

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

Playful education
builds the next
generation.



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Preface

While our mission remains unchanged, 2025 marked the beginning of an important new chapter in Join for Joy's development. After leading the organisation for more than fourteen years, co-founders Hannah Kooren and Minke van Geen stepped back from daily operations in March 2025. Their vision, dedication and entrepreneurial spirit have been instrumental in building Join for Joy into the organisation it is today.

One of the most encouraging developments in 2025 was the continued progress towards greater localisation and national ownership. For the first time, Join for Joy Zambia and Join for Joy Malawi secured significant direct funding. While these grants represent an important financial achievement, they are even more meaningful as a reflection of growing national leadership, fundraising capacity, and ownership. We see that sustainable change is strongest when it is driven by the communities closest to the challenges and opportunities we aim to address.

Amid these organisational developments, our program continued to grow. Thousands of children participated in playful learning activities, more girls gained access to menstrual health education and products and our efforts to include children with disabilities became more deeply embedded across all the implementation countries.

The progress described throughout this report would not have been possible without the commitment of our staff, partners, teachers, supporters, donors, board members, and the communities we serve. Together, we are building a future in which every child can learn, grow and thrive in safe, inclusive and playful learning environments.

With thanks,

Charlotte Petty,
Managing Director



Mission, Vision & Approach

Playful education builds the next generation

Our Vision

Every child in sub-Saharan Africa can develop academically, socially, and emotionally in safe, inclusive, and playful learning environments.

Our Mission

We train teachers and equip primary schools in rural East and Southern Africa with the skills, tools, and support to create safe, inclusive, and playful learning environments where children actively participate, develop essential life skills, and achieve their full potential.

Our Approach

Playful Learning Program:

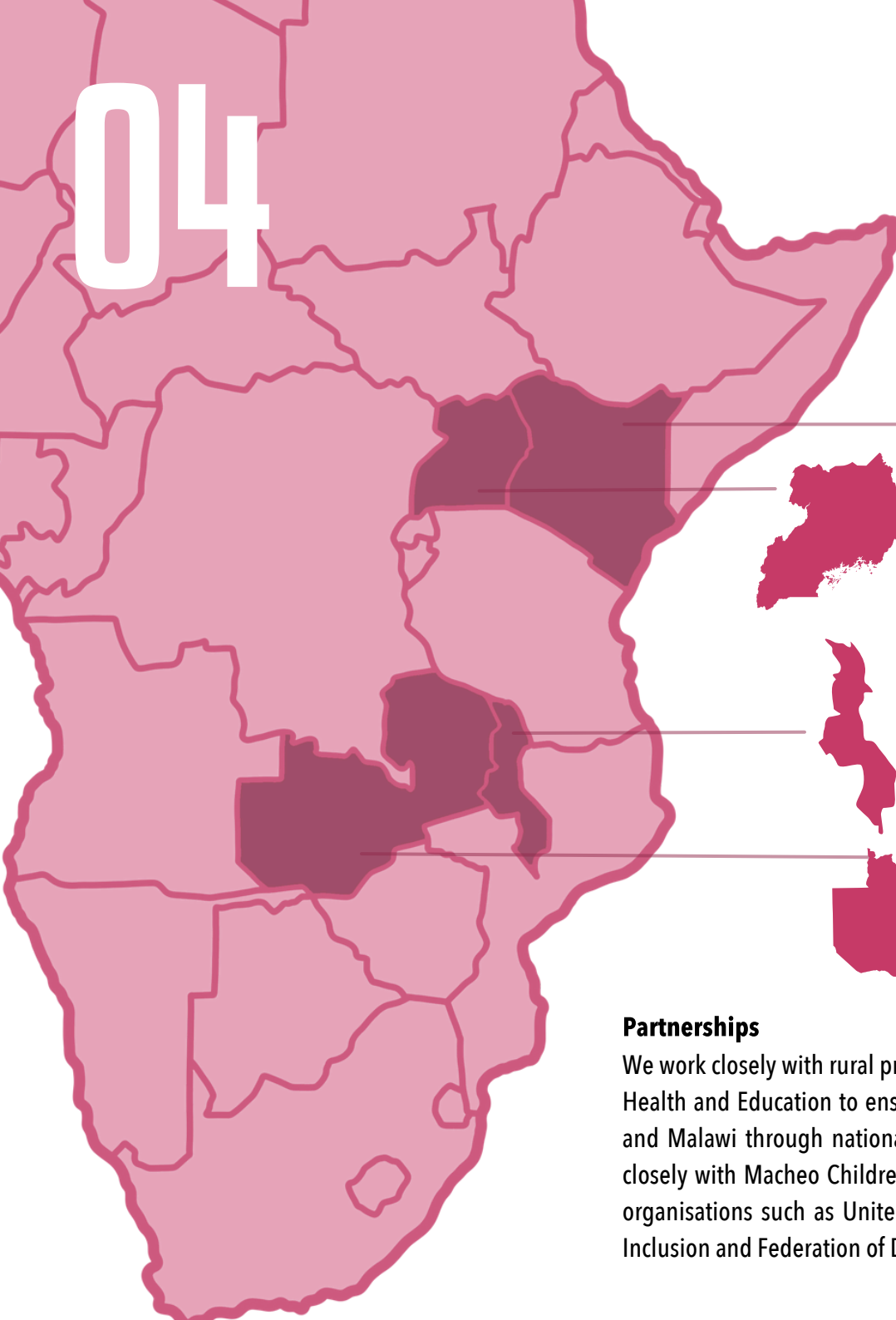
Each year, new primary schools join the Join for Joy playful learning program. Through teacher training, coaching visits, and ongoing support, teachers learn how to use playful learning to create inclusive and engaging classrooms where every child feels seen, heard, and motivated to learn. Using sport and play as educational tools, teachers help children develop essential life skills such as communication, teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving, while exploring topics including health, gender equality, and inclusion. Join for Joy also works with school leaders, caregivers, and communities to strengthen positive discipline, learner wellbeing, and supportive learning environments for all children, with particular attention to girls and children with disabilities.

