

# ELAN—Early Learning and Nutrition Facility

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## Scaling early childhood development and nutrition service delivery

The Jacobs Foundation and the UBS Optimus Foundation, the Ivorian government and 9 cocoa and chocolate companies want to create an **Early Learning and Nutrition (ELAN) financing facility** that will support the Ivorian Government to extend proven-to-work Early Childhood Development (ECD) interventions in Côte d'Ivoire. ELAN aims to reach **1.3 million children aged 0 to 5** in rural Côte d'Ivoire in contributing to their optimal physical, emotional and cognitive development by providing their caregivers access to training and basic services critical for young children's wellbeing.

The facility would be endowed with **seed funding of CHF 20 million**, and has a **target capitalization of CHF 40 million**, to serve as a multi-stakeholder platform for advocacy, resource mobilisation, evidence-based decision-making, coordination, planning and implementation of ECD interventions. It brings together decisions-makers from government, the cocoa industry, philanthropic and development agencies, as well as civil society. The facility will respond directly to three specific national strategies targeting children: The National Multisectoral Nutrition Plan; the 10 years Education Sector Plan; and the National Action Plan to Combat Child Labor. As such, the ELAN partnership could become the first public private partnership focused on scaling investments for children under the age of five in Côte d'Ivoire.

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## Background: the next prospering generation

Investing in early childhood development is one of the best investments a country can make to boost economic growth, develop human capital and break the vicious cycle of poverty.<sup>1</sup> James Heckman (2006) demonstrates that the earlier we invest in children's development, the higher the returns. Equally important, investing in early childhood development is necessary to uphold the right of every child to survive and thrive.

The primary caregivers of young children can play a major role in improving child-related indicators. Physical and brain development is most rapid in the earliest years of life, when children are fully dependent on their caregivers. Yet in Côte d'Ivoire, caregivers receive very little support to do so. As a result, a large majority of parents and caregivers maintain practices that they consider positive and appropriate, although in fact harmful. Hence, despite its well-performing economy, Côte d'Ivoire struggles to improve its human development indicators, which in turn is stagnating its human capital.

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## Catalysing the impact of existing efforts

ELAN will be much more effective if it is embedded in the context of a broader child rights framework addressing concurrent efforts (maintained or scaled-up) such as child protection/due diligence systems, poverty reduction or improved quality education. Jacobs Foundation and its philanthropic partners strongly believe that ELAN is a catalytic investment with the potential to accelerate broader multi-stakeholder agreement.

To date, substantial investments have been committed to ECD in Côte d'Ivoire including the *Projet Multisectoriel de Nutrition et Développement de la Petite Enfance* (PMNDPE), a CHF 60 million project financed primarily by a credit from the World Bank and a grant from the Power of Nutrition. While substantial, the current investments remain restricted in scope and cover only part of the country's needs. With the objective to fill this gap, ELAN will build upon the gains of the PMNDPE and will bring to scale ECD service delivery focussing on caregiver programs, while strengthening government capacity by prioritizing delivery via its institutional platforms.

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.worldbank.org/en/programs/earlyyears>

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## Expected results

### Expected results (2025)

#### Target capitalization of CHF 40 M



**~1.3 million children** aged 0–5 years reached with nurturing care interventions



**200 ECD relevant infrastructures** are renovated and equipped to improve the quality of child-friendly spaces.



**All projects** follow clear guidelines and a minimum package of activities.



**Local scientific** on the early years is generated.

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## Call to action

Companies and institutions interested in partnering with ELAN should contact:  
[irina.hotz@jacobsfoundation.org](mailto:irina.hotz@jacobsfoundation.org)

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## Contributing partners

### – Ivorian government

### – Philanthropy

Jacobs Foundation, UBS Optimus Foundation

### – Cocoa and chocolate companies

Barry Callebaut, Cargill, Chocolonely Foundation, ECOM, Ferrero, The Hershey Company, Mars Wrigley, Mondelez International, Touton

### Jacobs Foundation

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