

EVALUATION RESULTS



Introduction

An evaluation of Right To Play's programs with war-affected children and youth in Pakistan (2003-2010)

This document provides a summary of the mid-project external evaluation of Right To Play's 'Sport and Play Program for Afghan Refugee and Pakistani Children' in Peshawar and Quetta. The evaluation was conducted by a Pakistani consulting team and included a review of program documents, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and observation of activities and facilities in both program areas. Of the 35 schools involved in the project, 12 schools were randomly selected to participate in the evaluation.

Almost 500 respondents (59 percent male, 41 percent female) participated in the evaluation, 75 percent of whom were students. Sixty-four percent of the sample was from Peshawar and 36 percent from Quetta.



Environment for children's development

Right To Play programs are based in Peshawar and Quetta. Peshawar is located in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region, and Quetta is in Balochistan. In these regions, Afghan refugee and Pakistani children and youth do not experience a stable, peaceful and secure environment. Security is precarious and continues to deteriorate, with random insurgent violence along the border. Civilians are the most frequent victims of these attacks and among civilians, women and children the most often affected.

Poverty, political uncertainty, discrimination, violence, and trauma challenge the development and well-being of children and youth in the region, and limit the capacity of parents and other adults to create a supportive environment for children.

Ongoing violence, combined with limited opportunities for positive social interaction, contribute to distrust between the refugee and host communities.

Children's access to play

Government spending on education and health is less than 2.5 percent and 1 percent of the gross domestic product respectively. Refugee children and youth have limited access to education.

Most learning environments are not child-friendly. Classrooms are over-crowded, and the physical infrastructure has limited space for sports activities. Afghan schools in particular lack open spaces and playgrounds due to their location in densely populated areas.

Rote learning is the primary instructional method, and fear and corporal punishment are commonly used for classroom management. Furthermore, high demands are placed on teachers, and some schools do not have physical education trainers on staff.

Pakistan is one of the world's least developed countries, ranking 136 of 175 countries on the United Nations' Human Development Index. Forty percent of the population lives below the poverty line, a situation made worse by a financial crisis and high inflation. Only half of the population is literate and, in some parts of the country, only 10 percent of women are literate.

Girls and the right to play

In spite of the Government of Pakistan's ratification of Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), women and girls in Pakistan face extraordinary barriers to full participation in society. Although the right to play is enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, girls' right to play is not recognized by conservative sectors of Afghan and Pakistani communities.

Traditionally, girls and women are actively discouraged or prohibited from participating in sports – particularly when events are outdoors or away from the school. Boys are reluctant to play with girls, and girls are often harassed in public spaces.

