

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Playful education builds the next generation.





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Preface

With great pride and joy, we present Join for Joy's annual report for 2023. It was a milestone year, celebrating 12.5 years of continued dedication to improving education in rural East Africa through playful learning. We took a moment to reflect on our journey by creating a [video](#) that showcases the impact that we've achieved over the past 12.5 years and celebrated this significant milestone with an event in October in Amsterdam. We are also honored to share that Join for Joy has been recognized by HundrED for the third consecutive year as one of the top 100 most innovative educational interventions worldwide, showcasing the impact and scalability of our work.

Besides these celebrations, we faced challenges such as inflation, rising costs, and extreme weather conditions that impacted our operational expenses and the communities we work in. Despite these challenges, our playful learning program expanded to 48 primary schools across East Africa, training over 200 teachers and benefiting more than 156,000 children. We reached 12,000 girls through our menstrual hygiene program, empowering them to continue their education. To date, we have reached over 725,000 children through our program. We further developed and enhanced our monitoring and evaluation (M&E) strategy, revealing a 13.2% increase in average school enrolments following the introduction of our program.

Financially, Join for Joy raised €667,464 in 2023, a 17.7% (€117,736) increase from 2022. Operational efficiency has improved, positioning us for continued success. We welcomed three new board members, enhancing our team's expertise. Our Zambian team, established as a regional entity in 2022, has made significant progress in increasing our local presence and initiating marketing and fundraising activities, paving the way for further growth.

Our commitment to quality education, gender equality, and the well-being of children in rural East Africa remains steadfast. Our interventions have led to increased school attendance, reduced absenteeism, and improved teaching methods. Children are more aware of social issues and are developing their talents, becoming resilient individuals with a positive outlook on their future.

Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication to our mission. We hope you read our annual report with JOY!

Warm regards,
Frank van der Brink - Chair, Board Join for Joy





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Joseph's Story

Joseph (not his real name) is a 12-year-old boy in year 6 at Silanga Primary School in Ithanga, Kenya. He lives with his father, mother, and four older siblings in the countryside. Their situation is challenging. His parents work hard on the land, but their income is insufficient to meet all the family's needs, often leading to financial problems and stressful situations.

Due to circumstances, Joseph was transferred from his old school to Silanga Primary School, a change he now appreciates. Comparing the schools, Joseph sees a big difference. There was no time for sports and play in his old school. His grades were bad, and he didn't feel like going to school at all.

Now, Joseph is really happy with how things are done at Silanga Primary School. As the school is part of the Join for Joy program, he has the chance to release his energy and learn playfully about topics he encounters in his community but were never discussed before. He mentions issues like abuse, fighting, theft, and drug use. He sees these issues daily, but now he knows better how to avoid these bad habits.

Joseph has even developed a new passion through the Join for Joy program: athletics! Due to his enthusiasm and hard work, Joseph recently had the opportunity to represent his school at the sub-county level.

Teacher Gladys says about Joseph: "I see a very good boy in him. In my classes, he is focused, cooperative, alert, and respectful. His grades are among the best in the class, and I am sure the Join for Joy program has contributed to this, just as it has for many other children at our school. For this, we are very grateful."

"The games we play help me at home. I can resist bad habits, and instead of hanging around outside in the dark. I now help my parents with household chores because I know the dangers that are out there. I have learned about making good choices in life, and I am more self-confident."