Menstrual Health Component:

To ensure girls do not miss school during their period, Join for Joy complements its playful learning program with a Menstrual Health (MH) component. Through menstrual health education, Girls' Clubs, and the distribution of reusable menstrual cups, girls gain knowledge and practical support to manage their menstruation with dignity. Girls' Clubs, facilitated by trained female teachers, provide a safe space where girls can ask questions, share experiences, and learn about puberty and menstrual health. During these sessions, girls can choose to receive a menstrual cup. To create lasting change, boys, parents, caregivers, and community members are also involved. By challenging stigma and encouraging open conversations about menstruation, we help create supportive environments where girls can thrive. Together, these interventions help ensure that girls can attend school consistently and reach their full potential.



03



04

Where we work

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
Join for Joy Malawi

Chongwe & Chilangwa Districts, Zambia
Join for Joy Zambia

Partnerships

We work closely with rural primary schools, educational institutions, NGOs and government bodies including ministries of Health and Education to ensure our programs are contextually relevant and sustainable. Join for Joy operates in Zambia and Malawi through nationally registered offices. For the coordination of our program in Kenya and Uganda, we work closely with Macheo Children's Centre (Kenya) and Caritas Uganda (Uganda). We also collaborate with disability-focused organisations such as United Disabled Persons of Kenya, Zambia Agency for Persons with Disabilities (ZAPD), Embrace Inclusion and Federation of Disability Organisations in Malawi (FEDOMA) to strengthen disability inclusion.

Socio-economic Context

Economic Context

Many families in rural Zambia live in extreme poverty and struggle to meet their basic needs. Around fifty percent of the rural population in Southern Africa is under the age of 15; the population is growing rapidly, and the gap between rich and poor is widening. Growing up in this context, many children are caught in a vicious, interconnected cycle of poverty and limited access to education

Education

In Sub-Saharan Africa, over one-fifth of children aged 6 to 11 are out of school, increasing to nearly 60% for children between 15 and 17 (1). When children do attend school, the quality of education is often poor. Rural schools face severe shortages of qualified teachers and learning materials. Many teachers struggle with under-resourced facilities and low salaries. The relationship between teachers and students is often hierarchical, corporal punishment is prevalent and teaching is often delivered through rigid methods. The result is an education system in which learning and teaching are often not enjoyable, interaction between teachers and students is limited, and the school environment can be unwelcoming for children.

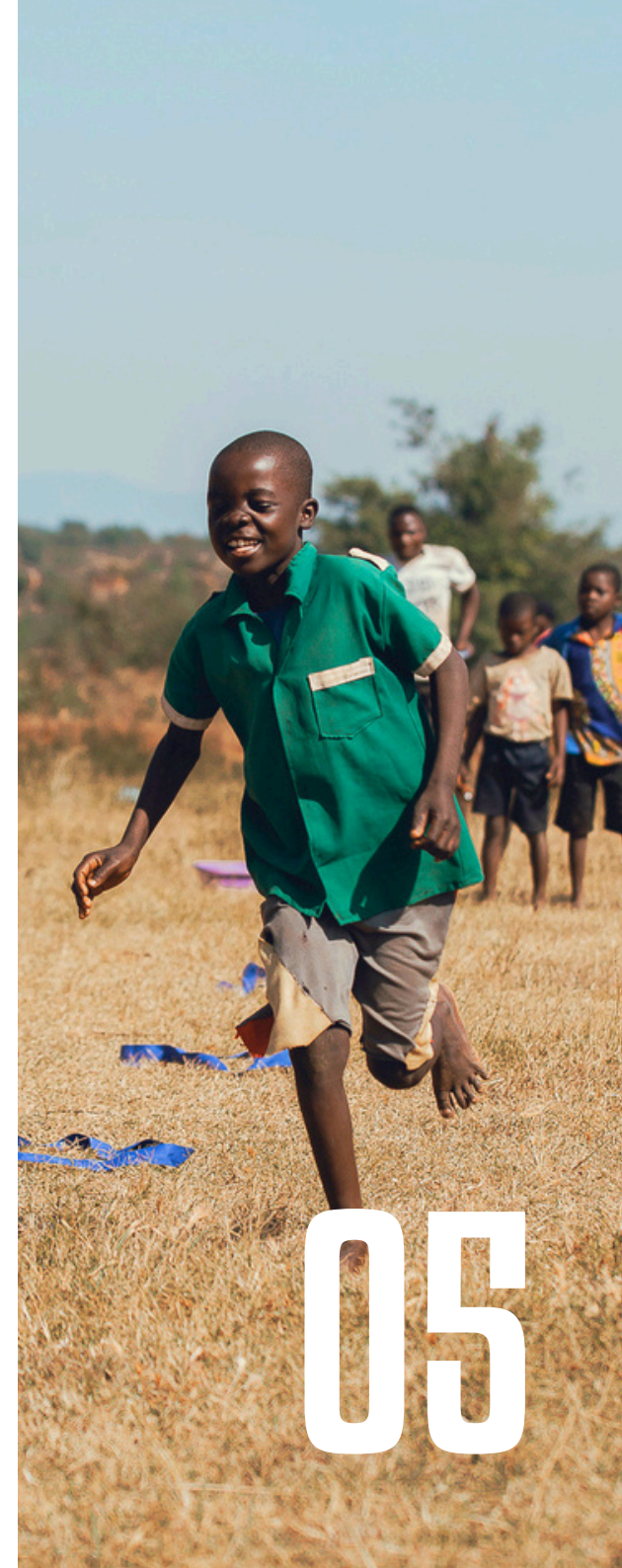
Gender inequality and social barriers

Girls face additional barriers to education: traditional gender norms and economic pressures can mean that girls' education is given lower priority over that of boys. Many girls also lack access to safe and reliable menstrual products and information, making it difficult to attend school every day of the month. As a result, menstruation often increases absenteeism and the risk of school dropout, which can have lasting negative consequences for girls' educational attainment and economic opportunities later in life.

Disability inclusion

Across Eastern and Southern Africa, an estimated 29 million children are living with a disability. They are among the most excluded groups when it comes to education and social participation. Persistent stigma and deeply rooted misconceptions within their communities continue to limit their opportunities and development. As a result, only around 10% of children with disabilities have access to mainstream education (World Bank, 2018).

(1) <https://uis.unesco.org/en/topic/education-africa>





From play to purpose

Our contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals

Our work on the ground connects directly to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through the power of play, we contribute to a healthier, fairer, and more joyful future for all children.

