



Improving Children's Learning— Transforming Their World

Our Medium Term Plan 2016–2020



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The Jacobs Foundation— our vision for 2020

The Jacobs Foundation was established in 1989 by Klaus J. Jacobs and his family. We seek to benefit future generations by providing children and young people with better opportunities for development, so that they can become productive and socially responsible members of society.

By 2020, we aim to have become the key organization linking excellent research with improving, globally, the development of children and young people under the age of 12. That means focussing our efforts on effective implementation, dialogue and advocacy. As a research-informed organization, we will base our funding decisions on solid evidence and will use comprehensive approaches to secure systemic change.

We are focussing on three big themes. Our first priority, “Science of Learning”, is to fund new research into how individual children can learn better. Our second priority theme is “Early Childhood Education and Care”. This focusses on developing exemplary best practice in the northern hemisphere, in Switzerland and Germany, with the learning disseminated to other European countries. Our third theme looks to the southern hemisphere where we will support improvements in “Rural Livelihoods” in Ivory Coast, whose benefits will be shared with other West African countries. We have established a worldwide network of the most talented people in child and youth development. Linking researchers, journalists, practitioners, social entrepreneurs and politicians will strengthen our alumni activities.

Strategic partnerships with institutions from the private and public sector will help us to increase the effectiveness of our programs. Furthermore, we aim to leverage our impact and our core funding by encouraging co-investments, by using impact investment finance and by harnessing all our skills to provide services. We will use our highly regarded reputation and brand to target communications in ways that help key people to make the most of learning from our projects and initiatives.

The knowledge sharing starts with us—we are a learning organization with an agile management culture. We actively manage knowledge. We are keen to experiment and learn from successes, failures and feedback. The Jacobs Foundation seeks to be a partner of choice within the Third Sector.

From excellent projects to systemic change

Societies struggle to ensure fairness and equal opportunity, particularly for children. We can really help. Research on children and their development is finding new ways to focus on the particular needs of the individual. Soon, we should be able to identify a bespoke set of supports required for each child's personal development. It could be tailored to maximize their potential and take account of, for example, their genes and upbringing, their social and financial circumstances. In particular, it could be adapted to counter their disadvantages, which are often established when people are very young and can persist for a person's entire life. They need to be tackled early on.

This striving to bring equal opportunity to children's lives—and thence to the adults they become and to the society they inhabit—yields high social and economic returns on investment. It lies at the heart of our new strategy. We recognize that a child's learning is, perhaps, its greatest asset. By learning, we mean not only reading, writing and arithmetic. At least as important are capacities to relate to others, to concentrate, manage oneself and overcome difficulties. This human capital formation is vital to individuals as well as to society and economies.

However, the process of child development is not easily improved. Fresh understanding of what children need springs from a bewildering array of fast-developing disciplines. These include psychology, pediatrics, neurobiology, education, evolutionary biology and behavioral genetics. Making the most of it demands sophisticated knowledge management, translation and communication to influence policy and practice so that children don't miss out.

We are investing CHF 200 million in our Medium Term Plan to face this challenge.

We are investing CHF 200 million in our Medium Term Plan to face this challenge. Our history is of child-focussed, multidisciplinary research and dialogue plus support for change that is grounded in practice. Our plan for 2016–2020 has three main pillars. First, we will support research around the science of children's learning. Second, we will develop evidence-based best practice and policy for early childhood education and care—in Switzerland particularly, and also in four other countries in Europe. And third, we will promote educational change further afield in a developing nation, Ivory Coast.

But success demands greater focus, not only in thematic priorities and geographical footprint. Our new strategy also demands we improve our capacity of being an effective learning organization—making the most of knowledge throughout the Foundation. We must also share that learning—and relevant findings from elsewhere—as widely as possible. Impact is the key value. This ambition is too great and too difficult to deliver alone. We will leverage support and finance from others to maximize the chances of success. We will invest in our talent network to strengthen our long-run institutional capacity.

To this strategy we bring together past project experience, research knowledge plus a diverse network of academics, practitioners and policymakers. Our commitment is to transforming children's lives. To this end, our excellence in project development has served us well. But now we must take a bigger step. We must engineer systemic change.

Jacobs Foundation 2020— our strategic goals

IN 2020 WE WILL BE ABLE TO SAY THAT ...

WHAT WE WILL DO

GOAL

1

... within our thematic priority of **"Science of Learning"** we explore the frontiers of individualized learning and intervention. We do this by generating research insights and innovation related to the biological, technological, psychological and pedagogical dimensions of learning.

GOAL

2

... within our thematic priority **"Early Education"** we help to formulate comprehensive early education policies in Switzerland and other European countries. We do this by developing systematic programs designed to promote equal opportunity at the school-entry level and emphasizing the societal returns of education.