- Joseph

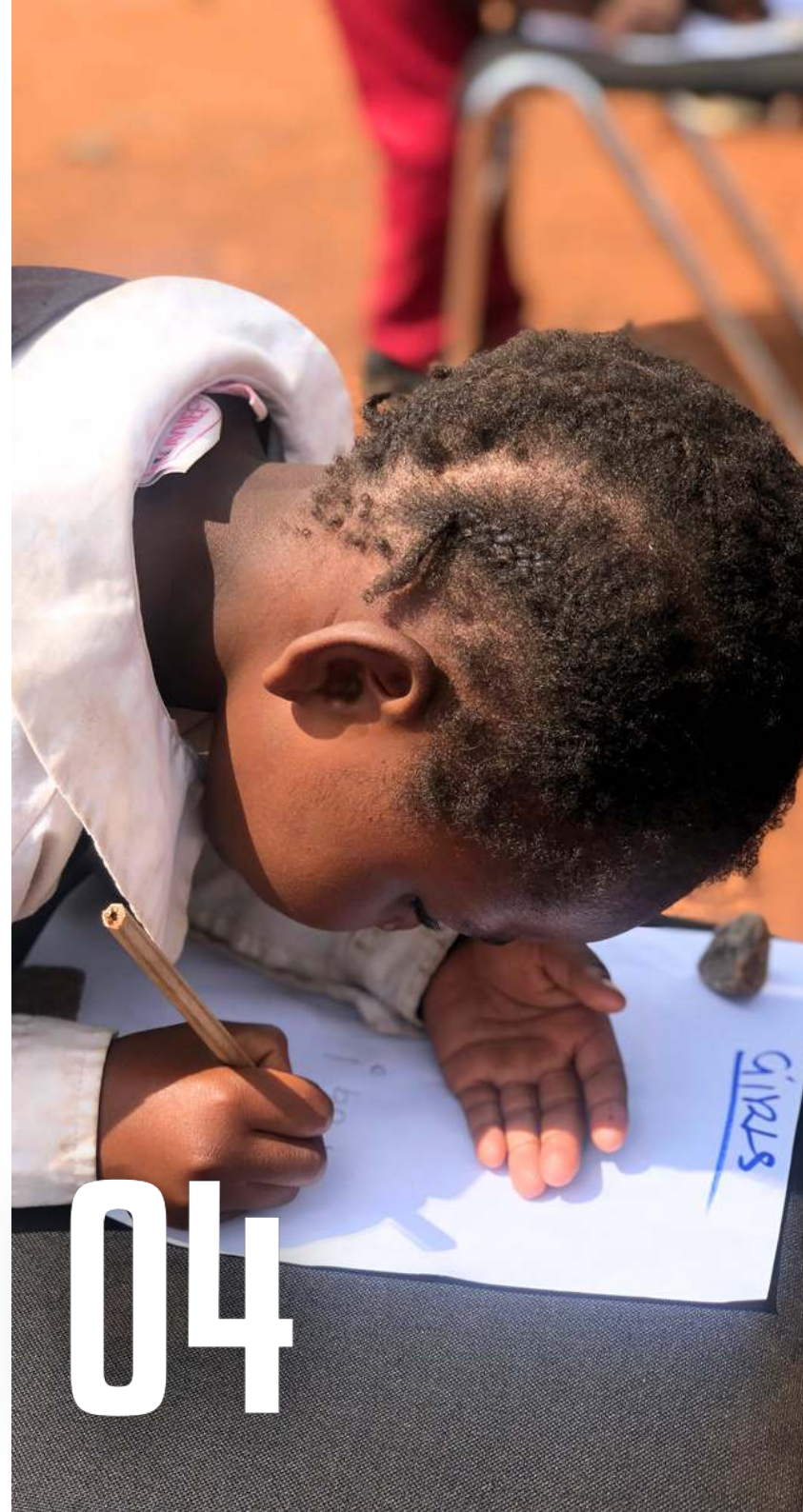
Mission & approach

Join for Joy is dedicated to creating safe and playful learning environments for children in rural East Africa. Our mission is to ensure that children come (back) to school, discover and develop their talents, build their resilience, and improve their health through sports and play activities, all while learning about health topics and social challenges such as HIV/Aids, malaria, teenage pregnancies, and physical and sexual violence. We pay particular attention to empowering girls by addressing gender-related issues such as child marriage and gender inequality, and by promoting the importance of education for girls in communities. We do this through two interventions: our playful learning program, and our menstrual hygiene program.

Playful learning program - the Join for Joy approach

Join for Joy has been implementing sports and playful learning programs across rural areas of East Africa since 2011. We do this through a comprehensive educational program designed for primary school teachers in rural Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, and Zambia. Our approach focuses on equipping teachers with the knowledge and skills necessary to create inclusive and gender-equal environments, act as positive role models, and use sports and play to address health and social topics with children and communities. Through learnings over the years, we have continuously adapted and contextualized our training program. This has resulted in an extensive training program, consisting of three training weeks and a game manual that includes 45 games focused on life skills development and discussion of health and social topics.

During intensive training days, teachers are introduced to the power of playful learning. Teachers are encouraged to reflect on their current teaching methods and how they consciously and unconsciously act in the classroom. Traditional ways of thinking that are often prevalent are discussed and alternative narratives are proposed. Common examples include the belief that education for girls is less important because they will eventually get married and do housework, or the idea that boys aren't allowed to express emotions because they must be 'strong'. Other prevailing beliefs include the idea that boys and girls should not play together because it could result in sexual relations, and for children with disabilities, it is often believed that education brings no added value and is not important.





Where we find our agents of change - the teachers!

We primarily focus on training primary school teachers. These teachers are on the current front lines of education, enabling them to directly impact the current school system, pupils, and wider communities. Over recent years, a second strategy has been developed in which we train university students in teacher training colleges. By collaborating with teacher training colleges to integrate our playful learning methodology into the curriculum, we reach future educators. This ensures that new teachers are equipped with innovative teaching practices from the start of their careers and can integrate these into their future classes. Through this dual approach, we aim to empower both current and future educators to create positive, lasting change in their schools and communities, driving forward our mission to quality education in rural East Africa.

Menstrual Hygiene Program - approach

Many girls in our program do not have money to purchase menstrual products. Alternative 'solutions' such as cloth rags or leaves are uncomfortable and not reliable. Many girls miss school when they have their period, resulting in poor grades and increased absences and eventual dropouts. This in turn leads to an increased risk of teenage pregnancies, early marriages and financial dependence.

A menstrual cup provides girls with the opportunity to never have to miss a day of school due to their period. That is why we distribute menstrual cups at schools within the program. Under the guidance of our menstrual hygiene experts, the girls, their parents and teachers receive information about the cups, but also about menstruation in general. Through these sensitization sessions, existing taboos are broken, for example that a girl on her period is unclean and must stay indoors or not be allowed to prepare food. This education and awareness helps to build self-confidence in girls and ensures they can use menstrual cups safely and hygienically. At the same time, these sensitization sessions create support within the community by involving parents and female community leaders to establish an enabling environment for more open discussion about menstrual health. After the distribution of the menstrual cups, the girls meet with our menstrual hygiene experts during regular school visits, providing them with the opportunity to ask questions. We open the conversation about menstruation with boys through sports and play activities to break down harmful gender norms, to foster a supportive environment, and to reduce stigma around menstruation.

Areas of intervention

Geographical focus

Join for Joy works in the rural areas in Zambia, Kenya, Uganda, and Malawi.



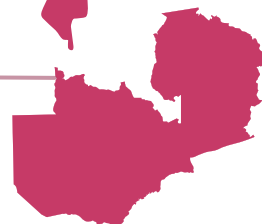
Thika District, Kenya
Partner: Macheo Children's Center



Kabale & Rubanda Districts, Uganda
Partner: Caritas Uganda



Mchinji District, Malawi
Partner: Zikomo Foundation



Chongwe District, Zambia
Join for Joy Zambia

Partnerships

We work closely with local NGOs, primary schools, educational institutions, and governments such as Ministries of Health and Education to ensure our programs are culturally sensitive, locally supported, and sustainable. To coordinate our program, we work closely with Macheo Children's Center (Kenya), Caritas Uganda (Uganda), and Zikomo Foundation (Malawi). Join for Joy is registered in Zambia and operates from a locally established office.

