



RIGHT TO PLAY

2021

Annual Report

PROTECT
EDUCATE
EMPOWER





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Messages

From Our Global Leadership

2021 was a year of great challenges for children. COVID-19 rolled back years of progress on the advancement of children's rights, especially those of girls. School closures pushed more children into poverty, child labour, early marriage and pregnancy, and widened the learning gap. The pandemic and other conflicts increased the incidence of mental health challenges in children and displaced more families from their homes.

We knew that a crisis of this scale meant that we must fight even harder to uphold the right every child has to a quality education and the hope of a better future.

Early in the year, we launched our 2021-25 strategic plan, charting an ambitious course that will see us lay the foundation to empower 100 million children by 2030 with the education, skills, and opportunities they need to rise above adversity and create a more peaceful and equitable world. Our POWER video resource provided 100 Right To Play games to teachers, coaches, and caregivers for the first time through an open-source platform. It is just one of the ways we are innovating to share 20 years of learning and expertise with an increasing number of children and organizations.

Throughout the year, when we spoke with our staff, junior leaders, coaches and community partners, we were constantly impressed by their creativity and commitment to making things happen for children. Our teams were full of new ideas about how we could lead the way in promoting children's development even in the face of escalating and intersecting crises. In 2021, we collaborated on five studies with academic partners to examine how we can continue to evolve programs to meet children's changing needs using new approaches, technology, and tools.

Results from education programs in Ghana showed 89% of girls were demonstrating leadership in their classes, up from 74% at the start of the program. Results from programs in Mali showed 36.5% of girls who were working in mines are now back in school or safer kinds of work. We also focused on impact at the governance level, building strength in our international and national advisory boards that will help us become an ever more innovative and effective organization – sharing powerful learnings and best practices across geographies and cultures.

All of this work was only possible thanks to supporters like you. Thank you for standing by the world's most vulnerable children during an extremely challenging year. We are proud and grateful to have you by our side as we continue to empower children to claim their right to a brighter future.



Susan McIsaac
CEO,
Right To Play International



Dag Skattum
Head of BlackRock Long
Term Private Capital Europe

Chair, International Board of
Directors

From Our Leadership

In my role as Chair of the Canadian Advisory Board, it has been a pleasure to witness the impact that Right To Play has through our programs for Indigenous youth in Canada, and around the world. On behalf of the Board I want to thank the Right to Play Canada team for the engaging campaigns and events that you bring to life, even in a virtual environment, to protect, educate and empower children to rise above adversity using the power of play.

I am delighted to have the opportunity to work with our Canadian Advisory Board to build on this important work. Whether it be through culturally-responsive land-based learning opportunities for Indigenous youth, or gender equality programs in Ghana, Mozambique and Rwanda made possible with the help of Global Affairs Canada, Right To Play is poised to reach even more deserving children in marginalized situations around the world.

Thank you to all those who made 2021 a success, and for your continued commitment to helping children overcome adversity through the power of play.

Sincerely,



Jake Lawrence
CEO and Group Head,
Global Banking and Markets,
Scotiabank

Chair, Canadian Advisory Board

Although 2021 proved to be another challenging year globally as we faced year two of the COVID-19 pandemic, as an organization, Right To Play continued to showcase our steadfast dedication to our mission of protecting, educating and empowering children and youth around the globe.

From the creation of new arts programming in Lebanon which encouraged children to express themselves through music, to the launch of a new five-year strategic plan for our Indigenous Programs team, which highlighted a new strategic pillar of Responding To Crisis, Right To Play continues to show tremendous growth and more importantly, commitment to the children we serve.

As we look to 2022 and the new opportunities that arise from challenges, I am confident, as always, that we will put children first. I look forward to seeing what the future has in store and give tremendous thanks to our dedicated staff at the Canadian National Office who work tirelessly for our cause, the Canadian Advisory Board, our volunteers and donors, without whom we would not be able to empower over 1.52 million children and youth globally.

With Gratitude,



Susan Vardon
National Director,
Right To Play Canada



OUR MISSION

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

We play for change in four key areas:

QUALITY EDUCATION

In Ghana, 73% of girls in Right To Play-supported schools are **reading better and faster since the start of programs**, compared to 60% of girls in unsupported schools.

GIRLS' EMPOWERMENT

In Pakistan, the number of girls in a Right To Play program who reported experiencing **corporal punishment dropped** from 67% at the start to 36% by the end.

HEALTH & WELL-BEING

In Uganda, 97% of children showed life skills like **independence, confidence, and a positive sense of identity**, up from 76% at the project's start.

