



### DID YOU KNOW?



*Johann Koss speaks with a Junior Leader while in Uganda.*

**More than 688,900 children now participate in sport and play activities in the 23 countries where Right To Play works.**

This increase in participation is largely due to a new initiative the Uganda office adopted to encourage greater leadership among youth. Junior Leaders are identified and mentored by Coaches so they can lead younger children in sport and play activities. This empowering initiative allows these young people to learn critical skills necessary to be a successful leader while building a sense of purpose that benefits their self-esteem and confidence.

- Almost 13,000 local Coaches, Leaders and Teachers provide regular activities to children - all of which are volunteer positions.
- Right To Play currently implements its HIV and AIDS prevention and education program in 12 countries.
- In Thailand, Right To Play-trained Teachers reported increased confidence in their students.
- Survey results from our Live Safe Play Safe program in Rwanda indicate that 95 per cent of participants knew that most people get infected with HIV through unprotected sex, and that 65 per cent of children reported that they had applied the knowledge they gained through their participation in Right To Play activities, in their daily life and social interactions.
- More than 22,000 children and youth (10,200 females) participated regularly in Right To Play activities in Benin this year.
- In Jordan, the establishment of three new partnerships in 2008 allowed Right To Play to gain access to an additional 585 children and youth and 36 teachers and staff of partner organizations in target beneficiary communities.





## SPORT AND PLAY BENEFITS CHILDREN AFFECTED BY VIOLENCE

By Zehra Kamal, Program Manager, Islamabad Right To Play, Pakistan

The trauma inflicted on children and entire families by civil conflict and displacement are not easily removed and require effort over a long period of time. By working with people living in camps for internally displaced persons, Right To Play provides children and families with hope, and equips them with skills to deal with their current difficult situation in the best possible way that they can.

Having established a reputation for positive results in the region, Right To Play was asked by Pakistan's Department of Education to offer activities to children after the conflict between the army and Taliban militants in May 2009 caused an influx of displaced persons from the Swat Valley, in north-western Pakistan and the surrounding area. Right To Play now offers sport and play activities to more than 2,500 children attending temporary schools in the camps in Mardan City. These children are learning important skills that help them deal with and overcome the trauma incurred by the violence and conflict they were exposed to.



*Girls participate in Right To Play games at a temporary camp in Mardan City.*

The programs are run by 16 Head Coaches, all of whom received training from Right To Play on "Understanding Psychosocial Support for Children". The training focuses on the concept of psychosocial support principles, psychological impact on children at different ages, vulnerabilities of children, ethics of working with children, communication tools as well as ways of dealing with secondary trauma and stress.

**"Two girls, ages 17 and 18, would often watch Right To Play games being played with younger children. They approached me and asked to join the games as well as attending the classes. They had never been to school and wanted to study. I took their request to the Principal who inducted them in the basic class. They also help me with the games."**

**Fahmeeda, Right To Play Head Coach**

The conditions at the temporary camps are difficult. Children lack proper playgrounds and are exposed to scorching heat. The children attending the temporary schools range in age from five to 15, and they have all experienced fear, physical pain and despair after witnessing acts of violence and death or hearing stories of conflict from family and friends. Their drawings often reflect their experiences and feelings of fear and violence. Some children, while playing, act out incidents of violence, while others are withdrawn, fearful and isolated. They are afraid of people who remind them in any way of the perpetrators of violence they witnessed and are made anxious by the sound of helicopters and other sudden or loud noises.

In a culture where female sports are looked down upon, the female Coaches have been successful in some areas to allow girls to play. Rabia Akbar, a Coach working in the camp's school said, "When I started taking the girls out to play the Right To Play games, the men resisted and demanded from the school Principal that only girls between ages three and six years play outside. I was called in by the Principal about this and I asserted the right of these girls to play and proposed using a smaller, less conspicuous ground for their play. Later I was told that the men agreed to this compromise. I am happy to be working with the girls especially on issues of cleanliness and helping them overcome their fears and concerns related to the internal conflict and displacement."



## RISING NBA STAR, HASHEEM THABEET, VISITS TANZANIA AND LEARNS HOW RIGHT TO PLAY GAMES ARE CHANGING LIVES

By Atuhura Tadeo  
Country Communications Co-ordinator



*Hasheem plays with the children during his visit to Uhuru Wasichana primary school.*

"It's play, fun and excitement; I can't believe what I am seeing. The work done by the children through the games is ensuring that there is education through the games," said Hasheem Thabeet, the Tanzanian rising NBA star who plays for the Memphis Grizzlies.