The socio-economic background of East Africa

While there has been significant socio-economic growth in East Africa, this progress has mainly benefited urban areas, leaving rural regions behind. Many rural families live in extreme poverty and struggle to meet their basic needs. About half of the rural population is under 15, and socio-economic conditions often prevent children from attending school. Girls are more likely than boys to be excluded from education due to traditional ideas about gender roles and expectations. Boys are seen as the future 'breadwinners', which means that families - especially when there is little money available - are more inclined to invest in their sons.

Children in these communities face challenges such as child labor, child marriage, violence, and health issues like malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS. Rural schools face the challenge of poor infrastructure and a lack of resources in schools. Overcrowded classrooms, low teacher salaries, and traditional teaching methods result in a lack of joy in learning and minimal teacher-student interaction. In many schools, corporal punishment is still used and teaching is usually done in a traditional didactic way. The result; low enrollment figures, high dropout rates and a generation in which too many children cannot access education.

Social aspects of our work

Join for Joy's programs address these socio-economic challenges by promoting inclusive, playful learning environments that foster resilience and personal growth. By training teachers to become positive role models and agents of change, and by involving the community in our initiatives, we create an enabling environment that enhances the educational experience of children in rural East Africa.

Our comprehensive approach ensures that children are not only educated but also empowered to navigate and overcome socio-economic barriers, leading to improved health and social outcomes for themselves and their communities. Through our efforts, we strive to build a brighter, more equitable future for all children in our intervention areas, directly contributing to several Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):





SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

Good Health and Well-being: Sports and play stimulate physical and mental health. We address health issues like malaria, HIV/AIDS, and cholera in a playful manner in schools and communities. We also conduct menstrual hygiene sessions and distribute menstrual cups to ensure safe periods, reducing the risk of infections for girls through the use of unhygienic alternatives.



SDG 4: Quality Education

Join for Joy improves education quality by training teachers to create inclusive, engaging classrooms using sports and play. This method addresses traditional gender roles and educational barriers, ensuring all children, especially girls, receive quality education and are empowered to succeed.



SDG 5: Gender Equality

The sports and play activities in our program directly address social topics related to gender inequality, and the development of life skills such as resilience, collaboration and self-confidence. Our approach empowers girls to understand their rights and stand against discrimination. Through the playful learning program and the menstrual hygiene program, we contribute to equal opportunities for girls to attend school and participate in sports activities.



SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

Join for Joy enhances the impact of its programs by engaging and collaborating with communities, local organizations, and governments. These partnerships ensure culturally sensitive and locally supported initiatives, amplifying our reach and effectiveness in promoting education, health, and gender equality in rural East Africa.

Results 2023

An overview of our results & overall impact.

156.000

CHILDREN REACHED THROUGH PLAYFUL LEARNING PROGRAM

We expanded our reach to 48 new primary schools across East Africa, training over 200 teachers and positively impacting more than 156,000 children.

12.000

GIRLS EMPOWERED

Through our menstrual hygiene program, we empowered thousands of girls to stay in school and improve their educational opportunities. At the same time, we also reached their mothers and sisters through informational sessions and broke stigma and taboos related to menstrual health in wider communities.

12-WEEK

PLAYFUL LEARNING MINOR DEVELOPED

We developed a 12-week playful learning minor for universities, and advocated for the inclusion of our methodologies in East African university curricula.



Our overall impact



725.000+

CHILDREN IN OUR PROGRAM...

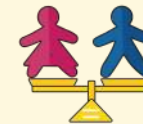
- Go to school and stay at school, because school is fun and important!
- Are more energetic, pay better attention in class and get higher grades.
- Discover and develop their talents.
- Are more resilient and aware of social challenges.



900 TEACHERS+

IN 223 SCHOOLS...

- Are more confident in front of the class, enjoy their work more and convey classroom material more easily.
- Provide a safer, more inclusive and equal environment for children and have better relationships with their students.
- Are role models and treat girls, boys and children with disabilities equally.



IN COMMUNITIES...

- There is a positive atmosphere with fewer reports of petty crimes.
- There are fewer reported cases of child marriage and teenage pregnancies.
- There is less stigma and more knowledge about health and social themes.
- Girls, boys and children with disabilities have more equal opportunities.

Teachers' Testimonials



"I have become a more lively and friendly person in character to my pupils.

My interaction and relationship with learners has improved both within and outside the classroom. Nowadays, I enjoy my work more."

**- Katojo Primary School
Uganda**

"The games have helped us handle issues like drug abuse, and curbed school dropouts. It makes the learners love school, resulting in high retention."

**- Garissa Road Primary School
Kenya**

"The program has helped our community to treat boys and girls equally. Education is now something that is normalized and promoted for both girls and boys."

**- Nyabombwe Primary School
Zambia**

"We have seen a reduction of child labor in the community and a high re-emission of pupils in school."

**- Kampata Primary School
Malawi**

"Daily attendance has improved and many students who had dropped out previously, decided to come back to school after introduction of this program."

**- Rwamuhima Primary School
Uganda**

"There used to be many cases of teenage pregnancies. Girls have become more assertive now and there is more awareness. There are no more new cases of teenage pregnancies reported."

**- Kianjau Primary School
Kenya**

"All learners are now given equal opportunities in class despite their gender, abilities, or appearance."