CHILD PROTECTION

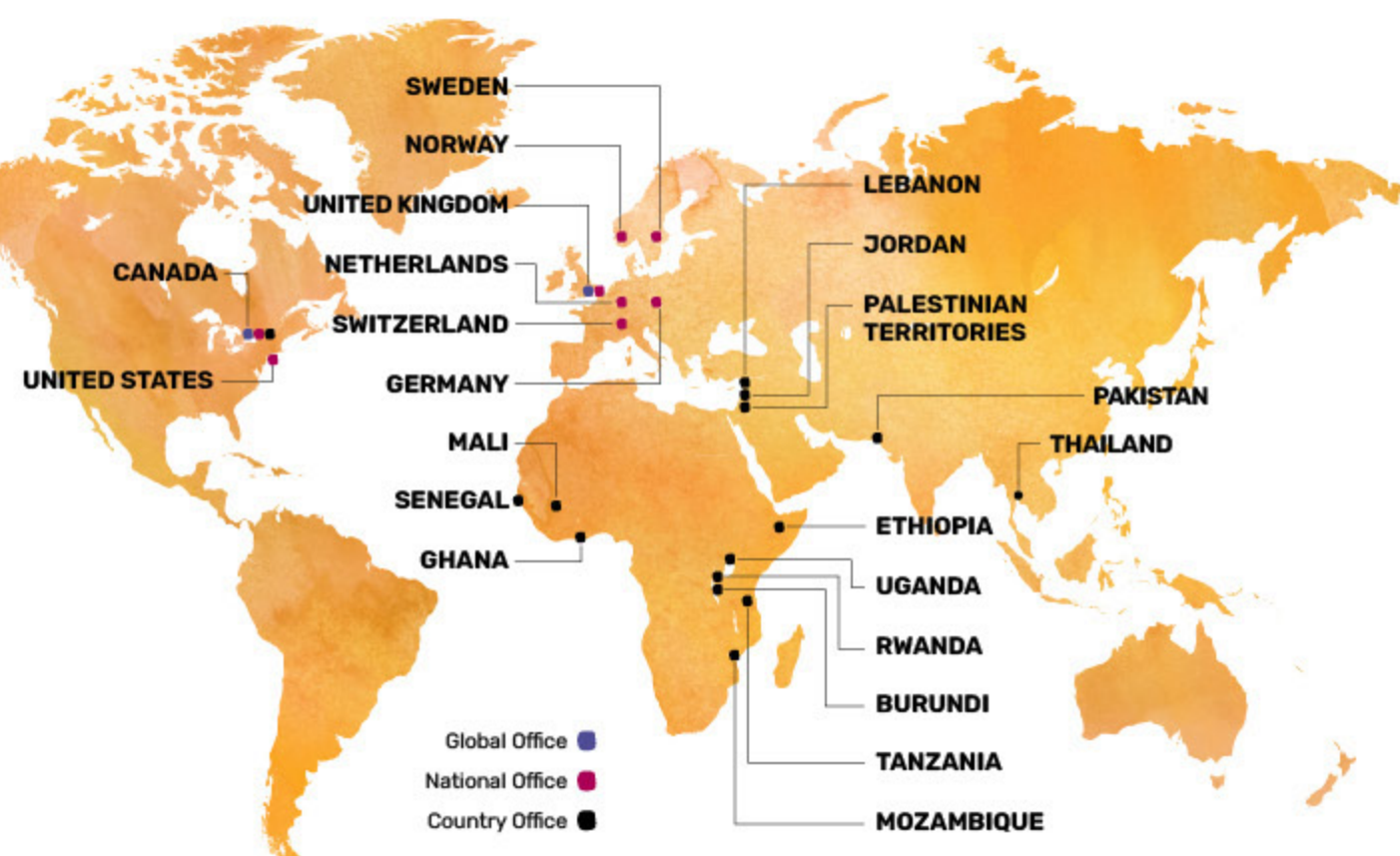
In Mali, the number of children reporting **child labour in their community dropped** from 83% at the start of the program to 35% at the end.



2021 REACH

Where We Work

We serve children in 15 countries in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and North America, supported by 8 national offices across Europe and North America.



1.52 million children and 15,119 youth participated in play-based program activities; 50% were girls.



542,539 parents and caregivers were mobilized to support their children's growth.



80,931 children who are refugees were supported in 67 communities.