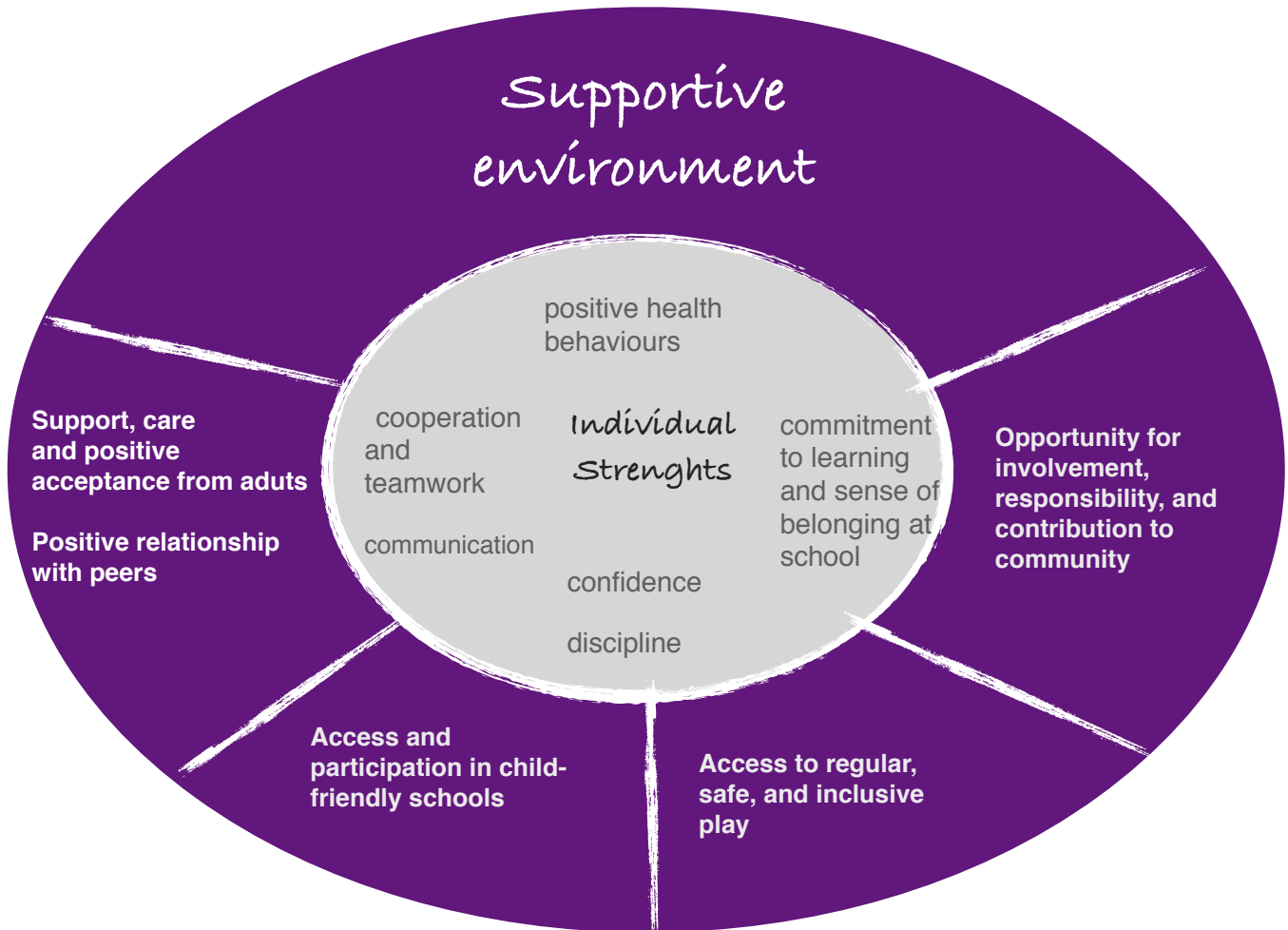
Photo: Girls playing Right To Play games in girls school, Quetta



Result 1: Strengthening protective factors

The evaluation data indicated that Right To Play is making a significant contribution in building protective factors for children. Protective factors are characteristics and resources that support children and young people’s health, well-being and development. Protective factors reduce the likelihood that children and youth will engage in risk-taking behaviours such as substance abuse, and help strengthen their resiliency – i.e., the ability to cope with and thrive amidst adversity and challenges.

The diagram below illustrates how Right To Play programs are building protective factors, by developing supportive environments and individual strengths among children. The following pages provide further detail about protective factors for children.



Photos (left to right): Girls Volleyball Pitch, Peshawar, Red Ball Child Play Games, Peshawar and Quetta



Child-friendly school environments: Teachers who have participated in Right To Play trainings are adopting more participatory, learner-centred instructional approaches and positive classroom management strategies. Corporal punishment is being used less frequently.

Supportive adults: War, ongoing violence, and the uncertainty of living as a refugee can affect the ability of adults to create supportive environments for children and youth. Teachers linked their previous reliance on corporal punishment to being affected by war and violence. Teachers reported improved relationships with students following participation in Right To Play trainings.

“Previously we wanted to be teachers who inspire awe in their students. Now we want to be teachers who are friendly with children.”

“I have made these changes in my home too with my younger brothers and sisters and children. Now we want to motivate children.” – Afghan Refugee School Teacher, Quetta

Access and participation in education: Schools with Right To Play programming are increasingly seen as providing positive learning environments that are lively and joyful. Parents want to send their children to these schools, and attendance has increased among enrolled students.

Access to regular, safe and inclusive play: There has been a visible increase in sports and play activities in schools and communities due to Right To Play programs. The sample schools all have safe

play spaces for children of all age groups, and are accessible for children with disabilities.

Strengthened life skills: Respondents, particularly students, reported that children and youth learned through experience about team-work and cooperation, communication skills such as expressing their feelings and giving feedback, following safety rules, and respecting elders. Children and youth also reported being able to use life skills to help others. A number of students reported feeling closer to others as a result of participating in the program.