When Hasheem was still young, boys and girls never played together and had different games to play. "Before I left Tanzania six years ago there was never anything like children playing together. There were games for the girls and the boys, but what I am seeing is sport and play for everybody. There is inclusiveness," he added.

The importance of sport and play was revealed when Hasheem Thabeet and Olympic swimmer, Khalid Rushaka, both Athlete Ambassadors, visited Uhuru Wasichana Primary School during a recent trip to Tanzania. Located within Dar es Salaam, Uhuru Wasichana Primary School, an all-girl school, conducts regular sport and play activities every week for more than 860 girls. The games are led by Junior Leaders who strive to ensure fellow children learn important life skills, such as how to live together, how to protect themselves from disease, and how to gain self-esteem through their participation in specially-designed activities.

Through sport and play the communities, and in particular the children and their mothers, have transformed their lives by adopting healthy behaviour, and creating a clean and safe environment in their homes. The games helped close the gap between the boys and the girls. This has been achieved through playing games that promote inclusiveness as opposed to separating boys from girls during play. The girls have managed to transfer the knowledge learned at school through play to their home situations. This has promoted co-operation, and team work with other children in the community.

Cynthia Ubwe, one of the school's Junior Leaders, demonstrated to the visitors that sport and play is about learning how to play together and unlearning traditions that were associated with play. Because of cultural gender roles, girls were limited to performing domestic chores while boys were offered enough time to play.

**"As girls we were never given the chance and opportunity to interact with boys during play... this affected the way we performed our roles. With Right To Play games, we think, create and play together. There is no segregation."**

**- Junior Leader Cynthia Ubwe**



"As girls we were never given the chance and opportunity to interact with boys during play, which affected the way we performed our roles," said Cynthia. "Girls were limited to doing domestic work. Boys were given priority in education, wealth allocation and regarded as future leaders of the community. This patriarchal set up marginalized girls by limiting their opportunities. Through sport and play, this belief has been overturned. When playing Right To Play games, we think, create and play together. There is no segregation."

Monica Millinga, a Project Co-ordinator, emphasized how sport and play has created unity among the children and the community in general. "Before activities were introduced in the school we used to have challenges with children fighting each other. We had challenges of a clean environment. This changed after we trained children in Right To Play games that specifically addressed those challenges. Games like Don't Trust Your Eyes; Elbow Tag; Human Obstacle; Elephant Trunk; and Basketball have helped to empower the children with knowledge on hygiene, unity and behavioral change. They offer the children [the opportunity to develop life] skills and build on their knowledge."



**Hasheem Thabeet signs a Red Ball while visiting Uhuru Wasichana Primary School.**

Addressing the children, Hasheem thanked them and encouraged them to continue playing the games. "When I was growing up, we didn't have the opportunity to play like you are doing now; please utilize this opportunity and you will have a bright future," he said.

Esther Mwita, a Coach Trainer, explained to the visiting team how sport and play is transforming the lives of the children. "This being a girl's school, the children are becoming empowered to take on various roles in leadership and the games have helped the children tap into their talents. Through the games, the children have improved on their hygiene both at school and home," she said.

During the visit, Hasheem met with the Coach Trainers and the management of the school and thanked them for the great work they are doing to ensure that children have a healthy and safe community in which to learn and play.



## RIGHT TO PLAY RECEIVES UN RECOGNITION FOR SUCCESSFUL PROGRAMS IN PALESTINIAN COMMUNITIES

After decades of displacement, violent conflict and restricted access to basic services like healthcare and education, hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees now live in camps around the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Right To Play has made a difference in the lives of many Palestinian refugees with activities that help youth manage trauma associated with violence and war and encourage their participation within the community.

Since 2003, Right To Play has been implementing sport and play programming in the Palestinian territories (West Bank and Gaza) in co-operation with UN agencies and local community partners. These programs aim to build youth leadership, raise awareness of child rights and improve the physical, emotional and social health of children and youth in disadvantaged and refugee communities in the Palestinian territories, especially girls and children living with disability.



*Mr. Wilfried Lemke, United Nations Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace speaks with girls while visiting the Palestinian territories*

In June 2009, Right To Play's team in the Palestinian territories (West Bank and Gaza) hosted Mr. Wilfried Lemke, United Nations Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace, for a visit to their project locations. The purpose of his visit was to assess the needs of the Palestinian people in regards to sports and to learn more about Right To Play's programs and activities in the West Bank.