3 GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING



SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being

Sports and play stimulate physical activity and emotional well-being. In our programs, we address pressing health issues such as malaria, HIV/AIDS, and cholera in a child-friendly and accessible way. We also provide menstrual and reproductive health education and distribute menstrual cups, helping girls manage their periods safely and with dignity - reducing the risk of infections from unhygienic alternatives.

4 QUALITY EDUCATION



SDG 4: Quality Education

We improve the quality of education by training teachers to create inclusive, active classrooms where every child is engaged. By using sports and play as tools for learning, we break down traditional barriers that focus on rigid teaching methods and unpack gender stereotypes, and by doing so we ensure that all children, especially girls and children with disabilities have equal access to meaningful learning.

5 GENDER EQUALITY



SDG 5: Gender Equality

Our programs challenge harmful gender norms and empower girls through life skills games and menstrual health education. Girls learn to understand their rights, speak up with confidence, and stay in school longer. Boys are encouraged to become allies in creating equal opportunities. Whether in the classroom or on the sports field, all children are supported to play, learn, and grow as equals.

17 PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE GOALS



SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals

We believe in the power of working together. Join for Joy collaborates closely with local NGOs, governments, schools, and communities to ensure that our programs are locally rooted, culturally relevant, and built to last. These partnerships help us expand our reach and deepen our impact across rural East Africa.

Strategic Plan 2025-2027

2025 marked the first year of implementation of Join for Joy's Strategic Plan (2025-2027), which sets the direction for the organisation's next phase of growth and impact.

The strategy is built around four key priorities:

1. Improving the playful learning program through data and innovation
2. Sustainable scale playful learning
3. Prioritise inclusion for children with disabilities
4. Build resilience through financial sustainability and organisational strength

Throughout 2025, these priorities guided key organisational developments, including the strengthening of monitoring, evaluation and learning systems, the scaling of playful learning through teacher training institutions, the expansion of disability inclusion initiatives, and continued progress towards national fundraising and organisational sustainability.



QUALITY EDUCATION

is our purpose



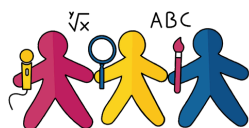
JOY

is our driver



AGILITY

is our strength



PLAYFUL LEARNING

is our power



INTERSECTIONAL INCLUSION

is our edge



Impact 2025

144

Primary school teachers
trained

34.000 Children
reached



6

Colleges
offering playful
learning course

14%  Average increase
in school enrollments

24%  Average decrease
in school dropouts

17.000

Girls
received information & the
offer of a menstrual cup



500+

Children with
disabilities
included



36

Primary Schools
participated



Pillar 1: Improving the program through data and innovation

Playful Learning Program

- 36 new primary schools joined the Join for Joy program in Kenya, Malawi, and Zambia.
- 36 boxes with sports and play materials distributed
- 144 primary school teachers trained in playful learning methodologies
- 34,444 children reached directly with playful learning
- 117,000 community members reached indirectly
- Sports festivals & Music & Arts festivals organized

Menstrual Health

- 23 schools in Zambia and Malawi implemented the menstrual health program
- 17,222 girls received menstrual health education
- 6,167 girls participated in Girls' Clubs
- Over 2,000 menstrual cups distributed
- Menstrual Health component strengthened with new puberty and menstrual health games

How we use data to improve our program

Sustainable impact requires continuous learning, reflection, and innovation. Throughout 2025, we invested in strengthening our ability to collect evidence, generate insights, and use data to improve program quality and inform future strategic decisions.

Through classroom observations conducted before and after training, we gained valuable insights into how teachers apply playful learning methods in practice. Through Girls' Clubs, individual interviews, and follow-up visits, the team gained valuable insights into barriers, success factors, and community attitudes surrounding menstrual health.



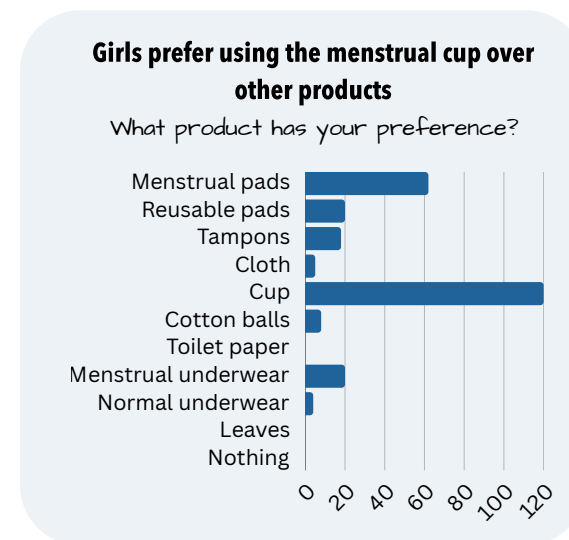
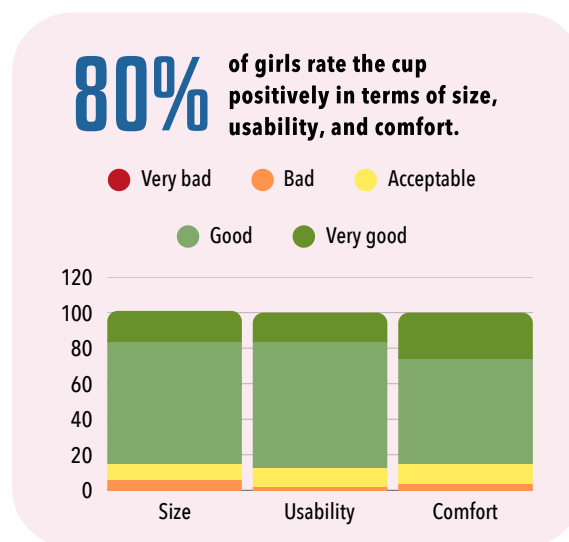
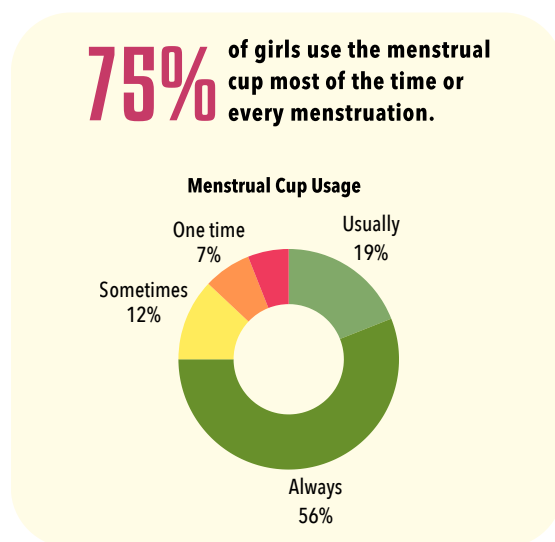
Playful learning

