



AKILI AND YOU: WHOLE CHILD DEVELOPMENT MEDIA FOR ALL

Grantee
UBONGO LEARNING

Grant amount
GBP 677,000

Project duration
May 2018 – April 2020

Beneficiaries
Children aged 3–6 years, caregivers and other partners

Location
Nationwide



The *Akili and Me* cartoon teaches children numeracy, literacy, language and motor skills.

UBONGO LEARNING

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Approximately 44% of 3-4 year olds in Africa experience low cognitive and social emotional development (McCoy et al. 2016). Much of this loss of developmental potential is preventable with early interventions, but it is difficult to reach young children at scale. Innovation is necessary to improve access to quality early childhood development, since the student-to-teacher ratio in pre-primary schools in Tanzania is approximately 177 students to each teacher (Children in Crossfire, 2017). Research from around the world has consistently shown the positive effects of social-emotional learning through early childhood education on social outcomes in adolescence and adulthood.

Ubongo is a Tanzanian social enterprise that creates interactive edutainment for learners in Africa, delivered to them via the technologies they already have. While working with caregivers and early childhood development (ECD) stakeholders in Tanzania, Ubongo Kids identified the need and gaps for caregiver awareness-raising and behaviour change.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project builds on a pilot project that was funded by HDIF between 2015 and 2018, during which Ubongo created *Akili and Me* – an edutainment cartoon and radio series that effectively teaches children aged three to six years early numeracy, literacy, English as a second language and fine motor skills.

In this scale-up project, Ubongo is continuing to develop effective educational media for children as well as create holistic 'Akili and You' toolkits: an innovative multimedia platform that can increase the access of content to more children via caregivers and ECD stakeholders to improve the health, wellbeing and development of 3.5 million under-six year-olds.

Ubongo will also continue to create engaging content for radio and TV that builds public awareness and demand for quality whole child development, which can then support caregivers and stakeholders with the knowledge and resources they need to improve children's early outcomes. This multimedia platform will help Ubongo increase its reach as it continues to distribute content via its own platforms and through those partners that work within the ECD space.



PROJECT GOALS

Ubongo aims to deliver high-quality learning to African children using accessible technology and other interventions by:

- ▀ *Building on its iterative human-centred design (HCD) process* and using its findings from previous seasons to make the content more effective for both children and caregivers, as well as for those stakeholders and partners who work closely with the target groups.
- ▀ *Expanding upon the early education content for children aged three to six years* and adding content around hand washing and hygiene, healthy habits, good nutrition and disability inclusion.
- ▀ *Expanding its total reach:* With the creation of the 'Akili and You' toolkits, Ubongo aims to reach 3.5 million households in Tanzania by 2020.

GENDER EQUITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Ubongo carefully designs and tests content to ensure that it promotes positive norms for gender. They have a high representative of female characters, showing youth girls who are intelligent, curious, active and not subservient to men. Also, they show boy characters who treat girls equally, engage in domestic and household work and are not afraid to show their emotions.

PRINCIPLES FOR DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT

Design with the user: Ubongo uses a HCD process that means constantly engaging with Tanzanian children throughout the content production process. For this scale-up project, as the 'Akili and You' toolkits are created, Ubongo will be regularly in touch with its partners who will be the key users of this platform to ensure that it includes all their needs and addresses any gaps.

NEXT STEPS

Ubongo has now started broadcasting *Akili and Me* in Kenya, Zambia, Uganda, Rwanda and Ghana. The enterprise is also continuously trying to work with more partners to help them adapt and dub their content into other African languages such as Luo, Hausa, Kikuyu, Yoruba, Igbo and Kinyarwanda.



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