

# THE POWER OF PLAY

 RIGHT TO PLAY

**2022**  
Annual Report





In Ghana, teachers in Right To Play-supported schools make colourful supplemental learning resources out locally available materials.

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# MESSAGE FROM OUR GLOBAL LEADERSHIP

In 2022, millions of children faced a difficult present and an uncertain future. Conflict, climate change, economic instability, and the consequences of COVID-19 combined to limit their futures and their potential.

Accessing quality education and the support that helps a child thrive became more difficult. 244 million children were not attending school. Millions more children who were in school faced a learning gap that threatens to leave them without the skills and knowledge they need to thrive. 41 million children were refugees or internally displaced, the highest number ever recorded.

Despite the scale of these challenges, we saw reasons for hope every day. In Tanzania, young students with disabilities went back to school, joining lessons adapted to allow them to fully participate. In Senegal, teenage girls learned how to stand up for their rights and stop gender-based violence in their communities. In Uganda, Tanzania, and Lebanon, we supported parents to take a more active role in promoting their children’s emotional well-being and educational success. And in Ghana, children became stronger readers thanks to play-based lessons that make reading fun and exciting.

2022 also saw us increase our focus on scaling our reach and impact. We worked with governments and civil society partners in many countries to bridge the learning gap and support children to develop and thrive. We trained a growing number of educators and coaches on how to make learning safe, engaging, and inclusive. We collaborated with Ministries of Education to incorporate play-based learning into teacher and classroom curriculum, to improve

student learning outcomes, and to strengthen education systems. And we brought education stakeholders together to learn from each other and deepen their commitment to quality play-based learning. These efforts are a critical part of making sure the world’s most marginalized children won’t be left behind in a rapidly changing world.

All of this work was only possible thanks to supporters like you. Thank you for standing by children during an extremely challenging year. We are proud and grateful to have you by our side as we continue to protect, educate, and empower children to rise above adversity through the power of play.



**Susan McIsaac**  
CEO,  
Right To Play International



**Dag Skattum**  
Chair,  
International Board of  
Directors

## HOW PETER WENT BACK TO LEARNING

Peter was forced to drop out because local schools couldn’t accommodate his disabilities. A Right To Play-trained school inclusion committee helped him re-enroll and supported his teachers to adapt their lessons so Peter could get back to doing what he loves: learning and playing with his peers.

“I hated staying at home doing nothing. I enjoy coming to school. My teacher loves me.”

- Peter, seven-year-old student, Tanzania



# 2022 REACH

Our mission is to protect, educate, and empower children to rise above adversity using the power of play.

We seek to achieve impact in four core outcome areas: quality education, child protection, girls’ empowerment, and health and well-being.

## WHO WE REACHED

**2,786,798**  
**CHILDREN**  
were reached through direct and indirect programs. 49% of them were girls.



**12,767**  
**YOUTH**  
were reached through programs, including close to 8,000 youth who participated in Junior Leader training.



