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FORUM

# Follow-Up Survey: UEF Love, Learn & Play Girls' Club Pilot 2021

In partnership with



THE  
PAUL  
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TRUST



## Setting the scene

### An Innovative Partnership for Change



UEF's mission is to enhance human flourishing by ushering humanity into an era of universal enlightenment, where all people are able to realise their innate potential to Love, Learn and Play. The Paul Hodges Trust's mission is to enable women and girls living in the world's poorest communities to access the resources they need to flourish.

Powered by our shared values, in 2021 we joined forces to deliver a ground-breaking project in Sierra Leone: The UEF Love, Learn and Play Girls' Club. This pilot, reaching 30 girls over a 12-week period, put UEF's unique Love, Learn and Play (LLP) framework into action, while providing a rich source of knowledge to enable future scale up.

### Why was this project needed?

Scholars from across disciplines have battled with fundamental questions of the purpose of our existence and how to live a fulfilled life. UEF believes that the deepest and most fundamental longings within all of us are only three - to LOVE, to LEARN, and to PLAY. If we approach everything in life with an LLP mindset, we will truly flourish.

In poor communities in Sierra Leone, we can see clearly that girls are consistently denied the opportunity to fulfil these fundamental longings. They are routinely locked out of the opportunity to Love, Learn and Play.

### Why Girls' Clubs?

Increasing evidence has demonstrated that Girls' Clubs are a high-impact way to promote girls' wellbeing and change the gender norms that constrain their lives. We see Girls' Clubs as the ideal forum to put UEF's LLP framework into action.

### Project Design

The UEF Love, Learn, Play Girls' Club pilot was designed to:

1. Introduce the UEF Love, Learn and Play framework in a fun and accessible way
2. Provide girls with life skills and vital information to support their flourishing
3. Nurture greater self-confidence, self-respect and self-worth
4. Support girls to identify and challenge false narratives
5. Provide opportunities to play, have fun and be creative

The pilot ran over 12 weeks as an afterschool club. The curriculum was co-designed by UEF, The Paul Hodges Trust and our partner in Sierra Leone, We Yone Child Foundation.

## Target Beneficiaries

The Club was aimed at poor and vulnerable adolescent girls, aged 12 – 15. These included orphans, girls with disabilities, HIV+ girls and survivors of violence and abuse. The pilot was run in George Brook, the biggest slum community in Freetown. As an ‘unofficial’ community, the government refuses to provide any healthcare, education or infrastructure, such as running water, to the roughly 10,000 people who live there. Life is very challenging, with most people living well below the poverty line and struggling to provide for their basic needs.

## Monitoring and Evaluation Methodology

Effective monitoring and evaluation were at the heart of this pilot, giving us the opportunity to learn and build evidence. Girls were surveyed at ‘Week 1’ of the girls’ club to collect baseline data. They were then surveyed again at ‘Week 12’ to track changes in attitudes and knowledge. Throughout the pilot, we also collected a range of qualitative data to pick up changes in perspectives and behaviour, as well as tracking girls’ understanding of the interconnected principles of Love, Learn and Play. At the end of the pilot the impact was assessed and summarised in the Final Report, which was shared with UEF in July 2021. The final report highlighted significant changes in girls understanding of Love, Learn and Play, as well as meaningful increases in their levels of self-esteem and ability to challenge false narratives.

## Follow-up survey

This follow-up survey was completed in April 2022, 9 months on from the end of the pilot. It was designed to better understand the longer-term impacts of the project. It involved reconnecting with the 30 girls involved in the pilot and asking them to complete the ‘Week 12’ survey again.

## Findings

Across all areas, the follow-up survey demonstrates persistent positive changes in girls’ attitudes, even 9 months on from the end of the pilot. This data is dramatic, showing significant changes in beliefs and mindsets, including:

- Increased self-confidence and self esteem
- A deepened understanding of the LLP mindset
- Increased knowledge on girls’ rights and sex education
- A strengthened ability to identify and challenge false narratives

This data demonstrates that the positive changes observed at the end of the project have continued after girls stopped attending the clubs. This powerfully reinforces the value of the clubs to girls’ lives and wellbeing.