**- Antioch South Primary School
Zambia**

"Most learners were not able to interact with the opposite sex due to cultural and religious beliefs. Children now learnt to interact with each other normally through play."

**- Estate 76 Primary School
Malawi**



M&E Strategy

In 2023, we further developed our Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) strategy. Our strategy is designed to systematically measure and improve the impact of our programs on children, teachers, and the community. In order to do this, we use different surveys and tools measuring teacher performance, Join for Joy's impact on dropout and graduation rates is for both boys and girls, and indirect effects of our intervention. We showcase the impact of our program through our Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) dashboard.

Our M&E strategy consists of:

- *Teacher Performance Observation Visits*

We measure the (in)effectiveness of the Join for Joy program by assessing the improvement in teacher performance before (baseline) and during (follow-up) the Join for Joy program. Join for Joy sports coaches visit all schools in our program periodically (~4-8 times per year) and observe teacher performance during PE lessons.

- *Student Dropout and Graduation Rate Interviews*

We measure the student dropout and graduation rates in participating schools and compare these before and after ~1 year of working with Join for Joy. Through interviews with headteachers, we estimate the impact of the Join for Joy program on these numbers. The interview is conducted using a standardized online survey.

- *Teachers' Feedback*

During the final phase of our playful learning program, the Achievement Review, we collect qualitative data from teachers about their personal and professional successes and challenges. We also ask them to share the "Most Significant Changes" that have taken place on the student, school, and community levels. This is captured using structured forms that are designed to gather detailed testimonials and insights. While primarily anecdotal, these testimonials are valuable for understanding the context and depth of the program's impact. They complement quantitative data by providing narratives that highlight personal and community transformations.





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Overview of activities 2023

General innovations and strategic developments

We are continuously working on guaranteeing the quality and continuity of the Join for Joy playful learning program. In June 2023, Team Join for Joy, usually spread across five countries, gathered in Kenya. This meeting was sponsored by Contribute Foundation and allowed us to work on our innovation and strategic planning for the coming years all together. The focus was on making our current program more cost-effective without compromising on quality and impact.

This teambuilding week led to enhanced team dynamics and focused on improving our way of working specifically on how to use the shared G-drive. After the week, we saw increased efficiency and productivity following the introduction of (donated) MacBooks and the Join for Joy shared Google Drive. Important discussions also took place on innovation and strategy, resulting in clearer objectives and the inclusion of new program elements, such as environmental awareness, ensuring the continuous improvement, quality and sustainability of our playful learning program.



As for our Menstrual Hygiene Program, we adapted our approach in 2023 based on feedback gathered from participants and in line with our focus on continual improvements. We now offer girls an initial information session, followed by a few weeks to decide whether they want to receive the cup before the second information and distribution session. This reduces the risk of the cups going unused. We have also begun implementing this program in Malawi and have taken steps to pilot it in Kenya and Uganda in 2024.

Update per country of intervention

Kenya

In 2023, we welcomed 12 new schools into the playful learning program. Kenya made significant efforts to train, guide, and monitor these new schools alongside the existing schools. We also intensified our focus on including children with disabilities, recognizing that they are 49% more likely to never attend school and often face exclusion from sports due to inaccessible facilities ([UNICEF, 2021](#)). We intentionally worked with 3 schools that have special education units to ensure that children with disabilities are also actively included in program and can enjoy the benefits of playful learning and education. As a result, even when children with disabilities can access education, they are often excluded from sports activities due to a lack of accessible facilities and inclusive practices.

Additionally, Team Kenya organized the first menstrual cup training session for teachers, paving the way for the implementation of a menstrual hygiene program in 2024. This pilot aimed to understand how the program can be contextualized to meet the needs of Kenyan communities and gather valuable lessons for future implementations.

Zambia

In 2022, Join for Joy registered as a regional entity in Zambia and opened an office in Avondale, Lusaka. Since then, the Zambian team has made significant progress in establishing the office, engaging in partnership discussions, and initiating marketing and fundraising efforts. A notable initiative by Team Zambia is the introduction of 'Headteacher Day.' Recognizing the crucial role of headteachers in program implementation, this special day was created to boost their involvement and enhance their understanding and support of the program.

Team Zambia works on continuously improving our menstrual health program to increase the uptake and use of menstrual cups. This involves gathering feedback from participants, refining our training sessions, and ensuring that the program effectively addresses the specific needs and challenges faced by the Zambian communities.