**101,514**  
**EDUCATORS & COACHES**  
were equipped to support children’s learning, development, and well-being.

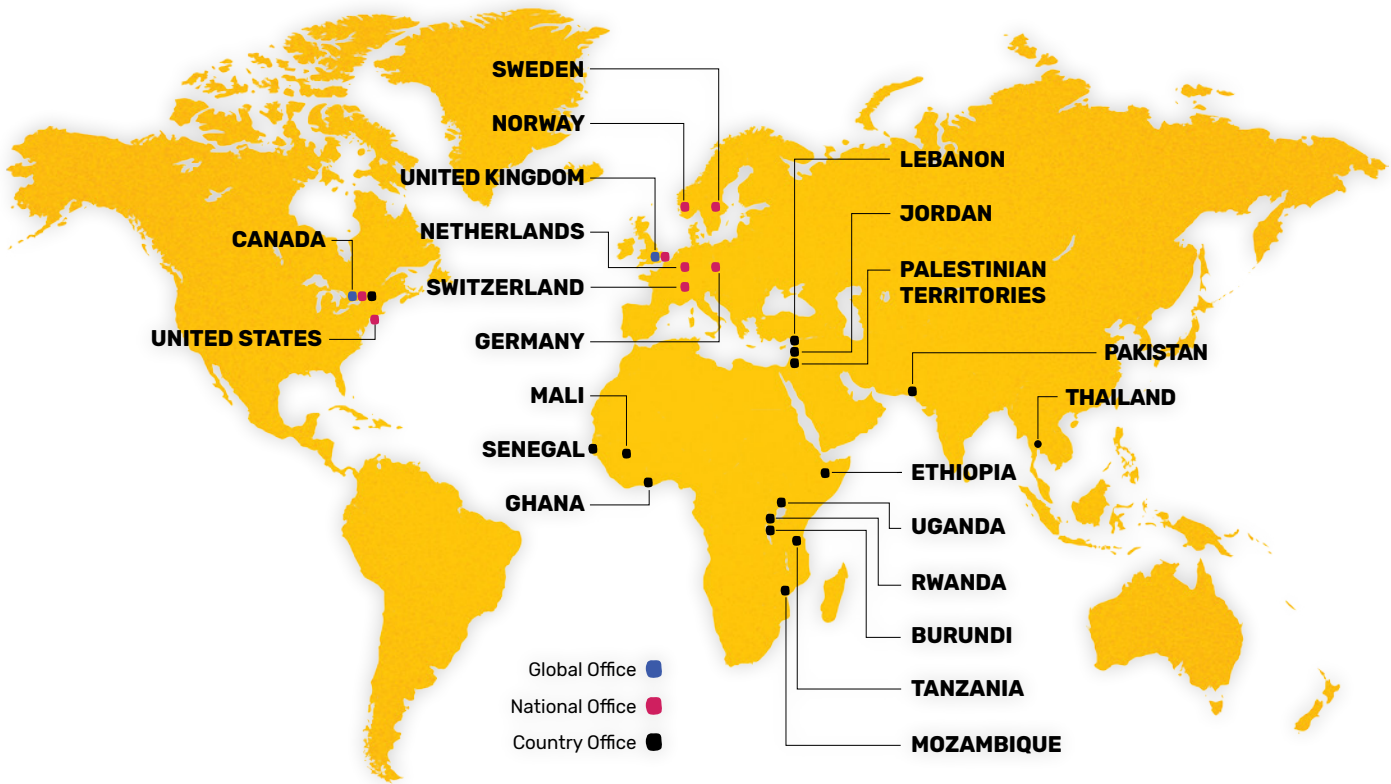


**175,763**  
**PARENTS & CAREGIVERS**  
were empowered to protect children and keep them learning.



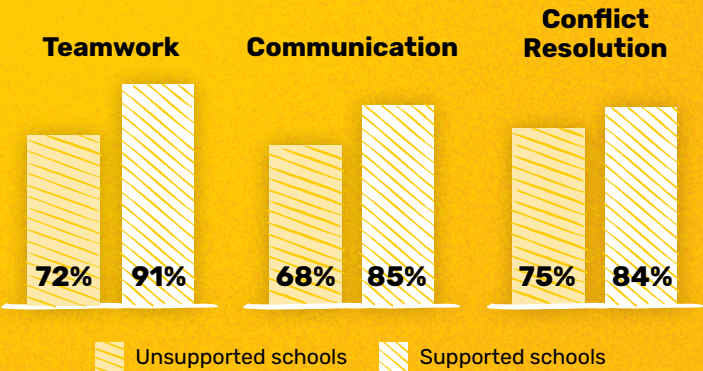
## WHERE WE WORK

We served children in **15 countries** in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and North America, supported by eight National Offices across Europe and North America.