“We learnt how to give feedback. I used this training to convince my sister, and she has started to study. One of my class fellows never gave others a turn, so I explained the rights of others to her, first her strengths and then her weaknesses. Previously we used to explain aggressively.” – Junior Leader, Afghan Refugee High School (mixed), Peshawar

Improved physical health and hygiene: Respondents, particularly students, reported that among students participating in Right To Play programming there were increases in physical strength and energy as well as improvements in personal hygiene. School grounds were also kept cleaner, and there were reports of reduced risk-taking behaviours.

“After training from Right To Play supervisors about cleanliness and hygiene we worked in Pabbi (an adjoining district) after floods and through activities told children why it was necessary to wash their hands. As a result of our efforts 40 percent of the children started adopting hygiene principles.” - Khyber Scouts Open Group



Photo: Participants in sports tournament, Quetta

Increased school engagement and performance:

School records and reports from teachers and students indicate that attendance has increased and is more regular; attendance is particularly high in Right To Play activities and sport classes. Students also reported that participating in sport and play activities helped them focus during other classes and improved their school performance.

“Due to Right To Play I got 80 percent mark in Urdu and improved in other subjects as well.” – Boy, Govt. High School, Peshawar

Opportunities for youth to be leaders in, and contribute to, their community:

Youth are demonstrating their leadership as junior leaders and through action projects associated with the Youth As Leader program. Junior leaders are taking an active role in managing students when teachers are absent, preventing fights, preparing play areas and leading activities, and promoting safety and good sportsmanship. Junior leaders are also helping in other areas of the school such as managing the library.

Following their participation in the Youth As Leader program, the Khyber Scouts Open Group used Right To Play activities to promote peace and non-violent conflict resolution as well as health and hygiene.

Promoting life skills: Respondents, particularly students, reported that participating in Right To Play activities led to increased alertness, confidence, patience, discipline, and emotional control and fewer behaviour management problems in participating classes. Improved life skills is a particularly important result, as many of the children and youth have been traumatized by witnessing war and conflict, living in its aftermath, and the uncertainty and fear associated with insurgent attacks along the Afghan – Pakistan border.

“We are working with people who have seen the ravages of wars and conflicts. Many students were so traumatized that they did not speak and could not concentrate on their studies.” - Right To Play staff, Quetta

“We held a free medical camp on 29 October this year to which 500-600 women came. Right To Play made all the arrangements and gave us medicine while we managed the camp and arranged the doctor.”

**- Junior Leader,
Khyber Scouts
Open Group**

Photo: Free medical camp for Afghan refugees



Result 2: Gender inclusion

Right To Play has achieved a high level of female participation. In 2010, almost 50 percent of regular participants were girls, over 50 percent of leaders and teachers were women, and over 35 percent of junior leaders were girls.

Staff used several strategies to ensure girls' participation, including actively recruiting women to be leaders, focusing on gender inclusion in Right To Play training, and encouraging leaders and head coaches to address barriers to participation. Some head coaches took the initiative to speak directly with parents:

"My head coach went to my house with me and convinced my parents to allow me to participate in activities. She also phoned parents and convinced them to allow their girls to study." - female Junior Leader, Afghan Refugee High School (mixed), Peshawar

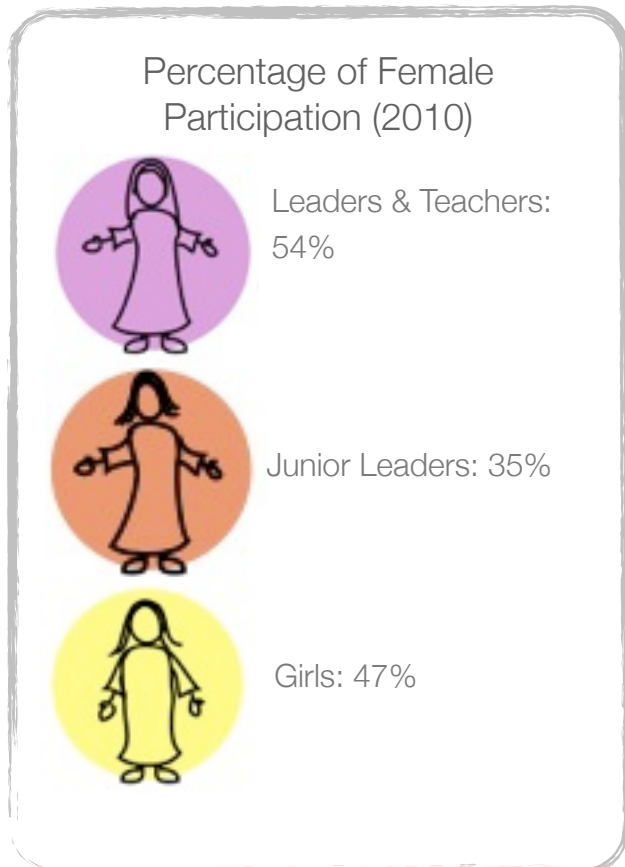
The evaluation showed that girls are now making their own teams, are able to participate in tournaments, and there are increased reports of