GOAL

3

... within our thematic priority **"Rural Livelihoods"** we work to improve the lives of the rural population of Ivory Coast both today and in the future. We do this by nurturing an ecosystem of private and public stakeholders dedicated to the common goal of enhancing educational quality.

HOW WE WILL DO IT

GOAL

4

... Jacobs Foundation has been transformed into a learning organization.

GOAL

5

... Jacobs Foundation has successfully focused its communication strategy on content marketing.

GOAL

6

... Jacobs Foundation has significantly leveraged its core funding.

GOAL

7

... Jacobs Foundation attracts, retains and develops talent within the network of the Foundation.

GOAL

1

SCIENCE
OF LEARNING

Understanding how children learn

Why it matters

No single child is the same as another. Research could soon tell us how to tailor learning to the specific needs of each individual child. This personalized approach would reflect, for example, differences in biology, upbringing, social and economic circumstances. It would be a historic breakthrough, providing unprecedented opportunities to tackle inequalities between children that can last a lifetime.

Understanding the biological basis of learning would offer practitioners and policymakers tools to transform our societies. Put into practice, these insights would help us change a world where children often grow up handicapped by their early learning because no one properly understood or provided what they needed. We could, instead, ensure that as many as possible emerge from childhood equipped with the key skills and capacities for a successful life. That is about more than cognitive skills that make us good at arithmetic, reading and writing. It also concerns social and emotional skills that help us think, manage relationships and deal with difficult situations.

This is a great ambition and more than a dream. It is within sight. But achievement requires focussed research across diverse disciplines that helps us to understand children's learning. These disciplines include psychology, neurobiology, evolutionary biology, pediatrics, education, behavioral genetics, computer sciences and human computer interaction. Achievement also demands understanding of the many settings where learning occurs—be it in the family, the playground or the classroom—as well as different methods for learning, such as formal teaching and digital technology.

What we will do

The Jacobs Foundation is perhaps uniquely placed to extend and draw together knowledge from these diverse disciplines and about these varied settings and methods. Research on the biological, technological, psychological and pedagogical dimensions of learning is advancing fast. Speeding up adoption could benefit millions of children. We can focus the findings from the various disciplines around the needs of children and for improving policy and practice. Our skills and capacities will help others to put the knowledge to work and transform children's lives.

ACHIEVEMENT MEASURES

PUBLICATIONS

50 papers by our funded researchers published in the 10 major journals in their fields or the 50 top journals in the Foundation's field.

CITATION ANALYSIS

Jacobs Foundation Research Fellows demonstrate 20% greater academic impact than applicants of their age and discipline who were not selected.

That is why the Science of Learning is our first strategic goal. We will support the world's leading research and the brightest early- and mid-career scholars in this field. They are creating the evidence that will underpin practical interventions we will design to support children for our next strategy beginning in 2020.

We want, for example, to find out more about the interaction between a child's environment, social circumstances and genes. How do these interactions affect the brain, learning and memory? What explains the vast individual differences that occur naturally among learners? Which educational programs and technologies best promote learning and how can neurobiology help? Which moments in the early years are most sensitive for particular forms of learning, shaping outcomes across the lifespan? Which interventions, and when, make most difference? How can we, in the long term, develop individualized education programs leading to "individualized schools" where a learner is provided with materials precisely matched to his or her own needs?

Our research effort will focus on our highly successful and globally recognized research support infrastructure. This includes: the Research Fellowship Program; the Jacobs Center at the University of Zurich; our workshops and residencies at Marbach Castle; the annual Marbach Conference and the connected Jacobs Young Scholars Program. The Klaus J. Jacobs Awards will continue to honor "Groundbreaking Research and Best Practice in Child and Youth Development".

... We are building a learning organization

We aim to be a learning organization with an agile management culture, actively managing knowledge, eager to experiment and learn from success, failures and feedback. We are keen to share with each other and the outside world. We will open up any hidden silos of knowledge.

That means making maximum use internally, as well as externally, of the information and data that we have. We will synthesize that material to create and share learning that is understandable, integrated and actionable.

Managing knowledge strategically lets us effectively use knowledge to support change. So we will map where it lies within the Foundation and create a simple system to make information accessible. We will analyze and set out our position on key subjects, including lessons learned, distributing the output internally and externally.

ACHIEVEMENT MEASURES

TIME

Each of us dedicates 10% of our work time to increasing the effectiveness of the Foundation's strategic goals, based on each person's learning plan.

USING KNOWLEDGE

The Foundation has developed 12 specific areas of knowledge management. These modules focus on understanding how children learn, good practice around early childhood and care, plus our work on rural livelihoods in Ivory Coast and on program management. We will use these modules of knowledge for internal learning and external communication.