## IMPACT HIGHLIGHT

In **Mali**, children attending Right To Play-supported schools that use play-based learning approaches demonstrated **stronger life skills** than students in unsupported schools, scoring higher in teamwork, communication, and conflict resolution skills.





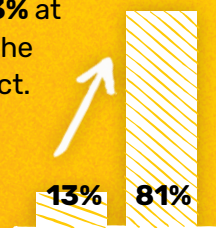
# IGNITING LEARNING WITH PLAY

The world is facing a learning crisis. It's estimated that 70% of the world's 10-year-olds can't read a simple text with comprehension post-COVID. Most of them live in the Global South.

Research shows that play is an effective way to boost primary school students' interest and performance in reading, mathematics, and science. It can also strengthen students' creativity, problem-solving skills, and their ability to collaborate to achieve their goals.

## IMPACT HIGHLIGHT

In Ghana, Mozambique, and Rwanda, **81% of teachers** in partner schools are using playful, gender-responsive techniques in class - **up from 13%** at the start of the GREAT project.



# 1.5X

Students in supported schools were **1.5 times more likely to view their learning environment as positive** than children in non-partner schools.

In Ghana, students showed **stronger overall reading fluency**, reading an average of **17 more words per minute** than students in unsupported schools.

# 17 wpm

“Before our teacher learned to play with us in class, it was very boring. We would fall asleep because the subjects were hard to understand. Then we started playing, and learning became easier.”

– Aisha, 13-year-old student, Ghana



Students in Ghana play a game with their teacher that helps them apply literacy and numeracy concepts.



# BUILDING POSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

When teachers use play in the classroom, learning becomes meaningful and fun. Incorporating play creates a more positive learning environment. Gender and ability barriers are broken down, and both girls and boys participate more equally. Students want to come to school, and they encourage their peers to join them. They develop supportive peer relationships. More children complete their education and pursue their dreams.



Parents in Uganda help their children prepare for school by integrating literacy and numeracy activities into everyday games – like encouraging them to count their steps when they jump rope.

## Creating Supportive Schools

**Burundi** has been wracked by periodic violence since 1962, which has contributed to one of the largest and most underreported refugee crises in the world. Schools serving returnee communities are crumbling, classes are crowded, resources are scarce, and the dropout rate is high. We are **strengthening access to education** by rehabilitating classrooms and creating playful and engaging lessons that help children master new concepts and catch up to their peers. With funding from Global Affairs Canada, we **restored ten classrooms** and **trained 234 teachers and 27 other education staff** on how to use play-based lessons to help students achieve their goals – in and out of the classroom.

## Breaking Down Barriers to Participation

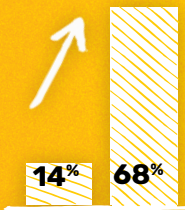
Schools in rural **Tanzania** struggle to meet the needs of children with disabilities. The options for most children with special needs are either to find an expensive private school or to drop out. School inclusion committees, trained through a project funded by Norad, are running community-based campaigns to **bring children living with disabilities back to school**. Teachers are receiving training on how to create **learning environments where every child at every level of ability can fully participate**. Students, including those with disabilities, are connecting to others, building their confidence, and discovering their own potential through intentional activities and support. In 2022, we supported **8,624 children with disabilities** to claim their rights to equal participation in their classrooms and communities through programs like this.

## Engaging Parents in their Children’s Success

Strong parent-child relationships are critical for a child’s long-term learning and development, especially in their early years. A program in **Uganda** and **Tanzania** is **equipping caregivers with strategies and support to nurture their children’s early literacy, numeracy, and social-emotional skills**. With the support of the LEGO Foundation, we are training community leaders to facilitate parental support groups and learning sessions where they can practice playful learning and bonding activities with their children.

### IMPACT HIGHLIGHT

In **Burundi**, there are 1.9 million out-of-school children between four and 19 years of age. Fifteen per cent of them live with a disability. As part of our work in Burundi, we raise awareness around children with disabilities’ right to education. **Sixty-eight per cent of community members in our project locations are now supportive of that right**, up from 14% at the start of the project.