boys and girls playing together. Girls reported increased confidence as a result of their participation, and community support for girls and women's participation in sports and play has been growing. There remain, however, reservations among boys about girls playing in an open environment.

"Prior to Right To Play girls were not even allowed to play in front of boys. The head coach convinced teachers and they allowed girls to participate in Right To Play activities. The girls made their own team and in the tournament they won medals."

"Now everybody is happy and the principal has said that next time if there is a tournament they will definitely send their girls team. Now boys and girls also play together." – Head Coach, Quetta

"They have helped us gain confidence. Previously we did not play in our own school. Now we even go to other schools to play activities." - Junior Leader, Afghan Refugee Middle School (mixed), Quetta



"Previously we could not talk to our own brothers at home. Now we can talk to anyone. We have become confident and bold." –youth, Khyber Scouts Open Group

Photo: Girls playing Red Ball Child Play activity, Peshawar

Result 3: Peace-building and conflict resolution

Children and youth reported being better able to manage their anger and to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence. They also reported increased kindness, peace and harmony in school and at home. Head coaches were able to successfully support the children to resolve conflict non-violently in cases where conflict arose between players or teams.

“We can help someone after understanding her feelings. We can show her a path...She can find a solution to her problem.” – Student, Afghan Refugee Girls High School, Peshawar

“Here peace is a necessity. Through Team Up we are trying to bring peace and end conflicts. We teach children peace through activities.” - Right To Play staff, Quetta



“Different schools participated in the training sessions and in this way we developed relations with teachers of these schools... We also learned from one another and in this way traditional rivalries amongst various schools and people also lessened and finally died down.

When we came back from training sessions we shared this experience with other teachers of our schools.”

– Afghan Refugee School Teacher, Quetta

Photo: International Peace Day celebrations, Afghan refugee school

Result 4: Inclusion of children with disabilities

Head coaches and leaders have demonstrated their innovation and flexibility in finding ways to adapt activities to facilitate the participation of all students, including those who are missing one or more limbs or extremities, are deaf, and have chronic conditions such as epilepsy. The inclusion of students with disabilities in sport and play activities has helped to mainstream these students and foster greater acceptance among the student body.

“The best thing about these activities is that we can also include handicapped children in them, which was not possible in traditional sport and physical education.”

–Physical Education Teacher, Peshawar

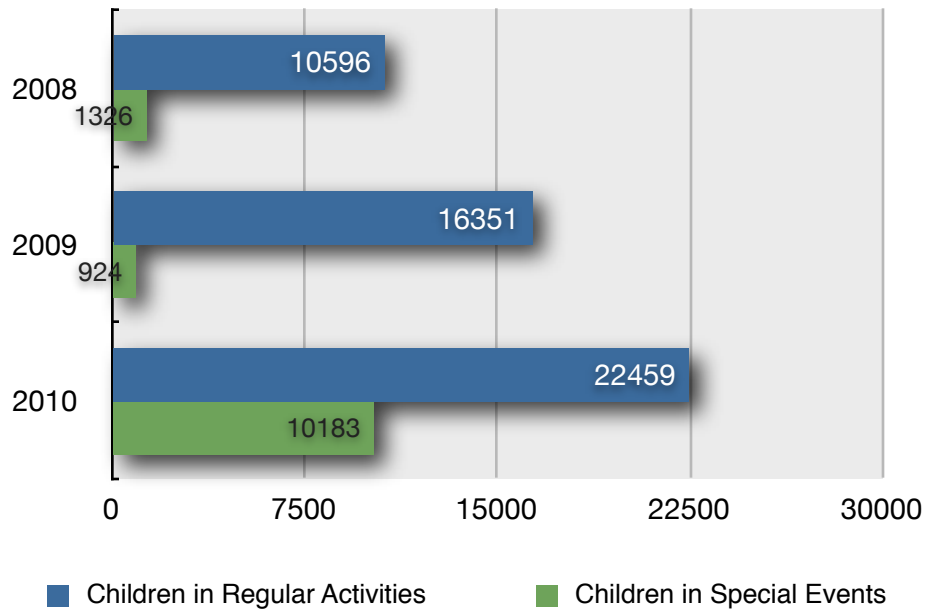
Photo: Physical Education teachers participate in training