GOAL

4

LEARNING ORGANIZATION



Improving early childhood education and care

Why it matters

Research by the Jacobs Foundation and others shows that early childhood is the most significant developmental period. It tells us that high-quality early childhood education and care transforms people's lifetime prospects, especially for those who are disadvantaged.

It helps children develop social and emotional skills—as well as primary cognitive skills—to think for themselves, get along with others, overcome setbacks, conflicts and difficult situations, take responsibility and contribute to society. They are better ready for school, learn well while there and, building on these early skills, are better prepared for jobs in later life.

High-quality early education and care is good for people, good for the economy and cuts health and social care costs. Indeed, inequality typically persists throughout life between advantaged and disadvantaged people unless high-quality support is provided before they start school. Starting support for disadvantaged children only when they enter school may not compensate for their disadvantages.

These important early years of brain development provide the most efficient and cost-effective moment to help out. Yet, there is a gulf between knowledge of what is best for young children and what happens in practice. Switzerland and other European countries lack a common understanding on quality in early childhood education and care (ECEC) despite widespread evidence. They fall behind in the implementation of comprehensive policies including coordination of diverse stakeholders. By promoting high-quality early education and children's transition into the school system, we want to ensure better returns from educational investments. We want to secure equal opportunities by the time children start school.

ACHIEVEMENT MEASURES

EVIDENCE

We contribute evidence showing that quality ECEC improves school readiness by the time children enter kindergarten.

PRACTICE DEVELOPMENT

We support systematic approaches in Swiss cantons and communes to improve the transition into primary school from ECEC. This leads to at least half of the areas rethinking their policies and adopting new practices.

What we will do

Within our second theme, Early Education, we will help to formulate comprehensive early education policies in Switzerland and other European countries. We will do this by developing programs designed to promote equal opportunities at school-entry level and that emphasize the societal benefits of education. We will use our research knowledge, our support for practice development and our policy advocacy. We will build on practical experience with our four-year program, Primokiz, to develop policy-making in ECEC across Switzerland, and our national program, QualiKita, started in 2013, to pioneer excellence in Swiss day-care centers. We want better transitions between early care and

kindergarten and then onto primary school and formal education. Organized well, these moves strengthen integration of children and learning. So we will scale up Educational Landscapes, our Swiss program piloting and evaluating moves from early education to school.

In Switzerland, we will lobby government and businesses for a comprehensive Early Childhood policy, covering health, education and social services, which professionalizes the delivery of high-quality services in the sector. Our scientific studies of such policies' cost-effectiveness will strengthen the case. We will extend our campaign, at least partly, to other European countries, sharing our learning on quality development in day-care institutions. Vital evidence should come from our work running a unique scientific study of supporting children through their first seven years. It starts in mid-2016, carrying on to 2023, in partnership with the German city of Bremen and the Federal Ministry for Education and Research. The learning will be shared across Germany.

...We will share knowledge

We are changing how we communicate. We want to publish and distribute content about how children learn best. Our goal is to gather people in dialogue about key topics that can improve children's learning. It is about contributing to, and listening to, vital conversations that will achieve change. We will share facts, studies and expertise from various sources with peer groups and opinion formers, who can lead and implement that change. This requires transparent, open communication and clear presentation, plus fast, competent and active exchanges.

In practice, that means we will create, compile, maintain and distribute content that can have a long-term impact on key subjects and target groups. This high-quality content will underscore our leading expertise.

ACHIEVEMENT MEASURES

SHARED LEARNING

Our knowledge documents have been downloaded at least 10,000 times from our website.

E-NEWSLETTER

Our numbers of readers increase by 50% in the first year. We increase frequency of publication to once every three months in 2016 and bi-monthly thereafter.

GOAL

5

CONTENT MARKETING



Transforming children's learning in Ivory Coast

Why it matters

Ivory Coast leads the world in the production and export of the cocoa beans used in the manufacture of chocolate. Its smallholder cocoa farmers account for almost 40% of global cocoa production. Yet they can barely survive on less than \$0.50 a day, well below the internationally recognized \$2 poverty line. Nearly half of men and almost three quarters of women are illiterate. More than two thirds of Ivorian youths have not finished primary education and more than a third have never attended school. Gender inequality and child labor are prevalent. About 1.3 million children aged between 5 and 17 are reported to be involved in child labor, nearly all doing hazardous work in cocoa production.

The well-being of these communities and the education of their children are intricately connected. Education is associated not only with higher income, but also with better health, and longer life. The costs of school failure are high. According to the OECD, it results in "increased criminality, lower rates of economic growth, lower intergenerational effects on children and parents, higher public health spending, higher unemployment, lower social cohesion, and even lower participation in civic and political activities".