“Through play, parents learn more about their children and their interests. This helps parents get closer to their children.”

- Joel Karagwe, primary school teacher and parent educator, Uganda



# BUILDING HER VISION FOR THE FUTURE: AISHA'S STORY

Thirteen-year-old Aisha lives in a community outside of Accra, Ghana. She dreams of becoming a journalist for Ghana's national broadcasting service so she can raise awareness of the challenges children face. But the idea of standing in front of a camera scared her.

“To be a journalist, you have to be able to stand in front of people. I was very shy, so I always asked myself, ‘How can I become a journalist when I feel so shy?’

I started to involve myself in [Right To Play's] games and eventually I didn't feel shy anymore. They would bring a game where you had to act out what you want to do in the future, and I would act out being a journalist. That's how I'm improving my skills. Because if I'm doing this now, then one day when I'm grown it will be easier for me to be a journalist.”



**Good afternoon cherished viewers.**

A few minutes ago, I met 13-year-old Eben selling plantain chips on a major highway. This falls under child labour and child streetism. Child labour and streetism are dangerous, critical and difficult problems in Ghana.

What are child labour and streetism?

Child labour is when your right as a child is being seized, and you are made to work for money while you are underage. Streetism means a child on the street selling water, some begging for money and some also doing robbery for a living. I spoke to a few parents and children on the street concerning this matter, and surprisingly got many answers. Some of the children were saying it was because of poverty and peer pressure. Some parents also said it may be due to lack of parental advice and also single parenting.

How has it affected these children? According to an adult beggar on the street, every month, at least one child gets knocked down by a vehicle. Instead of being in school learning, they are on the dangerous streets of Accra.

Somebody may ask, How is it going to affect our nation of Ghana? Of course, it's going to affect it in many ways. Are we going to allow this to happen to our nation Ghana? I know you will say a big No to this question. Let's join hands to stop child labour and streetism. We can help by educating people on it, and also I am urging children to seek counseling from responsible adults. Let's stop child labour and streetism.

This is Aisha, reporting for GBC News, Accra, Ghana





“These activities made my connection and relationship with my kids more positive. The breathing techniques helped me cope with stress and make good parenting decisions.”

– Mother of three in Beirut, Lebanon

# PROTECTING CHILDREN WITH PLAY

When a child is facing crisis, displacement, or the effects of conflict, play is a powerful protective tool that helps them build resilience and healthy coping skills. Children use play to hold on to feelings of normalcy and hope, and to connect with the important people in their lives. With caring, thoughtful

support from their caregivers, play can help children dream beyond their circumstances. We are equipping caregivers with the skills and resources they need to protect children from the effects of negative emotions that can harm their futures.

## Keeping Hope Alive in Lebanon

Children and families in **Lebanon** are dealing with inflamed social tensions and the economic chaos of hyperinflation. In partnership with Norad, we equipped parents with resources that help them manage their own stress, respond to their children’s complex emotional needs, and support their children to develop healthy coping skills. Parents have found the program resources so helpful, they’ve started sharing them with their networks on social media.



### IMPACT HIGHLIGHT

We provided psychosocial support sessions to children affected by the legacy of the **Beirut explosion**. Children who participated in the sessions said they felt better able to ask for help, and were **40% more likely to report feeling resilient** by the end of the program.

40%



## Rebuilding After the Pakistan Floods

The worst floods in Pakistan’s history hit in September, displacing eight million people and damaging more than 23,000 schools. Right To Play coaches and volunteers in hard-hit Sindh province rapidly mobilized to offer play-based **psychosocial support to more than 3,400 flood-affected children** to help them cope with stress and anxiety. We also provided 1,000 hygiene kits to flood-affected families and worked with government and the international community to make schools safe for children to return.