Result 5: Participation in programs and activities

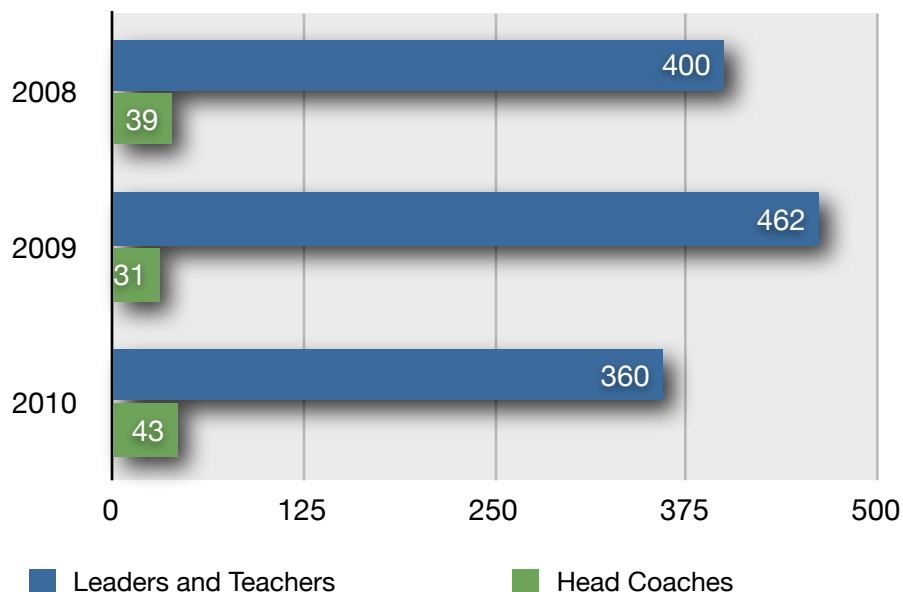
The graph below illustrates a steady growth in participation. The project expanded significantly in 2010: a total of 22,459 children participated in regular activities, and over 10,000 children participated in special events, play days and sport festivals.

Number of Children in Regular Activities and Special Events, 2008-2010



In 2008 and 2009, over 400 leaders and teachers were trained. Twelve new head coaches were trained in 2010, reaching a total of 43 head coaches. In 2010, only those leaders and teachers who were actively leading regular activities were included in the tally; the number for 2010 is therefore lower than in previous years.

Number of Leaders, Teachers, and Head Coaches, 2008-2010



Linking activities to outcomes

This evaluation identified a number of factors that contributed to results:

High-quality inputs and low-cost, quick, and visible impact

The evaluation concluded that the innovative nature of Right To Play's program combined with the quality of activity manuals, training program, and equipment are key ingredients in the program's success. The cost-efficient model produces a visible impact quickly, and investment in physical resources (such as schools and sports grounds) and human resources (such as head coaches, teachers and student leaders) yields positive outcomes among children and within communities.

The evaluation also highlighted that Right To Play extends the reach of activities with minimal costs, by working with schools that have two shifts and with large government schools that are hubs for other schools.

An effective training model

Right To Play training programs for head coaches, leaders, and junior leaders were reported to be of exceptional quality. They are well received by trainees, and evaluation findings showed that they lead to significant changes in instructional and classroom management methodologies. During refresher trainings, teachers demonstrated a high retention rate of information and skills from earlier trainings. Teachers reported that they apply what they have learned in their classroom and daily lives, and have also shared what they learn through trainings with others.