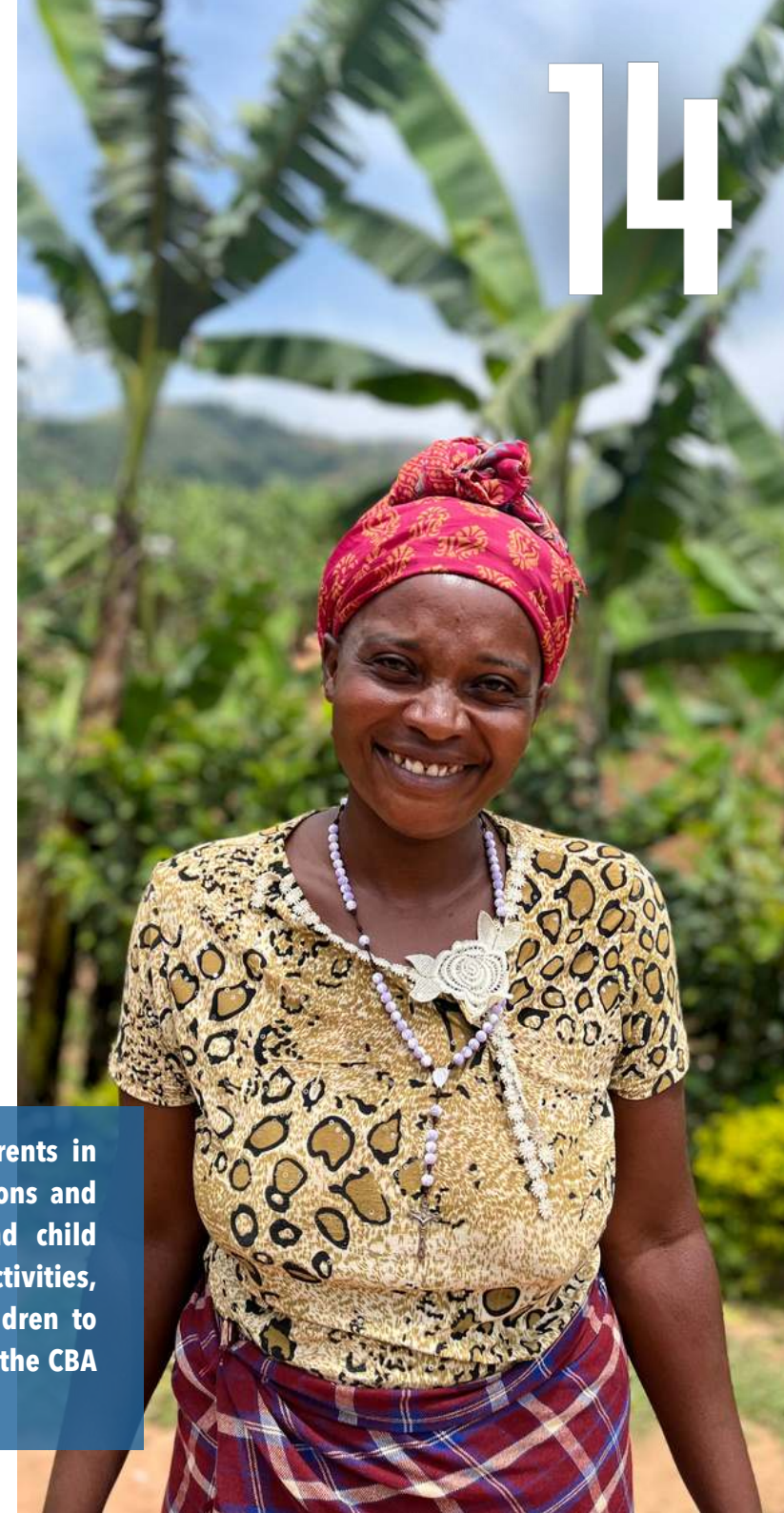
Malawi

In 2023, significant strides were made in both the playful learning and menstrual hygiene programs. Information sessions and distributions for menstrual cups successfully commenced. In October, officials from the Ministry of Education conducted research to measure the program's effects by interviewing teachers, students, parents, and headteachers, and observing lessons. They noted several positive outcomes, including improved self-confidence and physical well-being of students, reduced absenteeism, and enhanced teacher expertise in facilitating games. Additionally, exciting steps have been taken to establish a regional office in Mchinji in 2024.

Uganda

In Uganda, the requirements for teacher training colleges have been adjusted by the government. This change means that teachers must achieve a higher level of education before they can begin their teacher training. Due to these changes the admission of new students was halted. This prevented us from conducting training sessions as planned. Despite this setback, we focused heavily on lobbying efforts throughout the year, which paved the way for substantial progress in 2024. We will collaborate with Caritas to implement our 12-week Playful Learning course in six universities across five districts: Mbarara, Kabale, Hoima, Kasese, and Fortportal. Moreover, our efforts continued in primary schools with a specific focus on the Community Based Approach (CBA). Schools, parents and reported numerous positive effects of the CBA. The sensitization workshops and distribution of seeds have led to increased parental involvement, with many now providing daily lunches for their children and participating in parent-teacher meetings where important topics such as child guidance are discussed. This involvement has led to better care and support for children's education.

Through our CBA, we involve the community in promoting education. By engaging parents in workshops, we discuss important topics such as the significance of education for both sons and daughters. These workshops also address critical issues like teenage pregnancies and child marriages, which hinder girls' education and future prospects. In addition to educational activities, we provide seeds to families to improve food security and conduct workshops with children to encourage them create their own sports and play materials. Through this holistic approach, the CBA empowers communities, fostering collaboration for sustainable and impactful change



Most significant risks and uncertainties

In 2023, Join for Joy faced several significant challenges:

Inflation and rising costs:

Inflation led to substantial increases in fuel and food prices, impacting our operational costs and adding hardships for the communities we support. This also resulted in more girls being forced into early marriages as families sought to alleviate financial pressure. We responded by integrating playful activities in schools and communities to address this issue, emphasizing the importance of education for girls.

Anti-homosexuality law in Uganda:

The new 'Anti-Homosexuality Act 2023' signed by Ugandan President Museveni on May 29 increased penalties for same-sex relations and introduced new offenses, such as 'promoting homosexuality'. In some cases, the death penalty can now be applied. The introduction of this legislation normalizes a climate of inequality and discrimination, which directly opposes Join for Joy's core values of equality and inclusivity. This new law hampers our ability to effectively communicate about urgent issues within our programs, such as HIV.

Extreme weather conditions

Droughts and floods in Kenya, Zambia, and Uganda worsened living conditions, making schools hard to reach and jeopardizing food security. These conditions affected our program delivery and the daily lives of the children we support.

Funding and financial sustainability

As is often the case with NGOs, securing consistent funding can be challenging. Therefore we are continuously exploring new funding sources and partnerships to maintain and expand our programs.

Infrastructure challenges

Poor infrastructure in rural areas, such as inadequate roads, hindered the accessibility of primary schools in rainy seasons.





