

BRAC's Global ECD Strategy



Every child learns and thrives through play.

Background

Every child deserves quality early learning opportunities. Investing in pre-primary education yields higher returns than investments in education later in life. For each dollar invested in quality early childhood development (ECD) programs, the estimated return on investment may be as high as USD \$17. However, investments in ECD globally remain extremely low. Marginalized children, including children living in poverty, children with disabilities, and children affected by crisis and conflict are disproportionately less likely to be enrolled in ECD programs.

BRAC has championed the importance of early childhood development for decades. BRAC has run pre-primary education programs since the 1990s, reaching millions of children in Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Liberia, the Philippines, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Research shows play-based learning promotes children's cognitive, language, physical and social-emotional skills while fostering creativity and imagination. BRAC started developing and implementing high-quality, scalable, culturally relevant, play-based ECD interventions in 2015. These interventions include its flagship Play Lab model and iterations such as Humanitarian Play Labs, Remote Play Labs, and the Play Lab Social Enterprise.

BRAC's Global ECD Strategy positions BRAC for greater scale and impact. BRAC aims to reach children and families through quality play-based learning and establish BRAC as a global leader in the field of ECD, particularly in play-based early learning programs.

“
I consider ECD to be the next frontier for education development in developing countries.”

- Sir Fazle Hasan Abed, BRAC Founder

Vision

BRAC envisions a world where every child learns and thrives through play.

Goal

By 2030, 10 million children from ages 0 to 8 and their caregivers participate in quality play-based learning.

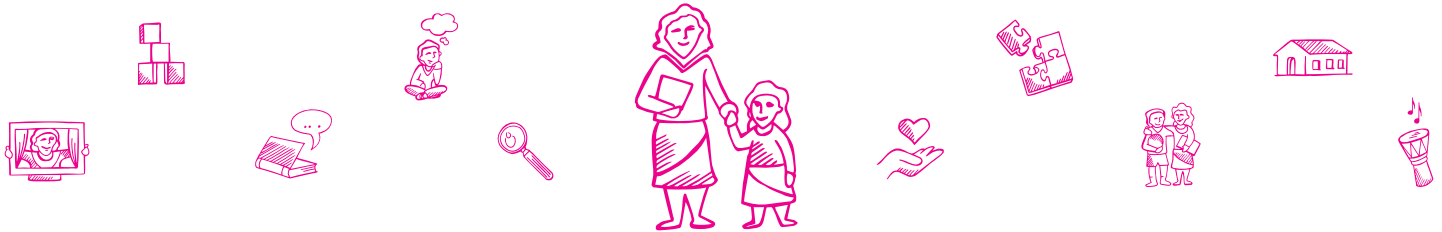
Over the strategy period of 2022-2025, 3 million children ages 0-8 and their caregivers participate in quality play-based learning so that:

- Children have improved cognitive, social-emotional, language and physical skills and improved wellbeing
- Caregivers demonstrate improved knowledge and skills on play-based ECD and improved mental health and wellbeing



Strategic Pathways

To deliver on the Global ECD Strategy, BRAC will utilize interconnected, mutually reinforcing strategic pathways.



Global Play Lab

To support and operationalize the strategic pathways, BRAC will establish the Global Play Lab, a best-in-class, southern-led convener and thought leader for play-based ECD. The Global Play Lab will leverage BRAC's existing programs, talents, and expertise to advance the science and practice of play-based ECD through high quality implementation, innovation, capacity building and systems strengthening, partnership building, advocacy, and research and learning. The Global Play Lab will be headquartered in Dhaka with hubs in Nairobi and New York.

Strategic Pathway 1 Implement Directly

BRAC will directly implement its play-based ECD models to help address the unmet needs and gaps in service delivery in different contexts, including low-resource and humanitarian settings. BRAC will also innovate, pilot, and test new ECD programming to respond to changing contexts, and explore greater integration of play-based approaches across different programs such as health, nutrition, Ultra-Poor Graduation Initiative, and youth empowerment.

Strategic Pathway 2 Build Capacity to Strengthen Systems

BRAC will build the capacity of national systems and partner organizations to strengthen their ECD services. Provision of technical assistance to governments will be key. BRAC's efforts may include supporting the development and adaptation of policies and curricula, training facilitators and government officials on learning and healing through play, and offering services to support the contextualization, design, and implementation of the Play Lab model and its various adaptations.

Strategic Pathway 3 Advocate for Play

BRAC will promote and advocate for play-based learning on a global scale to increase awareness of play and build partnerships and alliances to champion and coordinate the early learning through play agenda. Aligned with partners, BRAC will launch advocacy initiatives through ECD networks, platforms, and coalitions and will strengthen its communication and branding efforts. Through fundraising initiatives and work with governments, BRAC will also work towards strengthening investments in play-based ECD.

Strategic Pathway 4 Learn and Build Evidence

BRAC will refine the Play Lab model and its adaptations based on research and learning from implementation. BRAC will develop, adapt, and validate new measurement tools for child and caregiver outcomes and implementation quality in new contexts. BRAC will also conduct further research studies on the impact of the Play Lab model and its adaptations and disseminate evidence on the effectiveness of play-based approaches, particularly in the context of the Global South and humanitarian crises.



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BRAC's Approach to Implementation

BRAC has identified the following programmatic approaches, target populations, geographic locations, and modes of delivery based on the strategic pathways outlined above to implement the strategy.

What BRAC Will Deliver

- Play Curriculum
- Play Leaders
- Care for caregivers
- Play space and materials
- Community engagement
- Monitoring, evaluation, and action research

How BRAC Will Deliver

- Technical assistance
- Direct Play Lab implementation
- Research and advocacy will support the above

To learn more about BRAC's Play Lab approach, please visit our PlayBook knowledge hub at <https://playlabs.bracusa.org/>

Where BRAC Will Deliver

Countries in Africa and Asia, including:

- **Champion Countries:** where BRAC is currently implementing ECD programs, like Bangladesh, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, and Uganda
- **Expansion Countries:** where BRAC works, but does not have active ECD programs, like South Sudan and Rwanda
- **Partner Countries:** where BRAC has no current presence

Who BRAC Will Target

- Children ages 0-8
- Caregivers
- Facilitators
- Key stakeholders such as local community members, implementation partners, and government officials