The data showed clear improvements in teaching quality across participating schools. Teachers became more confident in facilitating activities, interacted more actively with students, and used sports and play to discuss life skills and social topics. Follow-up observations also showed more inclusive classroom environments, with girls and boys participating more equally and teachers creating safer and more positive interactions among learners. By using data to understand what happens inside the classroom, we can continuously refine our training approach, provide targeted support to teachers, and strengthen the impact of playful learning for children.



Menstrual Health

Menstrual health data shows that menstrual cup usage rates are notably high and have improved significantly compared to previous years, attributed to enhanced sensitisation sessions conducted prior to distribution. The strategic focus on providing cups exclusively to informed and interested participants has proven to be both cost-effective and impactful, maximising the program's benefits.



These findings have already informed program improvements, including stronger involvement of mothers in Girls' Clubs, additional support for girls with disabilities through a menstrual underwear pilot, with menstrual underwear kindly donated by Lotties period, and a greater focus on community engagement to improve acceptance and sustained use of menstrual products.

Pillar 2: Sustainably scaling

Teacher Training Colleges

- **6 Primary Teacher Colleges in Uganda offering the Playful Learning Module**
- **220 Coordinating Centre Tutors (CCTs) trained to mentor and support future teachers in 800 primary schools**
- **Teacher Training College approach expanded from Uganda to Malawi**
- **82% of student teachers rated the Playful Learning course 8/10 or higher and would recommend it to others**
- **93% of student teachers applied playful learning methods during school placements in Uganda**

In 2025, Join for Joy continued its transition from direct implementation towards sustainable scaling through teacher training institutions in Uganda. Following the successful 2024 pilot of the 12-week Playful Learning module in six Primary Teacher Colleges (PTCs), the focus shifted to strengthening the systems that support future teachers. Due to a temporary pause in student teacher intake following national education reforms, Join for Joy trained 220 Coordinating Centre Tutors (CCTs) in the Playful Learning approach. Through their role within Uganda's education system, CCTs support student teachers during placements and provide guidance to primary schools, helping embed Playful Learning in everyday teaching practice.

Join for Joy also launched its first Playful Learning training programme at St. Ignatius University in Kabale, marking an important step towards institutionalising Playful Learning within pre-service teacher education. Throughout the year, research and monitoring activities confirmed the strong potential of this approach to increase reach while strengthening long-term sustainability, while highlighting the importance of ongoing mentorship, practical classroom support, and institutional ownership. These lessons are now informing the introduction of Playful Learning in Malawi, where Join for Joy will launch a pilot in Dowa District in 2026.



Digitalisation

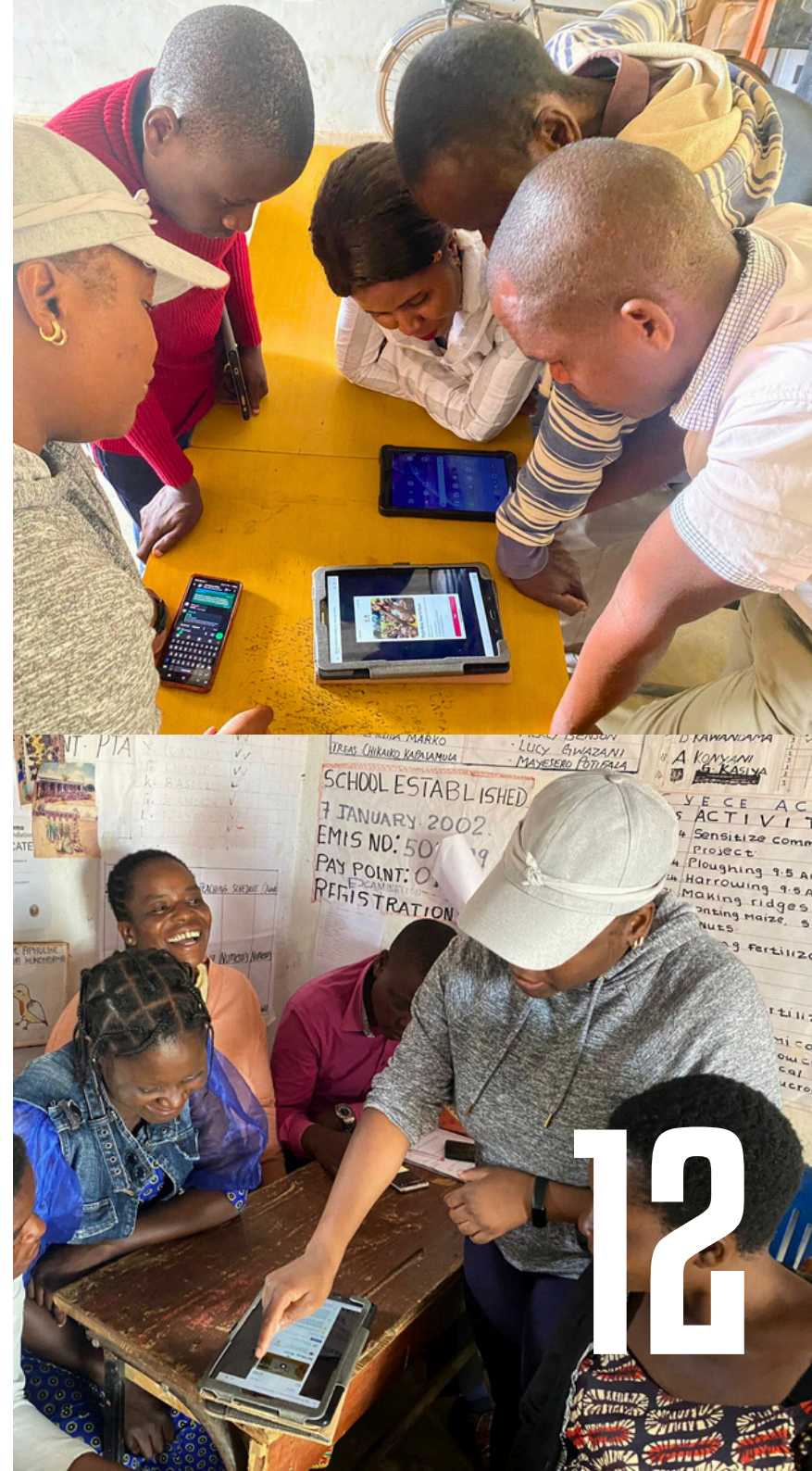
To support the sustainable scaling of the Playful Learning programme, a major innovation milestone in 2025 was the start of the digitalisation of the Join for Joy methodology and games. Teachers in our program expressed a strong preference for additional, accessible support that they can use independently outside the formal training sessions. This was also reflected in an evaluation among nearly 1,000 student teachers from six teacher training colleges in Uganda, where almost half of the respondents indicated that they would like video tutorials to accompany the games.