At the same time, a higher quality of life would allow for better schooling. Well-educated adults would be more productive, command higher incomes and live materially more comfortable lives. How can we promote improvements in both economic productivity and in education to create a virtuous, self-sustaining circle of change?

ACHIEVEMENT MEASURES

SKILLS IMPROVEMENT

80% of children in our programs for improving literacy and numeracy have, by the second year, acquired the skills expected at their school grade level.

PRACTICE IMPROVEMENT

More than 50% of projects addressing institutions (companies and CSOs) have changed the practices or policies in the target institutions.

What we will do

The Jacobs Foundation has a long history of supporting better livelihoods in West Africa, particularly for children. Our charitable funding springs from the cocoa trade. Reflecting this unique background, we have created an alliance of public and private organizations committed to raising the standard of living for the rural populations in Ivory Coast, focussing its efforts particularly around children's education. Under our third thematic pillar (Rural Livelihoods) with our program called Transforming Education in Cocoa Communities (TRECC) we have entered into a strategic partnership with CocoaAction, which represents the 10 globally leading cocoa and chocolate companies. Our goal is to improve quality of life for 200,000 children in Ivory Coast and, approximately, 1,000 communities, by supporting community development, improving children's education and increasing the incomes of cocoa farmers.

Nationally, we seek a transformation in educational opportunities for Ivorian children. Through our close cooperation with the Ivorian government, we expect improved school readiness and social and emotional skills among the under 5s, reflecting the educational importance that our research attaches to such skills. We anticipate improved literacy and numeracy skills at primary school level for children up to 10 and higher vocational skills for Ivorian youth so they can secure quality opportunities for earning more.

We envisage a six-pillar process. This requires research, capacity building, matching grants, impact finance, engagement and policy strengthening to feed into each other and create a sustainable ecosystem that fosters quality of education in Ivory Coast.

TRECC will ensure sustainable change by drawing in other organizations, particularly those concerned with early childhood development and vocational training, but also by promoting good health and other basic preconditions for quality education. These activities aim to increase financial, social and intellectual capital invested in improving education in cocoa-growing areas.

...We will make our funding go further

We want to achieve the highest possible impact from our financial resources and to support our funding by capitalizing on our expertise, built over 25 years in the field of child and youth development.

That means joining forces with compatible strategic partners to leverage our core funding, making it go further and to greater effect. We will develop further partnerships, co-investments, impact finance instruments and work towards assessing the potential of earnings from paid consultancy.

ACHIEVEMENT MEASURES

EXTRA FUNDS

Co-investments in our programs have risen by CHF 70 million.

IMPACT FIRST INVESTMENTS

We have allocated CHF 6 million in impact first financial instruments, including debt, equity, and fund investments. These investments have yielded modest financial returns, allowing us to re-invest the capital with a high social impact floor.

GOAL

6

LEVERAGE
FUNDING



People are the foundation of change

The Jacobs Talent Network

Achieving the changes we seek means we must attract, retain and develop people with relevant expertise. So we will establish a network of the most talented people in child and youth development worldwide, a talent pool that extends our capacity to secure change. The Jacobs Talent Network will include fellowship programs for key groups—researchers, journalists, (social) entrepreneurs and politicians—and give great strength to our alumni activities. Conferences and workshops at Marbach Castle on Lake Constance and at the Jacobs Haus in Zurich will bring their energies and skills together to tackle the difficult questions in our field.

The Jacobs Talent Network will seek out outstanding individuals who are interested and ready to work with us as preferred partners in the design and implementation of our programs as well as in our content marketing, be it as employee, experts, strategic or operational partners. We want to be an employer and partner of choice.

The Jacobs University

Established under the title International University Bremen, the English-language private university became the Jacobs University Bremen after an investment of EUR 200 million by the Jacobs Foundation in 2006.

The Jacobs University is known for its undergraduate degrees and has received impressive results in national and international rankings. The university has enabled the Jacobs Foundation to demonstrate that private efforts can make important contributions to teaching and research in higher education. It has helped advance the development of Germany's universities.

Jacobs University educates highly talented young people from more than 100 countries. Excellence, internationalism, interdisciplinary thinking, diversity, leadership and clear values are the foundations of a Jacobs education. We will continue to support the university as a key legacy project under our Medium Term Plan.

ACHIEVEMENT MEASURES

BETTER SKILLS

10 staff members (existing and new) have brought relevant skills to the Foundation that were previously lacking.

NETWORK SUPPORT

10 former fellows of the Jacobs Talent Network have become relevant decision makers and opinion leaders in relevant institutions and continue collaborating with us as a preferred partner.



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