Mehboob, a 22-year-old Right To Play-trained coach, lives in a village in Kashmore, Sindh province, and supported the emergency psychosocial response. His account has been translated from Sindhi.

## HELPING CHILDREN COPE AFTER THE FLOOD: MEHBOOB'S STORY

"When rain first hit in September 2022, we did not know that it would cause havoc in our village. Every house, including mine, started flooding with water, so everyone went out to take temporary shelter in the only government school in our village. There were space issues since everyone had to fit in one large building. Food shortages, unhygienic practices and the realization of lost livelihoods started to emerge. Water-borne diseases even led to the death of a couple of children, while others were in severe trauma.

I could hear people calling for help while everything they owned was flooded with water, and I could see children's faces filled with distress and fear of losing even the smallest toy they had. Being affected by this disaster, I knew their pain and I could not stop the urge to help. I was already volunteering with Right To

Play as a coach, and the most important thing I had learned from that experience was to work together in hard times. I started talking with people about what their children needed the most right then. While most of them said it was safe shelter and food, some said they needed to get their stress out, but they did not know how.

So, I joined in the relief efforts and started conducting play-based activities in smaller groups. Seeing those little smiles, other children and parents started joining in these activities. With the expertise I gained from Right To Play, I chose games such as "Hope in the Air" and "I Like My Neighbour". These are games that provide psychosocial support to children.



"We never knew that rain, which we considered a blessing, would turn into a catastrophe."

Over a short period, I noticed how these sessions were helping them to see a light amid despair. The healing power of play not only allowed them to release the negative emotions caused by the floods, but also sparked the spirit of togetherness, a spirit to fight against all odds. Parents started conversations on how they could act to create a new life out of uncertain times and connect better with their children. Through this, the children helped create a sense of normalcy for everyone as their voices echoed across the village each day.

Play-based psychosocial support activities reduced fear among the children, while making them feel more resilient. They understood that uncertain times require everyone to act together. Community members, especially parents, realized the importance

of play for a child's well-being. Even after the situation got back to normal, they requested the other Right To Play coaches and I continue conducting play sessions. The children who were once shy started speaking to their parents and their peers due to these play activities.

Playing ignited a solution-oriented approach in their lives. It made them more resilient and able to handle the hardships that life brings. This is the first time in my life that I have seen people getting up amidst a calamity and children's eyes filled with joy, thanks to the power of play. This is the message I would like to convey to the world: Call for support when hardships hit, but do not sit with your hands tied. Explore everyone's abilities, bring your skill sets to practice and be the captain of your own ship."



# SCALING THE IMPACT OF PLAY

The crisis in learning is threatening the education and futures of millions of children. We collaborated with Ministries of Education and civil society partners to reach more children with playful approaches that improve learning and development outcomes. In 2022, we trained more than 100,000

teachers and coaches, and contributed to curriculum development and system building efforts in several countries. Here, we profile two training initiatives, supported by the LEGO Foundation, that are strengthening teachers' skills in ways that will benefit students for generations to come.

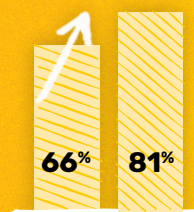
## Strengthening Education Systems

Through a collaboration with the **Ministry of Education in Ghana**, we are demonstrating how learning through play can be integrated into education systems at a national level. In addition to providing training on play-based learning approaches directly to education staff in partner schools, we are also equipping teacher trainers with skills and resources to **support and mentor thousands of education staff** in other districts.

This cascading training model allows us to gradually transfer training responsibilities to district and national education stakeholders, supporting the long-term sustainability of the project. It will also open up the positive impacts of learning through play to millions of children across Ghana.



## IMPACT HIGHLIGHT



In Right To Play partner schools in Ghana, Mozambique, and Rwanda, **81% of students** felt their school **supports their learning goals**, up from 66% at the start of the project.