Teachers identified the following key benefits:

- Greater accessibility. Teachers at remote schools can access guidance, even when in-person training is not available.
- Reusable learning resources. Teachers can revisit game instructions at any time, long after the training has ended.
- Greater independence. New teachers or colleagues who have not attended Join for Joy training can start using the games independently, without direct support.
- Improved continuity. Knowledge is retained within schools, even when trained teachers are transferred or leave.

Following consultations with teachers and program staff, we began developing an offline digital app to make the Game Manual and training materials more accessible to teachers in remote and rural areas. Together with a digital development partner, we created a prototype and gathered feedback from teachers across multiple countries.

Initial responses were highly positive, with users highlighting the platform's clarity, relevance, and potential to strengthen program continuity when trained teachers leave schools, new teachers join, or student teachers require support. In 2026, we will further refine the prototype and move into full development, with the aim of launching the app in the second half of the year.



Pillar 3: Inclusion of children with disabilities

Disability Inclusion

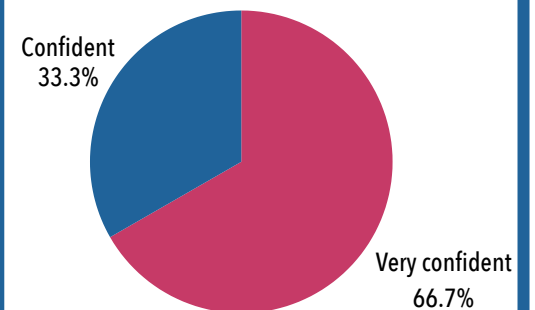
- **Strengthened approach through teacher training, adapting all games in our curriculum for inclusion, and building staff capacity through partnerships with disability organizations.**
- **12 inclusive game boxes with adapted play material distributed**
- **523 children with disabilities actively participating in playful learning**

In 2025, disability inclusion was elevated as a key organisational priority. The year served as a pilot phase, during which new approaches were tested, staff capacity was strengthened, and valuable lessons were gathered to inform future scale-up. A key focus was building internal expertise and ensuring that inclusion becomes an integral part of program design and implementation.

Teacher training was strengthened with a greater focus on inclusive playful learning, while inclusion guidance was integrated into all 48 Join for Joy games. Inclusive Game Boxes containing adapted materials, such as sensory balls, visual flashcards, larger building blocks, and sound-making equipment, were also developed and piloted to support children with diverse needs. In addition, Join for Joy strengthened its disability inclusion expertise through partnerships with disability-focused organisations, and invested in additional staff disability inclusion expertise and training.

Feedback from teachers has been highly encouraging. Teachers reported increased confidence in adapting activities, creating more inclusive learning environments, and enabling children with disabilities to participate actively in inclusive playful learning activities.

How confident do you feel using the inclusive game box?





Pillar 4: Fundraising & Financial Sustainability

Overview

- **€592,794 raised**
- **Diversified funding portfolio with 45% secured through multi-year commitments**
- **€41,291 raised directly by Join for Joy Zambia and Join for Joy Malawi**

In 2025, Join for Joy raised a total of €592,794. Throughout the year, particular emphasis was placed on multi-year partnerships, providing greater financial stability and enabling long-term planning. Encouragingly, by the start of 2026, approximately 45% of annual funding was secured through multi-year commitments, reflecting this strategic focus. Join for Joy continued to strengthen and diversify its funding base through partnerships with family foundations, corporate partners, individual donors, and with fundraising campaigns. To support long-term financial resilience, the organisation aims to ensure that no single donor accounts for more than 25% of annual income, maintaining a healthy and balanced funding portfolio.

National Fundraising

A major milestone in 2025 was the success of fundraising efforts in Zambia and Malawi. Over the past several years, Join for Joy has invested in building national fundraising capacity, including the registration of Join for Joy as a national organisation in both countries. These efforts began to bear fruit in 2025, with the first major grants awarded to Join for Joy Zambia and Join for Joy Malawi, together totalling €41,291.

Beyond the financial value of these grants, this achievement represents an important step towards national fundraising in Zambia and Malawi and increased organisational sustainability. By strengthening the capacity of country teams to mobilise resources directly, Join for Joy is building a more diverse and resilient funding model while advancing its commitment to national ownership. Throughout 2025, Join for Joy continued to invest in stronger national leadership, fundraising capacity, and organisational development within country teams. By gradually shifting ownership, resource mobilisation, and decision-making closer to the communities where programs are implemented, the organisation is building a more resilient future



Risks and Challenges

In 2025, Join for Joy faced several external and operational challenges. Below we outline the key challenges and how they impacted our work.

Ongoing Fuel Crisis in Malawi

In 2025, Malawi experienced recurring fuel shortages due to a lack of foreign currency, which limited the country's ability to import fuel. The situation worsened significantly as a result of ongoing political unrest in neighboring Tanzania, through which a large portion of Malawi's fuel is imported. This led to waiting times of several days at fuel stations, making it more difficult for the team to visit schools and continue implementing the program.