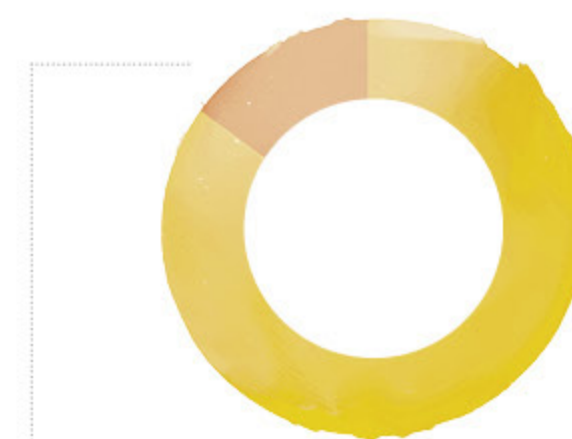
9,809 youth leaders engaged their peers to build self-confidence and positive life skills.



Where the Money Goes

Programs
\$43,872,878
84.9%

Fundraising & Administration
\$7,793,919
15.1%



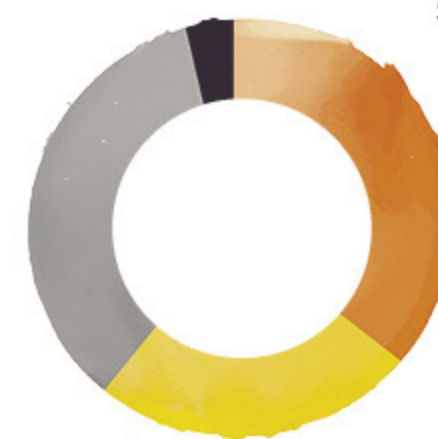
Where the Money Comes From

Other
\$2,172,160
4%

Governments
\$18,844,725
34.7%

Foundations
\$18,390,867
33.8%

Individuals & Corporations
\$14,965,755
27.5%



[See our full audited financials](#)

TOWARDS 2025

Launching a New Strategic Plan

2021 marked the first year of our new strategic plan, a bold new vision to empower **100 million children by 2030 with the education, skills, and opportunities they need to rise above adversity and create a more peaceful and equitable world.**

Over the next five years, we will strengthen systems that drive positive outcomes for children and support their development through our focus on **six strategic priorities.** >

Focus on the Most Vulnerable Children

Transform the lives of children in countries with low and medium measurements of development, children living in countries with large refugee populations, and Indigenous children in Canada.

Deliver Impact in Four Key Outcome Areas

Drive to improve children's access to quality education, gender equality, child protection, and health and well-being.

Leverage Our Unique Expertise in Play

Incorporate new kinds of play into our existing expertise to unlock children's potential for success and become a global leader in improving development outcomes for them.

Multiply Our Impact Using Technology

Create digital tools and resources to train and support more educators who will reach more children than ever before.

Integrate at a Global Scale

Increase Right To Play's ability to swiftly transfer innovations, lessons, and resources from region to region.

Expand Through Collaboration and Engagement

Become a partner of choice and engage a worldwide base of supporters to help children achieve their full potential.

RISE UP

How Delice Is Cultivating Creativity

Delice, 13, is one of more than 11 million girls around the world who was at risk of dropping out of school permanently due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A Right To Play club helped her strengthen her reading skills, even while schools in Rwanda were shut down, and inspired a love of language that helped her win first prize in a poetry competition – a love she is passionate about sharing with others. [READ MORE >](#)

“When I heard that I won the poetry competition, I was very happy and I decided I would help my friends study so that one day they can win too.”

Let's Protect the Crested Crane A poem by Delice

I start by praising the crested crane.
Crested crane supports development.
Crested crane attracts visitors.
They come to see how amazing it is and we get foreign income.
The crested crane lives in forests and mostly in swamps.
I can't forget to narrate about its appearance.
Crested crane, you bring about peacefulness. Crested crane, you look so attractive.
You bring peace and that peace spreads everywhere. We feel so good.
Visitors come in big numbers.
They see how it honks surrounded by its chicks.
They see how it takes care of its chicks.
You are shining as you are the most beautiful.
And this makes Rwanda most attractive, even if it is not easily found in Rwanda.
Let's keep it safe everywhere. Let's protect it against wrongdoers.
Among those wrongdoers, we can speak of hunters.
Hunters, do not target the crested crane, but keep them safe.
Let's protect crested cranes because they are very important for Rwanda.
We need to protect them and take care of them, to be helpful.
They attract visitors who happily come to see them,
And our country Rwanda keeps developing.
Keep developing, Rwanda, as you have your wonders.