## HOW AMBROISE STOOD UP FOR STUDENTS

Ambroise and his fellow teachers used to use corporal punishment in the classroom to keep students in line. The abuse made students afraid, and led to high student drop-out rates. In a teacher training program led by Right To Play, Ambroise learned nonviolent classroom management techniques, and how to use play-based approaches to make learning fun and keep students engaged. It worked so well in his class, he began sharing the knowledge with his fellow teachers. Now, students at the school are learning with joy, not fear.



## Leveraging the Power of Technology

In **Rwanda**, we are piloting a blended training program in learning through play for lower primary teachers. **More than 3,300 lower primary teachers will receive the training** over one year, **bringing learning through play approaches to a projected 158,000 children** across the country in the pilot phase. The course is certified and accredited by the University of Rwanda - College of Education and is developed and delivered in partnership with the Ministry of Education, the Rwanda Basic Education Board, and the National Examination and School Inspection Authority. We are also thankful for the support of the University of Cambridge and the Pedagogy of Play project at Project Zero, Harvard Graduate School of Education.

“The only problem with Right To Play is that you’re not in every school in Rwanda.”

– Gaspard Twagirayezu, Rwandan Minister of State, Primary and Secondary Education



# GLOBAL LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

This network of international leaders is committed to supporting our work. We thank our founding members for their leadership.

Johann Koss	Adrian Keller	Dag Skattum
Martin Bidermann	Barbara Keller	Ariel & Daryl Somes
Rainer-Marc Frey	Rob MacLellan	Larry Tanenbaum, O.C. & Judy Tanenbaum
Tatjana Frey	Meridee Moore	Paal K. Weberg
Mark Hantho	Mehrdad Noorani	Florian Wendelstadt
John & Deborah Harris	Dwight Poler	Urs & Simone Wietlisbach
Ragnar Horn	Rob Pulford	
Wilco Jiskoot & Alexandra Schaapveld	Dr. Michael Siefke	

# GLOBAL DONORS AND SUPPORTERS

We thank the following funders who contributed CAD \$25,000 or more to Right To Play between January 1, 2022 and December 31, 2022.

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<b>Y</b> Yara International
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# OUR AMBASSADORS

Thank you to all the Ambassadors who supported and amplified our work in 2022.

**Chemmy Alcott**, Alpine Skiing, United Kingdom

**Kayla Alexander**, Basketball, Canada

**Bianca Andreescu**, Tennis, Canada

**Nora Angehrn**, Golf, Switzerland

**Bonnie Blair**, Speed Skating, United States

**Brittany Bowe**, Speed Skating, United States

**Marco Büchel**, Alpine Skiing, Switzerland

**Pat Burgener**, Snowboard, Switzerland

**Dario Cologna**, Cross-Country Skiing, Switzerland

**Eva De Goede**, Field Hockey, The Netherlands

**Marijn de Vries**, Cycling, Journalist, Host, The Netherlands

**Diggy Dex**, Singer/Songwriter, The Netherlands

**Sasha Digiulian**, Rock Climbing, United States

**Uschi Disl**, Biathlon, Germany

**Sam Effah**, Track & Field, Canada

**Halvor Egner Granerud**, Ski-Jumping, Norway

**Perdita Felicien**, Track & Field, Canada

**Allyson Felix**, Track & Field, United States

**Nouchka Fontijn**, Boxing, Coach, Speaker, The Netherlands

**Severin Freund**, Ski Jumping, Germany

**Akwasi Frimpong**, Skeleton, The Netherlands

**Roger Furrer**, Golf, Switzerland

**Théo Gmür**, Alpine Skiing, Switzerland

**Kayla Grey**, Media, Canada

**Martina Hingis**, Tennis, Switzerland

**Sarah Hughes**, Figure Skating, United States

**Zach Hyman**, Ice Hockey, Canada

**Henrik Ingebrigtsen**, Athletics, Norway

**Kjetil Jansrud**, Alpin, Norway

**Therese Johaug**, Cross-Country, Norway

**Hugo Kennis**, TV Chef, The Netherlands

**Bruno Kernen**, Alpine Skiing, Switzerland

**Carlos Lima**, Handball, Switzerland

**Aksel Lund Svindal**, Alpin, Norway

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**Joana Mäder**, Beach Volleyball, Switzerland