Marketing & Fundraising

Foundations & donations

We are grateful for the continuous support of various (family) foundations. Among others: Contribute Foundation, Nefkens Stichting Ontwikkelingshulp, Michiel Löwenberg Foundation, Stichting Wees een Kans, Stichting Meijers-van Meer, Stichting St. Pierre Fourier, Familiefonds Wierda Baas, Stichting Verbeek-Fonds, Hofsteestichting, and ADRA Nederland. In addition to periodic and one-time gifts from foundations, we are also grateful for the continuous support of private and monthly donors. Fundraising activities were organized by third-parties, such as the Gooilandschool and Hildebrand van Loonschool. Join for Joy also raised funds through various business partnerships and the organization of events.

Donation 20 laptops KAYAK

We received a generous donation of 20 laptops from KAYAK. These laptops have greatly enhanced the ability of the Join for Joy team, spread across five different countries, to collaborate effectively online using Google Drive. During our team session in Kenya, the laptops were distributed, and training was provided on how to utilize them for our work. This support from KAYAK is instrumental in improving our team's connectivity and efficiency.

Events & campaigns

Joy Project Exposition & Launch Documentary

On the 16th of February, we hosted a special evening for friends, family, and supporters at Ping, House of Pong in Amsterdam. The director of Join for Joy Zambia, Mwangala Ikacana, shared insights about their impactful work in Zambia, and about the Joy Project she organized together with our ambassador Nanne van der Leer. Their story was beautifully brought to life through images captured by photographer Mark Engelsman and videographer Thijmen Boet. Several of these photos were sold during the evening, supporting our cause. To top it all off, our ambassador and singer-songwriter Rachèl Louise delivered a wonderful musical performance.

▶ Click [here](#) to watch the aftermovie by Eightynine

12,5 years Join for Joy celebration

We celebrated Join for Joy's 12.5-year anniversary with our amazing supporters, partners, and friends in the beautiful atrium of Clifford Chance Amsterdam. We reflected on Join for Joy's journey so far, and looked ahead into the future. The evening was filled with dancing, music, a lively pub quiz, and an exciting auction and raffle. Thanks to the generosity of everyone involved, we raised over €41.750.



▶ [Click here](#) to watch the aftermovie by Eightynine

We are deeply grateful to all who helped make this event a success. Special thanks go to Clifford Chance Amsterdam, Roos ten Doerschate, Marissa van Spronsen (Project M), Toon van Dijk & Daan Sniijders, MVNG MTRS, Rachèl Louise & Krystl (The Bluebirds), MoMoLab, Eightynine, and the dedicated volunteers Joan An, Julia, Marleine, Amelie, Ben, Berry, Carolyn, Ellen, Emma, Eva, Gijs, Harinder, Ishmael, Jacques, Lesley, Loes, Lotte, Maria, Merette, Mike, and Putu.

We are very thankful to all who donated auction items and raffle prizes, including our ambassador Wout Weghorst, House of Rituals, Jimi Kummer, Herold van den Berg, Anna + Nina, ART LOVING CRIMINAL (Willemijn Specken), Jimmy Nelson, Louwman Museum, KLM Open, Jasper Koch, The Lucas Bols Company, Sophie Laubert, Atelier des Etoiles (Marie-Fleur den Hollander), Rituals, Old Habits Die Hard, Maison Tribu (Isabel Sillevius), Domaine de l'Amaurigue, Eightynine (Mark Engelsman), Villetta Maroli, The Lucas Bols Company, MO Esthetics, Johan Cruijff ArenA, Oot Granola, Gebrouwen door Vrouwen, Ace & Tate, Heineken Experience, Our House | Immersive Experience on Electronic Music, Naïf Good Care (B Corp), Dinah Smutny, and MiM Amsterdam.

Dam tot Damloop

We managed to break our own personal Dam tot Damloop record: over 45 enthusiastic runners participated in our team and managed to raise over EUR 18.000 for Join for Joy together. We are very grateful for their efforts.



Menstrual Cup fundraiser

In December, we hosted our annual menstrual cup fundraiser with the theme: "It's the most wonderful time of the month." The online campaign was a great success, raising €43.500 for the 2024 menstrual hygiene program. Among this number is a generous donation of 6.000 menstrual cups from Contribute Foundation.



Media & publications

The Power of an Educated Girl documentary

On the 8th of March, International Women's Day, we launched "The Power of an Educated Girl", a short documentary about the intergenerational impact of educating one girl. The story follows Mary and Felistus, two Zambian girls living in the rural area of Chongwe District. The documentary was voluntarily made by Mark Engelsman (EightyNine) and filmmaker Thijmen Boet (Refined Media).



▶ Watch the four-minute documentary [here](#)

HundrED report

Join for Joy has been selected as one of the top 100 most innovative interventions in the field of education worldwide. A team of researchers and educational stakeholders reviewed over 3.000 different organizations to find out which 100 are the most impactful and scalable. This selection means we are featured in the HundrED Global Collection Report 2024. The top 100 organizations were announced in Helsinki during the HundrED Innovation Summit, an annual event bringing together innovators and educational stakeholders from all over the world. It was the third time in a row that Join for Joy was selected as one of the hundrED's 100 innovations, based on impact and scalability.



Global Collection 2024 Report out now!

Learn about the top 100 most impactful & scalable education innovations to watch out for



hundrED

Access the HundrED Global Report [here](#)

The powerful connection between play and learning

"Stop playing. We are here to learn" - a phrase that is often used. However, research proves that play actually enhances learning. Join for Joy was featured in an article by HundrED sharing more about the paradox between play and learning.

22.11.2023 | Jamie Lee | < Share

The paradox of play and school - can play support learning?



