



Right To Play in the Palestinian Territories

FOSTERING RESILIENCE IN PALESTINIAN CHILDREN

Right To Play began working in the Palestinian Territories in 2003, when an agreement was signed with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to work with schools located in refugee camps. In 2008, Right To Play initiated an after-school program with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education which was soon extended into classrooms and kindergartens. That same year Right To Play introduced youth programming at the community level to promote youth engagement and leadership development.

Right To Play has continued to work in partnership with UNRWA, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, the High Council for Youth and Sport, and local civil society organizations to address the critical need for life skills development, quality basic education, psychosocial support and the participation of girls and women. Current programs include a focus on empowering children through transformative education in line with the Palestinian Authority's Education Sector Strategic Plan and UNRWA's Medium Term Strategy. Beginning in 2019, Right To Play extended its work to all 370 UNRWA schools in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with the support of the Government of Canada.

In 2019, Right To Play reached
18,700 children and youth
in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The challenges faced by children and youth in the Palestinian Territories

The West Bank and Gaza Strip have been under military occupation for more than 50 years. As a result, the population has experienced constant violence alongside restrictions in movement, displacements and a blockade of the Gaza Strip that have resulted in an unstable and unhealthy environment for children and youth. Although children and youth make up more than 50% of the population, they are largely excluded from community leadership and decision-making processes.

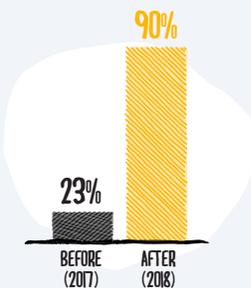
The ongoing conflict has had a detrimental impact on the provision of education as well. The education system in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is over-stretched and characterized by sub-standard school infrastructure and chronic underfunding. Gaps in teacher capacity to create safe and inclusive environments require more focused and comprehensive intervention from education actors. In response to these challenges, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education and UNRWA have developed strategic plans to enhance education quality and promote improved learning environments.

- 73% of the population of the Gaza Strip and 28.5% of the population of the West Bank is registered with UNRWA as refugees.¹
- 61% of students have witnessed physical violence at school.²
- Only 6% of youth are members of a sports club (2% of girls and 11% of boys).³
- 1 in 3 children with disabilities (ages 6 to 9) are out of school.⁴



Achievements

IMPROVED LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS



Right To Play supported schools demonstrated a **67** percentage-point improvement in the application of positive learning environment principles.⁵

ENHANCED TEACHING PRACTICE



Right To Play supported teachers significantly improved their ability to apply active, child-centered approaches in their classrooms.⁶

CHILDREN DEMONSTRATE KEY SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SKILLS



As assessed by the ISELA tool, children in Right To Play supported classrooms demonstrated high social-emotional skills.⁷

¹ UNRWA, Emergency Appeal 2020.

² UNICEF, "Children in the State of Palestine", November 2018.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ TAALOM, Midline Evaluation, 2019. 7 dimensions were assessed: child participation, inclusion of children with disabilities,

gender inclusion, communication style, enthusiasm towards children, behavior management and physically safe space.

⁶ TAALOM, Midline Evaluation, 2019.

⁷ TAALOM, Midline Evaluation, 2019.

Program Overview



CREATING SAFE, INCLUSIVE AND ENGAGING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Right To Play enriches the quality of learning environments by renovating classrooms and providing teaching tools and resources. Teachers are trained on how to challenge gender stereotypes and promote equitable participation in the classroom. And school officials and communities are supported to address violence, including gender-based violence, both in and out of school.

Building on this experience, Right To Play worked with the Ministry of Education and Higher Education to develop “The Minimum Standards for Active Classrooms” which provide standards for active, child-centered classrooms including overall space in the classroom, lighting, furniture, color choice, and use of technologies. Beginning in 2020, Right To Play will place a renewed emphasis on ensuring that schools are accessible to children with disabilities, including through the establishment of school inclusion committees.



STRENGTHENING TEACHING PRACTICE FOR IMPROVED LEARNING OUTCOMES

Right To Play invests in the professional development of teachers through its comprehensive in-service training program which promotes the use of child-centered, play-based pedagogy. Peer exchange mechanisms and training of principals and head teachers on coaching and mentoring form a sustainable support structure for teachers to receive ongoing guidance towards the integration of play-based learning in the classroom.

Right To Play, together with a coalition of education actors, worked with the Ministry of Education to develop the National Framework Document for the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) curriculum, which includes sport and play as integral components. Launched in 2017, the National Framework has been translated into practice through a National Early Childhood Teacher Training Manual which supports ECCD teachers and facilitators to use play-based approaches.

Beginning in 2020, Right To Play will apply its expertise on using play-based approaches for literacy to help children in grades 1 to 4 reach minimum proficiency levels in reading.



PROMOTING THE PSYCHOSOCIAL WELL-BEING AND LEADERSHIP OF GIRLS AND BOYS

Right To Play uses structured play in schools and communities to develop life skills which promote the psychosocial well-being and leadership of children and youth. At the community level, Right To Play develops the skills of youth coaches to lead sport and play activities that are designed to build skills in conflict resolution, collaboration and self-esteem. These community coaches often become ambassadors of change and positive role models for other children, youth and community members. After the Kufur Nemeh girls’ football club participated in the national league, its members became “Stars” and the “Leaders of Change” in their community.

At the school level, Right To Play provides primary teachers, physical education teachers and school counselors with the knowledge and skills to engage girls and boys using gender-responsive, play-based psychosocial support strategies designed to promote their resilience, healing and healthy relationships. Teachers are also trained on how to identify and refer children in need of additional support.



“Right To Play training reinforced our role as teachers in improving the quality of teaching inside the classroom, concentrating on child-centered intervention, which has positively reflected on students’ skills and interaction.

– Teacher, girls’ school, Gaza Strip



Right To Play International

Right To Play is a global organization that protects, educates, and empowers children using all forms of play – games, sport, poetry, performance, dance, art and music. We work with children in some of the most difficult and dangerous places on earth, empowering children with the knowledge and skills to drive change in their lives, their families and their communities.

In 2019, Right To Play transformed the lives of 2.35 million children in 15 countries around the world, working in collaboration with teachers, governments, communities, and parents.



Structured play enhances reading and writing skills.

Supporters



Government of Canada
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RIGHT TO PLAY
PROTECT. EDUCATE. EMPOWER.

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