Global consequences of the discontinuation of USAID programs

The abrupt reduction in USAID funding has had far-reaching consequences for the communities where Join for Joy operates. Access to HIV/AIDS medication, contraceptives, and malaria treatment has declined significantly. Globally, it is estimated that the withdrawal of this support has already contributed to more than 750,000 deaths, many of them children. In addition, programs that helped communities cope with periods of drought, such as irrigation and water pumping initiatives, have been discontinued. As a result, these communities have become considerably more vulnerable to prolonged drought and its effects on food security and public health. The reduction of USAID support has added another layer of complexity to the economic outlook in the countries where we work.

Political unrest in Kenya

In 2025, Kenya experienced periods of political unrest and protests in various parts of the country, driven in part by opposition to economic reforms and the rising cost of living. In some cities, these demonstrations led to heightened tensions and a forceful response from the authorities toward protesters. The protests and disruptions to daily life had a significant impact on both communities and the Join for Joy team. During certain periods, team members were required to remain indoors for safety reasons, and planned activities had to be postponed.

Rising Inflation in Malawi

In 2025, inflation in Malawi reached unprecedented levels, rising to 29.2% in April. The impact was felt most strongly by the communities where Join for Joy works, as families faced increasing food prices, higher transport costs, and growing economic hardship. These pressures affected household resilience and placed additional strain on children's access to education and wellbeing. The economic situation also affected program implementation, including the procurement of sports and play materials and other operational costs. To better navigate the challenging economic environment and fluctuating exchange rates, Join for Joy Malawi strengthened its financial systems and currency management practices.

Marketing, Fundraising & Advocacy

Foundations & donations

We are grateful for the continuous support of various (family) foundations. Among others: Contribute Foundation, Michiel Löwenberg Foundation, Nefkens Stichting Ontwikkelingshulp, Stichting Hoffknecht van Vuure, Tomorrowland Foundation, John & Marine van Vlissingen Foundation, Stichting Mi Corazon, Stichting DAS, Stichting Wierda-Baas, Piet Breek Stichting, Hofsteestichting, stichting Den Brinker, Africa Water Foundation, Sense Foundation Brussels, Dutch Flower Foundation, Plato Group Foundation, Verbeek Stichting, Lent Medical. Join for Joy also raised funds through various business partnerships and individual donors.

Conferences & knowledge sharing

In 2025, Join for Joy continued to contribute to international discussions on education and child development. At the International Fundraising Congress (IFC) in Noordwijk, Join for Joy Zambia Director, Mwangala Ikacana presented Join for Joy's work in Zambia, sharing experiences and lessons learned on playful learning and building education programs in rural communities. Join for Joy international Director Charlotte Petty, Marketing and Fundraising Coordinator Nina Urai and Join for Joy Zambia Director Mwangala Ikacana attended the Educaied.be conference on Conference on Health and Education in Brussels, sharing our experience on the intersection of health and education for rural primary schools.

Menstrual health advocacy

Dignified Menstruation Fellowship

In December 2025, Join for Joy Menstrual Health Coordinators members Tchaiwe Zulu and Mirriam Nanyinza graduated as Dignified Menstruation Fellows. Their selection and completion of this international fellowship program recognises their expertise and commitment to advancing menstrual health and dignity. Through the fellowship, they engaged with a global network of practitioners and advocates working on menstrual justice, gender equality, and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), bringing valuable knowledge and perspectives to Join for Joy's menstrual health program.





Premiere Impure

Join for Joy hosted the European premiere of *Impure* at the historic Pathé Tuschinski cinema in Amsterdam. More than 200 guests attended the sold-out event, which included a screening of the film about a twelve-year-old girl in Kenya who faces shame and misinformation after experiencing her first menstruation at school. Following the screening, a panel discussion explored the issue of menstrual poverty challenges around the world. Speakers included Captain Anthony Ngugi Mayo, representing the Kenyan Embassy, *Impure* Director Rico Herre, and gender specialist Naisula Lepariyo.

Menstrual Health Day Celebrations

Join for Joy Zambia co-organized the World Menstrual Health Day celebration in the Chongwe district. During this national event, various organizations came together to present their programs and innovations regarding menstruation. The Join for Joy team was present with its own booth focused on the menstrual cup. As part of this, two girls from participating primary schools were invited to share their experiences with the cup. There was a strong turnout of parents and government representatives.



Menstrual Health Campaign

The menstrual health campaign, "Don't Let Girls Pay the Price for their Period," delivered strong results in both fundraising and awareness. The campaign centered around a video that followed a menstrual cup from the moment it was donated to the moment it was received by a girl at school. [Watch the video here.](#) The campaign raised sufficient funds to provide more than 1,300 menstrual cups and introduced a broader audience to Join for Joy's work and the challenges many girls face in managing menstruation safely and with dignity. A special thank you to Max Broenink (Maxproress), whose contribution as filmmaker and editor helped bring this story to life and amplify the campaign's reach.





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In the press

Expressive Arts School Festivals

In 2025, Join for Joy expanded its playful learning approach by strengthening the role of expressive arts within the programme. While sports and play remain at the heart of our methodology, we recognise that children learn and express themselves in different ways. By incorporating music, dance, drama, and visual arts, we create additional opportunities for children to discover their talents, participate actively, and experience the joy of learning. This vision came to life through the Expressive Arts School Festivals organised in Zambia, Malawi, and Kenya. The festivals brought together students and teachers from participating schools to celebrate creativity, self-expression, and learning through play. Children showcased their talents through singing, dancing, drama performances, poetry, and visual arts, while schools shared experiences and inspired one another.

For many children, it was the first time they had the opportunity to perform before a larger audience and be recognised for their unique talents. The festivals demonstrated how a diverse playful learning approach can help every child find something they enjoy and excel in, fostering confidence, inclusion, creativity. The festival in Zambia received widespread media attention and was featured in the national newspaper.



Ambassador gathering

In September 2025, Join for Joy organised an ambassador gathering, bringing together all of our ambassadors Wout Weghorst, Rachèl Louise, and Kelly van Zon around our shared belief in the power of sports and play as a driver for quality education. The meeting was an opportunity to strengthen connections, exchange ideas, and explore how ambassadors can contribute to advancing Join for Joy's mission. Through open discussions and collaborative brainstorming, new ideas were generated for; increasing awareness of Join for Joy and the importance of playful learning, expanding our network, and keeping playful learning on the international agenda.