Across all data sets, we did see some reduction in the uniformity of the impacts over time, which was to be expected. However, the overall trends remain highly positive, indicative of long-term change across a meaningful majority of the cohort. We believe lengthening the course to 6 months, as we have done in the scale-up, will further enable these mindset changes to endure in the long term.

## Engagement & Attendance

- 9 months on, all 30 girls still agreed that they had enjoyed attending the Love, Learn and Play girls' Club. 100% agreed that they had learnt a lot from the club.
- 10% of girls reported it had been 'difficult' or 'very difficult' for them to attend the club. The girls cited family pressure to stay at home to complete cleaning, cooking, working and caring responsibilities as the major challenge to attendance. This highlights the harsh realities faced by girls when trying to access their right to LLP, something we continue to remain alert to and manage during the 2022 scale-up.
- The dramatic increase in self-confidence observed at the end of the pilot has happily been largely maintained with 80% of pilot graduates agreeing or strongly agreeing that that 'I feel more confident after the club' 9 months on.

I feel more confident after the club					
12-Weeks	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	30%	70%	0%	0%	0%
Follow-Up	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	20%	60%	10%	10%	0%

## Love

Interestingly, in Week 1, 100% of the girls already agreed with the statement "I think love is very important for a happy life". However, over the course of the 12 weeks, we saw important shifts, both in girls' understanding of the meaning of 'love' and their ability to love and value themselves. For example, in their initial discussions, the girls' conceptualisation of love focussed narrowly on romantic love/physical relationships. However, after watching the UEF video, when asked to draw their 'circle of love', the girls were inspired to include a greater variety of forms of love, including love of their friends, love of their community and love of their nation.

**This deeper understanding of love continued to be reflected in the follow-up survey.** 100% of girls continued to agree that "love is very important for a happy life". When the social workers queried to dig deeper into this, many of the girls provided answers reflecting the different types of love that can be important. Several spoke about the bonds of friendship they had forged through the club and cited this as one of the new ways that love was important to them. Another girl said: *"I thought love was something I would only have in the future with my husband, but now I know that I already have love from my friends and sisters. Love can come in many different ways. I'm not rushing for my husband."*

As the Club progressed, we also saw an increase in girls' ability to identify and define 'loving' and 'unloving' behaviours, and the social workers reported seeing the girls displaying increasing compassion towards one another, as the Club progressed. **Very positively, a continued increase in 'self-love' and 'self-esteem' were also observed in the follow-up survey.**

I am a good person					
Baseline	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	0%	50%	30%	17%	3%
12-Weeks	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	20%	67%	10%	3%	0%
Follow-Up	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	10%	70%	10%	10%	0%

I can be successful					
Baseline	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	3%	37%	17%	40%	3%
12-Weeks	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	20%	70%	0%	10%	0%
Follow-Up	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	10%	67%	10%	13%	0%

I have many good qualities					
Baseline	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	3%	37%	10%	40%	10%
12-Weeks	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	20%	70%	10%	10%	0%
Follow-Up	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	10%	75%	5%	10%	0%

I can be a leader in my community					
Baseline	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	0%	30%	23%	37%	10%
12-Weeks	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	20%	63%	7%	10%	0%
Follow-Up	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	10%	70%	15%	5%	0%

## Learn

From Week 1 of the Club, 90% of girls agreed that “Learning is important for a happy life”. However, in initial discussions about learning, girls focussed narrowly on learning as something that happens in school (with 85% of girls agreeing that “You can only learn important things in school”). When thinking about why learning was important, they felt the main reason was instrumental - so they could gain qualifications to succeed in the future.

Through the activities and discussions throughout the club, including the UEF audio recordings, the girls were introduced to the idea that learning is actually a lifelong process, which helps us to understand the world, our lives and ourselves and is valuable in and of itself. This helped to change girls’ perspectives and by the end of the course, only 15% of girls agreed that “You can only learn important things in school”. **The follow-up survey results indicate that these changes in attitudes towards learning have persisted, 9 months on from the end of the project.**

I think learning is very important for a happy life					
Baseline	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	40%	50%	10%	0%	0%
12-Weeks	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	60%	40%	0%	0%	0%
Follow-Up	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	37%	60%	3%	0%	0%

You can only learn important things in school					
Baseline	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	25%	60%	10%	5%	
12-Weeks	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	0%	15%	10%	55%	20%
Follow-Up	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	10%	20%	7%	43%	20%

## Play

Interestingly, during the 12-week duration of the Club, this was the area where we saw the most dramatic changes. In Week 1, only 33% of girls agreed with the statement “I think play is very important for a happy life”. When this was discussed in greater detail in Week 3, it emerged that the girls associated play only with very young children and had been strongly socialised to believe they were ‘too old’ to be playing and that it was very important not to be ‘wasting time’ or ‘being silly’.