Access the article [here](#)



Communication with stakeholders

We place great importance on every stakeholder, recognizing that each link in the chain is crucial to the success of our interventions. This is why we put in all efforts to ensure transparency, engagement, and collaboration with all parties involved. Our communication strategy includes regular updates and reports through quarterly newsletters, annual reports, and periodic email updates to keep supporters informed about our progress and achievements. Our social media platforms are vital tools for engaging with a broader audience, where we post updates, success stories, and photos from our programs.

In 2023, we hosted several online and in-person events, providing opportunities for stakeholders to interact with our team, learn about our initiatives, and contribute to our mission.

We highly value input and feedback from the schools and communities we work in, this is why we have implemented mechanisms like surveys to gather insights from program participants. This feedback is crucial for improving our programs and ensuring they meet the needs of the communities we work in. Engaging with local communities is a cornerstone of our approach, with regular meetings and discussions with community leaders, parents, teachers, and students to ensure our programs are culturally sensitive and locally relevant. We continue to strengthen relationships with existing partners and seek new collaborations with relevant NGOs, companies, educational institutions and government bodies.

Governance

The founders, board members, and employees of Join for Joy all share the drive and ambition to stimulate the development of Join for Joy to reach its mission. With diverse professional backgrounds in legal, finance, education, communication, media, sports, and more, they work in a complementary manner to support the organization's goals. Join for Joy believes in maintaining a small team in the Netherlands, while investing significantly in teams in our intervention countries. Join for Joy has a moderate wage policy for the management team, employees, and freelancers, aiming for salary levels and working conditions that match their responsibilities. Employees do not receive bonuses or a 13th-month salary. Board members do not receive any remuneration for their board activities, as stated in the articles of association.

We are excited to announce that we have welcomed three new board members, enhancing our team's expertise and dedication. Additionally, we have said goodbye to Simon Kamau, Kennedy Zakochera, and Martine Beijerman, and we thank them for their valuable contributions. We also welcome Derrick Okango (Kenya) and Sydney Njovu (Zambia) as our new Sports and Play Coordinators.

The day-to-day management and the Board meet bi-monthly to discuss ongoing strategic, financial, and operational issues and make specific policy decisions. Additionally, there is frequent ad-hoc contact between the management and the Board for urgent matters. Cash expenses related to Join for Joy's activities over €2,500 require prior approval by the Board with a 2/3 majority.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our board members and ambassadors for their unwavering dedication and invaluable support to Join for Joy:

Board

Frank van den Brink – Chairman, since 2021
Jaap Kalverkamp - Finance, since 2023
Arie Torres, since 2021
Suzanne van Esser, since 2023
Anne Sallaerts, , since 2023

Ambassadors

Wout Weghorst
Nanne van der Leer
Rachèl Louise
Rob Reckers

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On-site Team

Kenya

Ruth Mwinga - Sports and Play Coordinator
Derrick Okango - Sports and Play Coordinator
Mary Mutisya – Sports and Play Manager

Uganda

Hilda Mbabazi - Sports and Play Coordinator
Boniface Byamugisha - Sports and Play Coordinator
Javira Birungi - Sports and Play Coordinator

Zambia

Mwangala Ikacana - Operational Director Join for Joy Zambia
Mirriam Nanyinza - Menstrual Hygiene Expert
Sydney Njovu - Sports and Play Coordinator
Siisi Chocho - Freelance accountant

Malawi

James Phiri - Sports and Play Coordinator
Kennedy Zakochera - Sports and Play Coordinator
Andrew Nyoni - Accountant

Head office Netherlands (3.3 FTE)

Minke van Geen- Meijboom - Managing Director / Founder (0.5 FTE)
Hannah Kooren - Head of Operations / Founder (0.5 FTE)
Meike Smit - Program Manager (0.9 FTE)
Romée Nieuwland - Marketing and Partnerships Manager (0.9 FTE)
Martine Beijerman - Head of Strategy (0.5 FTE)
Nathan van Leeuwen - Intern Marketing, Communication & Research
Mart Beeftink - Freelancer Monitoring & Evaluation

Financial Report 2023

Summary Report Board of Directors

Join for Joy's objective is to support primary schools in the rural areas of low-income countries in East Africa by developing and implementing playful learning programs. Join for Joy has developed a sustainable and challenging playful learning program in which primary school teachers in the most rural areas of Zambia, Malawi, Kenya and Uganda learn about the power of playful learning and how to implement this at school. They learn how to create a safe learning environment and act as a role model for children. This way, their students enjoy school more, playfully learn to deal with daily challenges, and towards a bright future through education. In 2023, the board members oversaw and guided these efforts, ensuring that Join for Joy's objectives are met and the impact is maximized.

The Financial Year 2023

Despite global financial instability, in 2023 Join for Joy increased its total donation revenue by €117.736 compared with 2022. While total program related expenses remained similar, even when working in 12 more schools than in 2022. This increased impact was achieved by decreasing the FTE in Netherlands from 3.7 FTE in 2022 to 3.5 FTE in 2023 and concomitantly increasing FTE in the implementing countries. Savings were also made through negotiating with suppliers for better deals on sports equipment and play materials. Alongside favorable exchange rates, this way, we have managed to generate a contribution to our continuity reserve, which is critical for the future of the organization.