In-school observations indicate that the sport and play activities are being implemented at a "good" to "very good" level. Ratings were highest for teachers' ability to foster participation and run activities that are appropriate to students' age and developmental stage. The observation indicates that teachers need ongoing support to facilitate the reflective discussions that follow games and support students to apply the lessons learned in their own lives. This finding is expected, as this inductive instructional approach is radically different than the approach commonly used in many schools around the world.

"Training has had a great effect on teachers. Previously teachers did not cooperate much with the head coaches. But when they saw how children were attracted towards activities and were becoming regular and attentive because of these activities, they felt that there was a purpose behind these activities and their cooperation increased." Right To Play staff, Quetta

Awareness and buy-in from schools, communities and the government

1. Teachers and schools administrators

Teachers were initially resistant to Right To Play's involvement in their class and were reluctant to cooperate with the head coaches. However, the teachers became increasingly interested in Right To Play's approach when they saw an increase in student attendance and attention, and witnessed how engaged the students were in the activities.

The number of teachers participating in trainings steadily increased and other teachers began to request that they too be included. Following participation in trainings, teachers reported feeling more confident and less stressed, and several reported an interest in becoming physical education teachers.

"Right To Play staff used to come in our monthly meetings to conduct short courses. Previously 10-15 people turned up for these meetings. Now 45-50 turn up." - Physical Education Teacher, Peshawar

"When people came to know about Right To Play activities they sent their children to our school, resulting in increased enrolments. There was an open drain in front of our school and it posed problems for children especially in rainy season. The community was so motivated that they contributed to cover that drain." - Afghan Refugee School Teacher, Quetta

Like teachers, school administrators were initially resistant to Right To Play programs but this resistance was overcome when they saw the positive impact on students, play infrastructure and equipment, and the improved performance in inter-school tournaments. School administrators now ensure that there is time and facilities for children to participate in the activities, request trainings and training materials for all their teachers, and some join in the activities. One of the Afghan refugee schools has further increased access to sports and play by setting up an equipment lending system for students and the community.

Linking activities to outcomes (continued)

Communities

Community support for Right To Play sport and play initiatives is evidenced by increased enrollment in participating schools and collective actions to make schools more accessible and safe for students. Communities also show their support by taking part in out-of-school activities, such as tournaments.

Governments

There is a high-degree of support for Right To Play's program from government officials responsible for the Pakistani and Afghan refugee school systems. Afghan and Pakistani government partners have participated in trainings, activities, events, and tournaments, and provide in-kind and small financial contributions. Afghan government officials are interested in having Right To Play programs expand into Afghanistan. The present Director of Education for the region is very familiar with, and highly supportive of, Right To Play's work, and would like to see the program expanded to the whole province.

"We keep on hearing about the Right To Play program...Children have increased interest in their schools because of Right To Play program, which is a very positive development. We receive reports of the good work done by this program in Islamabad, and send these to the Afghan Ministry

of Education in Kabul... We want this programme to be extended to other Afghan schools also. - Afghan Consulate

"If they cooperate with us in curriculum development then we can expand this programme to the whole province. Our current curriculum is a stereotypical one and there is great scope for addition of such material. The government does not have many resources and it will not be possible for us to carry it forward on our own. We can do it jointly." – Director of Education, Peshawar

Dedicated local staff and volunteers

Despite a deteriorating security situation in Peshawar and Quetta, Right To Play programs have successfully continued implementation. Evaluation results showed that the ability to continue operating is largely due to the practice of engaging local people as staff and volunteers who know the local context and are invested in their community's future. School administrators noted that head coaches are – for the most part – punctual, hardworking, and even more committed than teachers of other subjects.

Adaptability and community involvement

Evaluation results emphasized the importance of adaptability and community involvement throughout the design, implementation, and evaluation process. Each program must be designed to address the specific community's concerns, strengths, and vision for change.

Overview of implementation approach

As the lives of children and youth are shaped by the adults and institutions that surround them, Right To Play worked with government ministries, school administrators, teachers, parents, and other community members to strengthen their capacity to create supportive environments for children and youth. Right To Play builds awareness and support for sports and play among these stakeholders and works with them to create child-friendly schools and access to safe play areas and quality equipment.

