Play is an essential component of childhood development. This partnership aims to understand the impacts of play on children, and to promote play as a means of strengthening urban resilience. We will investigate the types of play-focused investments that cities are prioritizing, particularly in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Working with a select group of cities, the initiative will provide technical support and facilitate knowledge exchange with the following objectives:

- Understanding the value of play in child development.
- Accelerating play-focused investments on the ground through collaboration with the private sector and non-profit community, and measure impact.
- Connecting with and learning from other cities and experts.
- Gaining global visibility for play-based solutions.

The global pandemic has created a sense of urgency to advance action on creating more spaces for children to play. This partnership brings together expertise in the field, and acknowledges cities as a core part of the equation to strengthen urban resilience through play. Together, we are determined to find solutions that work for cities and children.
Play is essential for children’s health, physical, and emotional growth, and intellectual and educational development. It also helps children to acquire social and behavioural skills and build resilience.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on children, disrupting their schooling, affecting their well-being, social contact, and even nutrition. This is especially damaging for children living in deprived urban areas.

As cities try to “build back better”, local authorities in partnership with their communities, national governments, the private sector and the global community need to act to prevent loss of play opportunities.

The Real Play Coalition is a global non-profit coalition created in 2018 which includes UNICEF, National Geographic, Arup, IKEA and LEGO Foundation. It has the ambition to create a movement that narrows the play gap for 100 million children by 2030, by making play accessible and inclusive, because it is an essential right for children to thrive now and in the future. The coalition seeks to change the perception of the value of play; embed play-based principles into urban design and planning; support the implementation and upscaling of safe play activations in cities globally; and grow the number of play moments in the lives of children across the world.

www.realplaycoalition.com