In between attending school, doing domestic tasks and often working part time to help support their families, they had very little time for any form of relaxation and play. If they did have any spare time, they were often not allowed out of the home to play with their friends and were strongly discouraged from playing sports, like football, because this was seen as inappropriate for girls and could potentially lead to them ‘mixing too much with boys’.

Through introducing girls to a wide variety of fun and engaging play activities, the Club provided a unique platform for girls to nurture their playful side and better understand the value of play for mental health and happiness. This is particularly valuable for many of the girls we are working with, who have experienced trauma and abuse in the past.

As well as being valuable in and of itself, and a powerful tool for girls’ well-being, it is also worth recognising that play within the Club environment provided a rich context for learning – bringing together two of the key LLP mindsets. During play, girls got to try new things, solve problems, invent, create, test ideas, explore and discover.

Happily, despite some initial hesitance, by the time it was Week 12 and the girls were reflecting on their experience, many of them identified the play and creativity sessions as some of their real favourites. There had been a huge shift, with 95% of girls agreeing that “Play is very important for a happy life”.

**In the follow-up survey we can see the durability of this change in perspective, long after the club has finished.**

I think playing is very important for a happy life					
Baseline	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	10%	23%	10%	37%	20%
12-Weeks	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	40%	55%	5%	0%	0%
Follow-Up	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	23%	40%	7%	23%	7%

Playing is only for children					
Baseline	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	40%	40%	10%	10%	0%
12-Weeks	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	0%	10%	10%	50%	30%
Follow-Up	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	3%	10%	10%	57%	20%

## Knowledge

As well as a solid introduction to the LLP framework, the Club taught girls practical knowledge on topics, such as puberty, sex education and healthy relationships.

Prior to completing the Club, many girls had misconceptions on these topics, including ideas that put them at significant risk or that damaged their self-esteem.

**Through the follow-up survey we can see the way that the Club helped to provide girls with both knowledge and resilience networks going forward, including through seeing significant increases in the percentage of girls who agreed that “If I have questions about sex and puberty, I know who I can talk to”.**

Once a girl hits puberty, if she has sex, she risks getting pregnant					
Baseline	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	10%	37%	43%	10%	0%
12-Weeks	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	70%	25%	5%	0%	0%
Follow-Up	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	60%	27%	10%	3%	0%

Talking about periods/menstruation is shameful and embarrassing					
Baseline	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	23%	40%	30%	7%	0%
12-Weeks	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	0%	10%	10%	60%	20%
Follow-Up	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	3%	10%	20%	57%	10%

If I have questions about sex and puberty, I know who I can talk to					
Baseline	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	0%	20%	30%	40%	10%
12-Weeks	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	25%	45%	10%	10%	0%
Follow-Up	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	17%	55%	3%	20%	5%



## Challenging False Narratives

UEF have a particular interest in how false narratives work to constrain our ability to flourish. A recurring ambition throughout the Club was to encourage girls to think more critically and to interrogate widely accepted but damaging social ‘truths’, especially around gender.

By the end of the Club, we saw significant shifts in the girls’ attitudes and perspectives towards norms and stereotypes that restricted their potential. And as was displayed during their impassioned Graduation Speeches, the Club clearly stimulated a desire to ‘call out’ and challenge these false narratives.

**It is great to see many of these impacts and changes in attitude still being observed in the follow-up survey.** We strongly believe that these are skills that will help girls to realise their potential and change the future for the next generation.

Boys are more important than girls					
Baseline	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	10%	50%	10%	20%	10%
12-Weeks	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	0%	5%	0%	50%	45%
Follow-Up	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	0%	3%	10%	50%	37%

Girls should be able to do the same things as boys					
Baseline	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	10%	30%	10%	30%	20%
12-Weeks	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	30%	50%	10%	10%	0%
Follow-Up	Strongly Agree	Agree	I Don't Know	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
	30%	50%	10%	10%	0%