Right To Play builds on the existing strengths and assets of communities by working with passionate, committed, and skilled teachers and community

members. Local men and women in Peshawar and Quetta act as "head coaches" in programs and implement regular sport and play programs for children.

Head coaches work with staff to train teachers as "leaders" and students as "junior leaders." Trained teachers run activities with their students when Head Coaches are not available and when there is a very large class. Head Coaches also work directly with community groups and local organizations to organize sport and play events for children. Junior leaders play an important supporting role in running activities for children in school and community settings. Including youth in this way provides yet another avenue to strengthen leadership and promote healthy development.

Right To Play conducts intensive training and provides ongoing mentorship to head coaches, and trains coaches and teachers in non-violent classroom management techniques and experiential, play-based learning.

Teachers and coaches also learn about child development and psychology, child rights, child protection, positive instructional methodologies such as Right To Play's Reflect-Connect-Apply, and communications skills such as giving and receiving feedback.

Right To Play runs activities in schools and community settings for Pakistani and Afghan refugee children and youth. Activities are drawn from three of Right To Play's program resources:

Red Ball Child Play provides activities to support healthy growth and development among children aged 6 to 12.

Team Up! engages children aged 6 to 18 in activities that promote peace-building and non-violent conflict prevention and resolution, as well as prepare children and youth to help build peaceful communities grounded in human rights and principles of social justice.

Youth As Leader supports youth aged 13 to 20+ to develop the leadership values and skills that enable them to be meaningfully involved and contribute to their communities.

Right To Play's Team Up! and Youth As Leader programs were implemented to build cooperation and collaboration between Afghan and Pakistani children and youth.

Right To Play also uses sport and play to promote positive interactions among Afghan refugees and Pakistanis. Pakistani head coaches worked in Afghan refugee schools and Afghan head coaches in Pakistani schools. Teachers from Afghan refugee schools and Pakistan schools were brought together for training. Tournaments and mixed teams provided opportunities for Afghani and Pakistani students and their broader communities to interact – often for the first time.



Photo: Team Up! activity at girls school about cooperation and team-building



Photo: Art competition for young children, planned and facilitated by Youth As Leaders



Joint sport tournaments and play days were designed to promote positive interaction between groups who are typically segregated by the formal school system.

Graduates of the Youth As Leader program designed and planned youth-led events that included members of both the refugee and host communities. Photo: Girls sports tournament, Peshawar

Conclusion: focus on sustainability

The evaluation provided important insight into the issue of sustainability:

Strengthening local capacity for sport and play

Right To Play focuses on strengthening existing assets and resources in communities so that communities can continue using sport and play for development over the long-term. However, community instability is an ongoing challenge for sustainability efforts. Right To Play works with a shifting population; some refugees leave the project areas to repatriate to Afghanistan while others leave the community for other reasons. These ongoing shifts affect the availability of skilled volunteers to run activities and require ongoing investments in training.

Ongoing investment are needed to sustain sport and play activities

While project stakeholders indicated that they and other volunteers would try to sustain the sport and play activities started during the project, they believed that activities would either stop or continue in a diluted form without ongoing support from Right

To Play. They highlighted the need to investment in head coaches, training and ongoing coaching, sport and play infrastructure, organizing tournaments, and mobilizing community support for girls participation.

Institutional support ensures ongoing investments in sport and play activities

Right To Play is trying to institutionalize sport and play activities in the government system. Institutionalization will ensure ongoing investment in sport and play; that program implementation will be carefully monitored, evaluated and documented; and that Right To Play can expand the reach and impact of programs beyond the project areas. Right To Play is working with key stakeholders to plan sport and play activities, to include training in the pre-service and in-service teacher education programs, and to train the best teacher-trainees to be supervisors who will provide ongoing support and coaching to their peers. The government will also need to commit to providing the necessary equipment and infrastructure. Turnover among civil servants is an ongoing challenge to institutionalization efforts.

Right To Play promotes a culture of accountability and innovation by building the capacity of local teams to continually measure the quality and impact of its programs.

Photo: Training for head coaches



Right To Play Partners

The Afghan Refugee and Pakistani Children's program is funded by Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Right To Play works with local schools, organizations, and agencies, including the Youth Resource Centre, Afghanistan Ministry of Education, Afghan Consulate, Commissioner for Afghan Refugees, International Rescue Committee, and District Education Departments (Peshawar and Quetta).