In Kenya, the Join for Joy program and staff costs have remained relatively similar from 2022 to 2023. In Uganda, the Join for Joy program and staff costs decreased in 2023 compared to the previous year. This was because the costs associated with the development of the university teacher training in Uganda were allocated to the general program development budget, as the teacher training program will be scaled to other countries in the future. The twelve schools recruited for the 2023 program undertook the kick off training at the end of 2022 due to school holidays, therefore the costs associated with the kick off were expended in 2022. All other training and education

BALANCE AS PER DECEMBER 31, 2023

(After appropriation of result)

	12-31-2023	12-31-2022
Assets		
Fixed assets		
Tangible fixed assets	1.847	2.674
	1.847	2.674
Currents accounts		
Receivables	15.024	163.471
Cash and cash equivalents	218.445	48.982
	235.316	212.453
Total	€235.316	€215.127

sessions were undertaken and expensed in 2023 as planned. In Zambia, the Join for Joy program costs decreased in 2023 compared to 2022 as in 2022 the increased costs were related to an initial investment for registering as Join for Joy Zambia and setting up the new office. In Malawi, the Join for Joy program costs increased from 2022 to 2023 predominantly due to the introduction of the menstrual health and hygiene program.

The current liabilities consist, among others, of a wage tax payable to the amount of €6.942, a holiday pay accrual to the amount of €6.451, and accrued expenses to the amount of €2.274. A liability of € 38.993 was included for the repayment of the NOW. Join for Joy has to periodically repay the NOW subsidy, a financial regulation organized by the Dutch government to support companies and organizations suffering from loss of turnover due to the impact of COVID-19. We appealed this decision in court (with pro bono legal support, by Clifford Chance), to our disappointment, unsuccessfully. The category 'donations from individuals & events' refers to sponsoring amounts raised by monthly donations and events. Income from this category increased from €54.045 in 2022 to €64.511 in 2023 mainly due to the 12.5 year Join for Joy celebration at Clifford Chance. The category 'donations partners & companies' relates to the fundraising received from businesses. Income from this category increased from €12.670 in 2022 to €28.960. The category 'income from (family) foundations' relates to donations received from private family foundations. Income from this category increased from €483.014 in 2022 to €573.993 in 2023, largely due to increased commitments from some of our larger donors.

The required personnel costs related to implementation of the Join for Joy program amounts to a total amount of €195,480 reflecting a total of 3.5 FTE in 2023. Of the total employee costs, €189.408 / 96.9% was allocated directly to the Join for Joy mission objectives.

Join for Joy adheres to the CBF C2 standards, ensuring transparency, accountability, and effective use of resources. The annual accounts are prepared by the guidelines for smaller fundraising organizations and foundations model "C2". The income is recognized in the year it is raised and allocated to the projects in the year when the project is realized.

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STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES

	2023	2022
Total		
Donations from non-profit organizations	573.993	483.013
Income from individuals/events	64.511	54.045
Income from partners & companies	28.960	12.670
	<u>667.464</u>	<u>549.728</u>
Total income	€667.464	€549.728
Expenses		
Playful learning program Kenya	91.173	100.893
Playful learning program Uganda	95.072	134.925
Playful learning program Zambia	143.648	154.381
Playful learning program Malawi	120.372	100.310
Playful learning development & strategy	81.239	66.940
Expenses events	17.287	-
Total program related expenses	548.791	557.449
Costs of raising funds	5.251	4.313
Management, operating expenses and administration	69.753	58.440
Financial income / (expense)	(1.725)	(2.329)
Statement of income and expenses	€41.944	(€72.803)
Appropriation of result		
Continuity reserve January 1	132.552	205.355
Statement of income and expenses	41.944	(72.803)
Continuity reserve December 31	€174.496	€132.552

OUTLOOK EXPENSES 2023

Qualitative & sustainable playful learning

Training program teachers

Empowerment, equality and inclusiveness

Monitoring, evaluation and learning

Subtotal €531.256

Capability building

Support setting up legal entity Malawi

Partnerships with educational institutions

Implementation of a Community Based Approach

Subtotal €62.000

General & administrative costs

Management and administration / employees

Insurance/banking/subscriptions/IT and other office-related costs

Marketing and communication

Office rent/housing

Subtotal €105.288

Total Outlook 2023 €698.544

Outlook 2024

In 2024, Join for Joy will continue its mission to enhance education and health through our playful learning and menstrual health interventions. We are excited to announce that 30 new schools will join our program, expanding our reach and impact. Moreover, we will continue to improve and implement our menstrual hygiene program, with pilot distributions of menstrual cups planned in Kenya and Uganda.

A major milestone for 2024 will be the establishment of our new office in Mchinji, Malawi. Our focus will be on building local capacity, expanding our presence and deepening our visibility and impact in Malawi. This will allow us to focus on local fundraising efforts in Zambia and Malawi through both regional offices, fostering mutual responsibility and reducing long-term dependence on fundraising efforts in The Netherlands.

In 2024, we will ensure more children with disabilities are included in our programs and provide additional resources and support for teachers on disability inclusion. Half of the schools we will work with in Kenya will have special education departments. By doing so we can ensure that children with disabilities are also actively and meaningfully included in the program.

In Uganda, we will collaborate with Caritas and the district education officers to implement our 12-week Playful Learning course at universities in five districts: Mbarara, Kabale, Hoima, Kasese, and Fortportal, allowing us to reach students in six universities across five districts. To complement our endeavor to make a lasting impact on the educational system, we intend to scale this approach to other countries in 2024.

Moreover, we are thrilled about an exciting upcoming new partnership with the Tomorrowland Foundation. While details are still under wraps, we can hint that it will involve music, dance, and arts, bringing even more joy and creativity to our programs.

Finally, we are excited to announce as of May 2024, Charlotte Petty will start as our new Managing Director. In the journey ahead, we remain steadfast in our commitment to improving educational opportunities, fostering empowerment, and building resilient communities. Together, we can create a future where every child can thrive because of quality education, regardless of their circumstances.

Playful education builds the next generation.



Join for Joy

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