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**Fanny Smith**, Ski Cross, Switzerland

**Ben Sonnemans**, Judo, Entrepreneur, The Netherlands

**Lauren Stam**, Fieldhockey, The Netherlands

**Jeroen Stekelenburg**, Sports Journalist, The Netherlands

**Johannes Thingnes Bo**, Biathlon, Norway

**Thijs Van Dam**, Fieldhockey, The Netherlands

**Tessa Veldhuis**, Rugby, TV Host, The Netherlands

**Anouk Vergé-Dépré**, Beach Volleyball, Switzerland

**Anouk Vetter**, Athletics, The Netherlands

**Hayley Wickenheiser**, Ice Hockey, Canada

**Erica Wiebe**, Wrestling, Canada

**Markus Zberg**, Cycling, Switzerland

**Mats Zuccarello**, Ice Hockey, Norway

## HOW MADIHA IS STANDING STRONG FOR GIRLS

Thatta in Sindh province is one of the most conservative areas of Pakistan, where girls are strongly discouraged from pursuing life outside their homes. Madiha refused to let tradition tell her what she, or any other girl, could or couldn't do. She stood up for girls' right to discover their potential by creating opportunities for girls to play together.



# SELECT 2022 PARTNERS

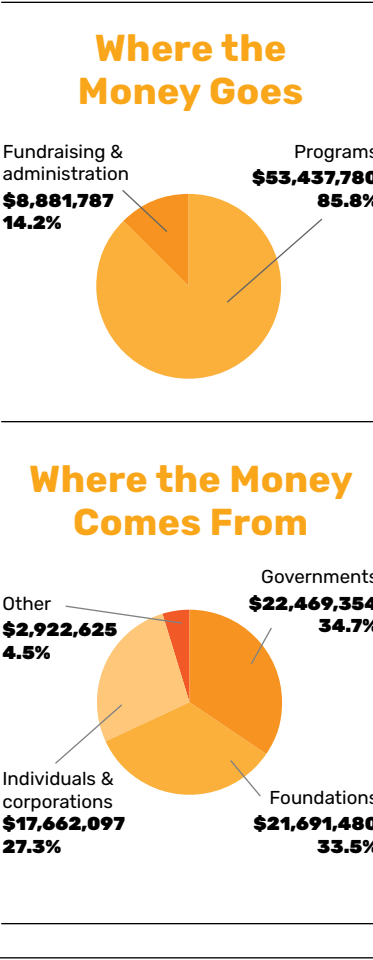
We are deeply thankful to the following global partners who have shown significant commitment to Right To Play over the last year by generously providing funding, supporting program implementation, and amplifying awareness of the organization at a global level.



# GLOBAL CONSOLIDATED FINANCIALS

We are grateful for the trust that donors have placed in us to protect, educate, and empower children. We are proud to share annual reports and financial statements as part of our commitment to openness and accountability.

