. We will then scale the most effective interventions to all of Plan's early childhood centres in six diverse target districts throughout Uganda, as well as actively share our approach for wider scaling and impact beyond Plan, helping to educate the builders of tomorrow in Uganda. We will complement this work and achieve sustainable change by also engaging the other stakeholders of early childhood centres, such as parents, community members, and government, to ensure they are champions for the learning through play approach.

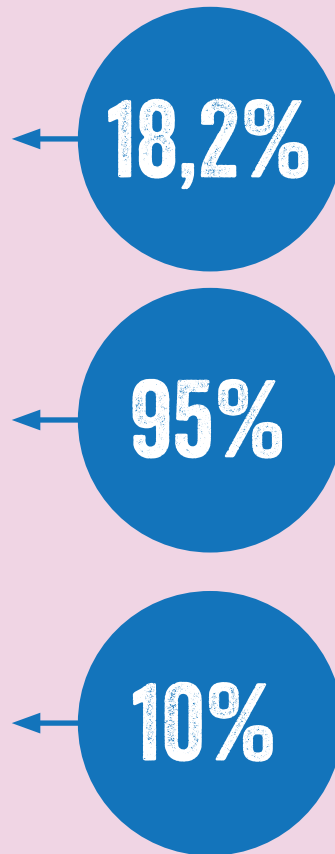
THESE ARE THE FACTS

Only **18.2 %** of children in Uganda enrol in some form for pre-primary education.

Almost **95 %** of children enrol in primary education in Uganda, but only two in 10 are on-track in reading at Grade 3, pointing to a massive lack of foundational skills when entering primary.

There are **317,041** children in the six intervention districts in Uganda. Less than **10 %** attend early education centres.

In three out of six districts, more boys were attending than girls.



The project will draw upon a range of core materials, resources and approaches from previous successful projects from the LEGO Foundation, including the PlayMatters project.

Classroom materials are often made by the teachers, they are generally old and in disrepair. If new materials are received from agencies, they tend to be locked away for safekeeping.

Teaching is almost exclusively based on having the children memorise content through repetition and teachers' behaviour during the class is quite rigid: expectations of children are that they will follow instructions quickly & orderly. Play is seen as a treat

or reward for the children, but not a teaching tool.

Play is gendered, with girls being left out of physical activities and pushed towards gender-normative play such as drawing and dancing. Teaching is almost exclusively based on having the children memorise content through repetition and teachers' behaviour during the class is quite rigid: expectations of children are that they will follow instructions quickly & orderly. Play is seen as a treat or reward for the children, but not a teaching tool.

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