Governance

Leadership

2025 marked an important year of transition and development for Join for Joy. After leading the organisation for 14 years, co-founders Hannah Kooren and Minke van Geen stepped back from daily operations in March 2025. Their vision and dedication have been instrumental in building Join for Joy into the organisation it is today. Both remain actively involved as voluntary members of the International Leadership Team, providing strategic guidance and supporting the organisation's long-term vision.

During the year, Frank van den Brink completed his four-year term as Chair of the International Board of Directors. We also thanked Arie Torres and Anne Sallaerts for their valuable contributions as board members over multiple years. At the same time, we welcomed Martine Beijermans as the new Chair of the International Board.

To strengthen ownership and representation in Zambia and Malawi, Join for Joy expanded its governance structures at country level. An Advisory Board was established in Zambia and a National Board of Directors was formed in Malawi. Together, these structures help ensure that leadership and decision-making increasingly reflect national perspectives and expertise.

These developments represent important steps towards a more representative and sustainable organisation.

Board of Directors

Martine Beijerman - Chair, June 2025 - present
Jaap Kalverkamp - Finance, 2023 - present
Suzanne van Esser, 2023 - present
Arie Torres, 2021 - June 2025
Frank van den Brinker, 2021 - June 2025
Anne Sallaerts, 2023 - June 2025

Ambassadors

Wout Weghorst
Rachèl Louise
Rob Reckers
Kelly van Zon

Join for Joy International

Kenya

Ruth Mwinga - Sports and Play Coordinator (0.5 FTE)
Derrick Okango - Sports and Play Coordinator (0.5 FTE)
Mary Mutisya - Sports and Play Manager (1 FTE)

Uganda

Hilda Mbabazi - Sports and Play Coordinator (1 FTE)
Boniface Byamugisha - Sports and Play Coordinator (1 FTE)
Javira Birungi - Sports and Play Coordinator (1 FTE)

Zambia

Mwangala Ikacana - Country Director Join for Joy Zambia (1 FTE)
Mirriam Nanyinza - Menstrual Hygiene Expert (1 FTE)
Sydney Njovu - Sports and Play Coordinator (until December 2025, 1 FTE)
Namasiku Munyanya - Assistant Menstrual Health Coordinator (1 FTE)
Mary Luole - Special Needs Coach (June 2025 - 0.2 FTE)

Malawi

James Phiri - Country Director Join for Joy Malawi (1 FTE)
Tchaiwe Zulu - Menstrual Health Coordinator & Play Coach (1 FTE)
Praise Mkandawire - Accountant (0.4 FTE)
Ellen Kalima - Special Needs Coach (from August 2025 - 0.4 FTE)
Philip Joseph - Project Coach (from August 2025 - 0.4 FTE)

The Netherlands

Charlotte Petty - Managing Director (0.8 FTE)
Romée Nieuwland - Program Manager (0.9 FTE)
Nina Urai - Marketing and Fundraising Coordinator (from March 2025 - 0.9 FTE)

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Safeguarding

In 2025, Join for Joy strengthened its safeguarding systems through the introduction of an updated safeguarding policy and the appointment of dedicated safeguarding focal points in each country of operation. These focal points received specialised training and play a key role in promoting awareness, providing guidance, and ensuring concerns can be addressed appropriately.

Our safeguarding reporting channel, report@joinforjoy.net remained accessible through participating schools and partner organisations, internal communication, and the Join for Joy website. We are able to report that no safeguarding incidents were recorded during 2025. Join for Joy remains committed to maintaining the highest safeguarding standards and continuously strengthening its safeguarding culture and practices.

Accountability & Transparency

Join for Joy operates with a clear governance structure and strong financial oversight. The management team and Board meet regularly to discuss strategic, financial, and operational matters. All major expenditures require Board approval, ensuring accountability and shared decision-making.

We maintain a modest and responsible remuneration policy for staff and freelancers, aligned with responsibility levels and sector standards. Board members serve on a voluntary basis and receive no remuneration. The remuneration of the Managing Director is assessed in accordance with the Dutch remuneration guidelines for charitable organisations and remains well within the applicable limits for organisations of comparable size and complexity.

Through annual reporting, monitoring and evaluation systems, regular stakeholder communication, and independent financial oversight, Join for Joy remains committed to transparency, accountability, and responsible stewardship of the resources entrusted to us. As we continue to strengthen national leadership and governance structures, decision-making is increasingly placed closer to the communities we serve.

Teachers' Testimonials

"The Join for Joy program has completely changed how I teach children with disabilities. Before, I did not actively involve learners with disabilities in leadership roles. I've learned how to identify the strengths of every learner and find ways to support them."

**- Puye Primary School
Malawi**

"Before the training, I believed boys were stronger and more capable than girls, and unknowingly, I treated them better. I now make an effort to give compliments to both boys and girls. This has improved girls' confidence and participation."

**- Rusa Primary School
Malawi**

"The training has helped me reflect on my way of teaching. I realized I need to make an extra effort to really involve children with disabilities in my class. When I return, I will share what I learned with my fellow colleagues"

**- Juja Far Primary School
Kenya**

"Playing the Join for Joy games has made my classroom is more vibrant and interactive. Through play-based learning, my lessons are purposeful and filled with fun, and I can align them with the curriculum goals."

**- Chilanga Primary School
Zambia**

"Since the start of the program, the socialisation and interactions between the special needs children and the other learners in the mainstream program has improved. There is less stigma and labeling now, and more collaboration."

**- Kalundu Primary School
Zambia**

"I now feel the importance of seeing each learner equally and recognising their unique talents, and to use compliments as a tool for motivation. I feel inspired to lead by example, reminding myself that positive change begins with me."

**- Njisa Primary School
Malawi**

"The Join for Joy program has helped me to teach differently. The program has really made me more creative, active and flexible in the classroom towards handling my learners emotionally, mentally and socially."

**- Munkolo Primary School
Zambia**

"After the training, I will be able to capture the attention of the learners I teach and improve their retention of information and knowledge. I hope this will help them succeed in the classroom, but also later in life!"

**- Mount Olive Primary School
Kenya**



Through the children's eyes

A well-trained teacher can create a ripple effect of change. When a teacher embraces playful learning or opens up conversations about menstruation, hundreds of children become more active, motivated, and engaged in their education. Children like Micheal and Joyce. Their stories show what this looks like in practice, in their own words.

