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**The Bernard van Leer Foundation** was established in 1949 and is based in the Netherlands. Our income is derived from the sale of Royal Packaging Industries Van Leer N.V., bequeathed to the foundation by Dutch industrialist and philanthropist Bernard van Leer (1883 - 1958).

**Our mission** is to improve opportunities for children up to age 8 who are growing up in socially and economically difficult circumstances. We see this both as a valuable end in itself and as a long-term means to promoting more cohesive, considerate and creative societies with equal opportunities and rights for all.

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Our grantmaking works primarily through **supporting programmes** implemented by local partners in selected countries. Through our **publications and advocacy**, we aim to inform and influence policy and practice globally and in the countries where we operate.

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#### Strategic goals (2010- 2015)

- Taking quality early learning to scale
  - Reducing violence in young children's lives
  - Improving young children's health by improving their physical environments
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#### The countries where we operate

- Brazil
  - India
  - Israel
  - The Netherlands
  - Peru
  - Tanzania,
  - Turkey
  - Uganda
  - European Union  
(regional approach)
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**Our goals in Uganda** (we will focus on the Districts of Apac, Nakapiripirit, Kumi and Soroti)

1. Reduced childhood mortality and morbidity among young rural children growing up in unhealthy physical environments
  2. Reduced violence in families with young children in rural areas
  3. Young children (0-6 years) in rural areas spend their days in safe and stimulating environments near their homes
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### Why these goals in Uganda

1. Up to 75% of the disease burden in Uganda is linked to poor personal hygiene and inadequate sanitation. This is a major factor behind Uganda's national under-5 mortality rate of 135 per 1000 live births – a figure as high as 200 per 1000 in parts of the Northern region. Diseases that are the greatest killers of new-borns such as diarrhea, pneumonia, meningitis and tetanus are directly associated with poor environmental health. We will focus on the most critical physical environment factors related to health including access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene practices in rural areas where 90% of young children (9.6 million) are living.
2. Violence in the family is the most prevalent form of violence experienced by young Ugandan children, both as victims and witnesses. Rates of violence are higher in rural areas, where 70% of married women (compared to 54% in urban areas) reported having experienced violence. Given these statistics, it can be said that an estimated 6.7 million rural children under 8 have been witness to violence against their primary caregiver. Smaller studies, including those commissioned by the Bernard van Leer Foundation, suggest that the prevalence of violence against children is even greater in magnitude.
3. 90% of children under 6 are not in any form of early learning related service. The majority of those that are enrolled are wealthy, urban and in private schools. Government standards for early learning services are hard to meet and there is no public funding in poor rural areas. The current government policy does not address learning and nutrition in an integrated fashion. We will focus on home visiting approaches that integrate early learning and nutrition into work of village health teams in selected districts where we are also addressing the other two goals.

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### Our history in Uganda

The Bernard van Leer Foundation has been working in Uganda since 2002. Until 2006, the emphasis was on preschool education through community based ECD centres with a focus on young children affected by HIV/AIDS and poverty, and the Karamojong. After 2006, the focus was on strengthening the care environment of young children living in poverty and affected by HIV/AIDS thus expanding the approaches to include parent/family support.



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**Please visit our website for more information on the foundation and our work in Uganda**

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