For the year ended December 31, 2022	2022	2021
	\$	\$
<strong>Assets</strong>		
Current assets		
Cash	34,636,553	38,489,497
Investment in GIC's	4,155,782	-
Contributions receivable	3,808,145	5,441,000
Harmonized Sales Tax receivable	172,811	171,277
Prepaid and other expenses	1,249,569	1,227,976
	44,022,860	45,329,750
Capital assets	789,041	554,421
	44,811,901	45,884,171
<strong>Liabilities</strong>		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	4,818,642	4,649,590
Deferred contributions	21,338,817	24,963,901
Deferred lease inducement	31,093	35,756
	26,188,552	29,649,247
Long-term		
Deferred lease inducement	242,901	268,749
Deferred capital contributions	575,443	587,159
	27,006,896	30,505,155
<strong>Net assets</strong>		
Invested in capital assets	555,132	308,796
Internally restricted net assets	4,155,782	4,155,782
Unrestricted	13,094,091	10,914,438
	17,805,005	15,379,016
	44,811,901	45,884,171
<strong>Revenue</strong>		
Restricted	46,248,459	38,679,980
Unrestricted	18,497,097	13,917,991
Government Subsidies	-	1,775,536
Total Revenue	64,745,556	54,373,507
<strong>Expenses</strong>		
Program expenses		
Program implementation	51,696,813	42,202,904
Public awareness and education	1,740,967	1,669,974
Total program expenses	53,437,780	43,872,878
Non-program expenses		
Administrative	3,742,396	4,120,203
Fund raising	5,139,391	3,673,716
Total non-program expenses	8,881,787	7,793,919
Total expenses	62,319,567	51,666,797
Excess of revenue over expenses	2,425,989	2,706,710



Visit our website to see a full audited report of Right To Play International's 2022 Financials, including notes that are an integral part of these consolidated financial statements.



# BOARDS OF DIRECTORS

## International Board of Directors

Dag Skattum, *Chair*  
Gaby Abdelnour  
Mireille Abujawdeh  
Leen Al Zaibak  
Karen F. Conway  
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Mehrddad Noorani  
Johann Olav Koss  
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Sandra Taube-Godard

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Barbara Keller  
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Dr. Christoph Nater  
Sonja Ringdal  
Dr. iur. Carol Schmied-Syz  
Christoph Tonini

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Roderik Bolle  
Pamela Boumeester  
Remko De Bruijn  
Margriet De Schutter  
Mies De Vries  
Hermine Voûte  
Gijs Vuursteen

## United Kingdom

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Amy E. Blackwell  
Chemmy Crawford (Alcott)  
Nancy Curtain  
Sonal Dash  
James Fleming  
Lindsay Groves  
Simon Holden  
Alex Howell  
Marijana Kolak  
Greg Lai  
Susan McIsaac  
Kjartan Rist  
Louisa Watt

## United States

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Lance R. Taylor, *Vice Chair*  
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Allyson Felix  
Mali Friedman  
Sung Hae Kim  
Mark Pellerin  
Jeff Schachter  
Evelyn Stevens  
Nancy Arnot Taussig  
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Steinar Zinke

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At a school in Bishoftu, Ethiopia, this Girls' Club provides a safe place where girls can access menstrual hygiene products and information, and where boys and girls can engage in conversations about gender equality and their rights. This photo was taken during an International Women's Day celebration at the school.



## THANK YOU TO OUR PHOTOGRAPHERS

Cover: Julius Mahela

Inside Cover: Luca Imberi

Page 3: Peter - Julius Mahela

Page 4: (clockwise from top-left)  
George Kumi Koranteng, Right To Play  
Pakistan, Umwuka Media, Right To Play  
Jordan

Page 5:  
Students in Ghana - George Kumi  
Koranteng

Page 6:  
Mother and children in Uganda -  
Umwuka Media

Page 7:

(left) Aisha - Luca Imberi,  
(right) Aisha - George Kumi Koranteng

Page 8:

(top left) Lebanon - Ralph Azar  
(top right) Mother and child, Lebanon -  
Right To Play Lebanon  
(bottom) Flooding, Pakistan - Right To  
Play Pakistan

Page 9:

Mehboob with children - Right To Play  
Pakistan  
Mehboob - Right To Play Pakistan  
Flooding, Pakistan - Adobe Stock

Page 10:

(left) Students in Rwanda - Luca Imberi  
(right) Ambroise - Round Designs

Page 12:

Madiha - Mehrdar Art and Production

Inside Back Cover:

Girl in Mozambique - Flash Studios

Back Cover: Christina Palassio



# RIGHT TO PLAY

**Right To Play International**

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