**Wilfried Lemke, United Nations Special Adviser on Sport for Development and Peace, thanked Right To Play for their wonderful work, and extended his support in promoting Sport for Development throughout the Palestinian territories.**

Mr. Lemke, who leads the UN's efforts to support Sport for Development and Peace, confirmed his belief in the organization's mission and expressed his on-going support for its efforts, after witnessing the positive impact of Right To Play's work on the lives of the children.

Right To Play staff escorted Mr. Lemke around several schools and community centres at Palestinian refugee camps, where he observed children participating in activity sessions and learned about the local communities' needs in regards to child and youth development. He also met representatives from Right To Play's partners in the Palestinian territories, including the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), the Palestinian Authority Ministry of Youth and Sport, and the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, all of whom support and work with Right To Play in the effort to improve the lives of local children.

Ultimately, the children who possess the crucial life skills taught through Right To Play's programs will serve as catalysts for healthier, happier and more peaceful communities.



### LIBERIA PLAY DAY ALLOWS COMMUNITY TO TAKE ACTION AND ENSURE CHILD PROTECTION



Children participate in activities at the Harper City Play Day in Liberia.

Right To Play staff recently held a Play Day in Maryland County, Liberia, to raise awareness of issues around child protection. The event, held on September 4th in New Kru Town, Harper District, aimed to inform children, parents and community members about the prevention of child abuse and neglect, children's right to education, and how to best provide support to children. The day's theme Take Action and Ensure Child Protection represented a call to parents and caregivers to respect and protect the rights of children.

The event attracted an impressive turnout, with 740 children attending. Children of all backgrounds had the chance to participate in games and performances that drew attention to the importance of their education and emphasized the need for parents to continue to support education despite rising tuition costs. The parents observing the day's activities, many of whom were overwhelmed by the unifying effect of the sport and play activities, acknowledged the importance of child protection and the need to ensure children's welfare at all times.

**"This is my first time to see this number of children playing so happily in this township since 1967 when it was created. I have seen that these kinds of activities really bring the children Together and they have really been enjoying themselves."**

**A.T.T. Nugba Sonpon, Commissioner of the township of New Kru Town**

The Play Day was just one of many events that is helping to establish Right To Play's programs within the community. After successfully training 22 Supervisors and eight staff members in child protection methods, Right To Play is engaging children, teachers and volunteer Coaches across the four political districts of Maryland County.

Local Leaders and volunteer Coaches were highly involved in planning the Day's activities and leading games in an organized fashion. Stephen Picka, a Right To Play volunteer for two years, applauded the organization's work and said he has learned a lot while volunteering. "Volunteering for your community and country means you are a nation builder," he said.

Right To Play Liberia's Project Co-ordinator, Mr. Sampson Dolo said the government played a positive role in supporting Right To Play's efforts to implement activities. He added that the organization's Liberia team anticipates more co-operation and collaborative efforts, as it works to promote the interests of children in the country.

The messages of the Play Day met with warm approval by A.T.T. Nugba Sonpon, Commissioner of the township of New Kru Town. "This is my first time to see this number of children playing so happily in this township since 1967 when it was created," he said. "I have seen that these kinds of activities really bring the children together and they have really been enjoying themselves."

Mrs. Comfort Mayren, a representative of the Harper City mayor, expressed the township's gratitude. "We thank you ever so much for this wonderful day. On behalf of the city mayor of Harper, we extend our thanks and appreciation to Right To Play for our children, for all of what you are doing here. We are very pleased, because you are teaching our children."



Children holding handmade signs depicting the messages of the Play Day.



## NEWS

### ***Right To Play receives prestigious Greer Memorial Award***

Right To Play was awarded with the prestigious Greer Memorial Award by the Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) on August 25th. The Greer Award recognizes an individual or organization for outstanding service to Ontario education. Robert Witchel, Right To Play's National Director for Canada accepted the award on behalf of the organization.

The Ontario Teachers' Federation (OTF) represents all teachers in Ontario's publicly funded schools. Right To Play was selected as the 2009 recipient of the Greer Award by the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO). The ETFO and Right To Play are working together in Benin to provide early childhood education to more than 2,000 children.

Read more about Right To Play's selection as the 2009 [Greer Memorial Award](#) recipient.

### ***"Let the Children Play (Some More)"***

Dr. Stuart Brown, President of the National Institute for Play, [blogs](#) on the importance of play.