Michael

"We now play games at school that help us learn better and concentrate in class. Some of the games really make us think. For example, they teach us that you shouldn't just follow everyone, because not everyone has your best interests at heart. When I learn a new game, I share it with my friends and encourage them to come to school too. And it works, because those friends are now attending school as well. They then encourage other children to come to school. It's important not to miss school, because education can help you build a better future."

Watch Michael's whole story [here](#)



Joyce

"At first, I wasn't sure if the menstrual cup was for me, but I still wanted to try it. Before, I used cloths, which used to fall out and made me feel ashamed. I stopped participating in sports and stayed home from school until my period was over. I fell behind, and was almost expelled from school. My parents also said it was better to stay home until my menstruation was over. At first they thought the cup had something to do with satanism, but my teacher madam Susu explained everything. Now they support me and help me to go to school. Since I started using the cup, I no longer miss school days and I feel confident enough to participate in sports again."

Watch Joyce's whole story [here](#)

Financial Overview 2025

Summary Report International Board of Directors

Throughout 2025, the Board of Directors provided oversight of Join for Joy's governance, financial management, risk management and safeguarding systems. The Board guided the implementation of the new 2025-2027 Strategic Plan, with a focus on organisational sustainability, financial resilience, and strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems.

In addition, the Board continued to oversee the transition towards a more decentralised governance structure, increasing national ownership and decision-making capacity while maintaining strong international accountability and oversight.

Financial Year 2025

In 2025, Join for Joy maintained a stable financial position while continuing to invest in the quality and sustainability of the playful learning programs. Total income amounted to €592,794, slightly below the previous year (€594,503 in 2024), enabling the organisation to continue delivering impact across Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, and Malawi.

The year ended with a modest negative operating result of €2,987. This result was anticipated and reflects deliberate investments in organisational capacity, fundraising development, and program delivery. Join for Joy remains financially healthy, with sufficient reserves and careful financial planning in place to support future operations.

The organisation continued to benefit from the commitment of its long-term funding partners. Income from (family) foundations and non-profit organisations amounted to €495,079, representing the largest share of total income. Contributions from individual donors and fundraising activities totalled €92,375, while corporate partnerships contributed €5,340.

BALANCE AS PER DECEMBER 31, 2025

(After appropriation of result)

	31-12-2025	31-12-2024
Assets		
Fixed assets		
Tangible fixed assets	1,682	1,468
	<u>1,682</u>	<u>1,468</u>
Currents accounts		
Receivables	38,742	3,141
Cash and cash equivalents	151,876	200,273
	<u>192,300</u>	<u>204,882</u>
Total	€192,300	€204,882

At the same time, Join for Joy invested in strengthening its fundraising capacity, with a particular focus on diversifying income streams and increasing fundraising efforts within implementation countries. This remains an important priority as Join for Joy works to reduce dependency on a limited number of major donors and strengthen long-term financial resilience.

Total expenditures amounted to €595,781. Of this amount, €484,824 (81.4%) was invested directly in program implementation across Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, Malawi, and cross-country innovation. Compared to 2024, program investment increased while management and support costs decreased due to a leaner organisational structure in the Netherlands, allowing a greater share of resources to be directed towards the mission.

Operating expenses in the Netherlands included investments in personnel, fundraising, financial management, technical expertise, safeguarding systems and organisational development. During the year, Join for Joy also continued to strengthen internal controls through updates to financial procedures, implementation of anti-money laundering measures, and ongoing monitoring systems to ensure transparency and accountability.

As of 31 December 2025, the continuity reserve stood at €160,363, compared to €163,350 in 2024. This reserve provides an important financial buffer and helps ensure the organisation can continue its operations in the event of unforeseen challenges or funding fluctuations.

Join for Joy remains fully compliant with CBF C2 standards for smaller fundraising organisations. All income is reported in the year of acquisition and allocated in the year of implementation. In line with CBF guidelines, 80% of total expenditures were invested directly in program activities. This remains well above the required benchmark of 70% and reflects Join for Joy's commitment to maximising resources for the benefit of children, teachers, and communities.

With stable income, responsible financial management and continued investment in organisational resilience, Join for Joy remains well positioned to implement its 2025-2027 strategy and expand its impact in the years ahead.

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES

	2025	2024
Total		
Donations from non-profit organizations	495,079	544,013
Income from individuals/events	92,375	43,480
Income from partners & companies	5,340	7,010
	<u>592,794</u>	<u>594,503</u>
Total income	€592,794	€594,503
Expenses		
Playful learning program Kenya	91,205	77,951
Playful learning program Uganda	105,858	105,984
Playful learning program Zambia	107,747	124,058
Playful learning program Malawi	114,193	83,673
Playful learning development & strategy	65,822	78,892
Expenses events	0	5,363
Total program related expenses	484,824	475,921
Costs of raising funds	8,737	37,213
Management, operating expenses and administration	101,633	91,880
Financial income / (expense)	(587)	(635)
	<u>€-2,987</u>	<u>€-11,146</u>
Statement of income and expenses		
Appropriation of result		
Continuity reserve January 1	163,350	174,496
Statement of income and expenses	(2,987)	(11,146)
Continuity reserve December 31	€160,363	€163,350

Outlook 2026-2027

As Join for Joy continues implementing its 2025-2027 Strategic Plan, we will focus on strengthening program quality, sustainable growth, inclusion, and organisational resilience.

In the coming years, Join for Joy will further refine its Theory of Change, monitoring and evaluation systems, and learning processes to ensure that programme decisions are increasingly informed by evidence and feedback from teachers, coaches, and learners.

We will continue expanding the playful learning school program in Kenya, Malawi, and Zambia, while strengthening partnerships with Teacher Training Colleges and advancing the development of its digital playful learning platform to make training materials and resources more accessible.

Building on recent progress in inclusive education, Join for Joy will continue adapting materials, strengthening teacher capacity, and increasing support for schools serving children with disabilities, alongside the further expansion of its menstrual health initiatives.

At the same time, Join for Joy will continue strengthening national ownership, fundraising capacity, and organisational systems to support long-term sustainability and impact.

By the end of 2027, the organisation aims to have directly reached more than 269,000 children and strengthened playful learning opportunities for over one million additional children, family members, and community members across East and Southern Africa.

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Playful education builds the next generation.



Join for Joy

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