Delice's poem was originally written in Kinyarwanda.



“I was inspired by the crane's beauty and how important the crane is for my country.”

“I like writing poems on themes that interest me.”

“It makes me happy to deepen my knowledge and get more information about something.”

PROTECT

STANDING UP TO FGM

Adele is a youth leader in Tanzania, where she's empowering young women to resist female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriage. When a girl stops attending classes, Adele and her club visit the girl's home and speak to her parents about the value of education for girls and ask for their support in sending their daughter back to school. [READ MORE >](#)

We help children learn how to guard themselves against abuse and exploitation. We create spaces where children feel safe and respected. We teach adults to build stronger relationships with children and to defend their rights. We empower children to heal and grow from trauma by supporting their psychosocial development.

PROTECTING GIRLS FROM VIOLENCE

Better data on gender-based violence will help us identify the most effective ways to prevent it. In 2021, we designed and piloted participatory tools for tracking gender-based violence and the barriers to success that girls face with the help of the Global Women's Institute, Canada's University of the Fraser Valley, Uganda's Makerere University, and the American University of Beirut. These tools are being piloted in Uganda and Lebanon, where stakeholders come together and host workshops to discuss what they see as the most significant issues for girls and the most effective interventions to support them. Then they use these insights to generate contextual, locally informed analysis that will help develop programming that is responsive to girls' changing needs.

RECOVERING FROM TRAUMA

Children experiencing displacement need to build strong familial, peer and community bonds to cope with negative emotions and recover after loss. In Uganda, we brought together more than 1,200 youth

and 400 parents from three refugee settlements for sports tournaments, play days, and workshops aimed at creating a sense of community and belonging, getting kids talking to one another and to their parents, and promoting a shared sense of responsibility for children's well-being. The program is a partnership with AVSI Foundation, Youth Sport Uganda, the Uganda Olympic Committee and UNHCR, and was funded by the Olympic Refugee Foundation.

PROMOTING SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

Better access to sexual and reproductive health education empowers young women to take control of their bodies and their futures. In 2021, we formed a consortium that will deliver the Sexual Health and Reproductive Education (SHARE) project, which will help 225,000 teenagers in Ghana, Mozambique, and Uganda access sexual and reproductive health education and services. SHARE is a partnership with FAWE, FHI360, and Water Aid, funded by the Government of Canada.

“Like lots of other girls in my village, I was at risk of having my dreams cut short by a marriage or a pregnancy before I had finished school.” – Adele, youth leader, Tanzania

70% of children felt safe in their communities at the end of the Jam Suka project in Mali, up from 39% at the start of the project.

65% of migrant youth in a program in Thailand were able to manage their emotions, compared to 23% at the start of the program.



EDUCATE

Children are facing the greatest educational crisis of our generation. School closures in 2021 meant hundreds of millions of children lost months of education. They joined the millions of children who were already out-of-school prior to the pandemic. We helped children to access remote and informal learning opportunities, educators to strengthen school systems as they safely reopened, and out-of-school children to return and finish their education.

BLAZING HER OWN TRAIL:

Arfaana is the first member of her family to go to school. She convinced her father to let her go by refusing to take "no" for an answer. That same determination has only grown as she's fallen in love with education. She wants to be a doctor, so when a teacher tried to transfer her to studying arts instead of science, she passed her science courses with top marks to prove she deserved to stay.

[READ MORE >](#)

TINKERING AND CODING

Learning about tinkering, coding, and robotics is empowering Rwandan children to think critically, express their creativity, and build their leadership and teamwork skills. In 2021, Right To Play launched the Plug In Play program, an innovative new program that is supporting children to learn basic principles of technology (coding, tinkering, and making) through playful lessons. In partnership with the LEGO Foundation, we're working with the Rwandan Ministry of Education to integrate playful learning into the science curriculum and train teachers on how to support students to engage in hands-on learning in the classroom.

DATA-DRIVEN SOCIO-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Social and emotional life skills are crucial for children's healthy development, helping them to advocate for themselves, to cope with negative experiences, and to forge stronger relationships with other people. In collaboration with the universities of Notre Dame and Dar es Salaam, we are pioneering a new tool that will measure how children develop context-appropriate social and emotional learning skills.

With the rich new data collected by this testing, we will be able to more easily and rapidly identify the most effective methods of strengthening children's holistic life skills across different programs and share those lessons where they can make the greatest differences for children.

PARTNERING FOR SCALE

We want to reach more children than ever before with the opportunity for active, experiential learning. Creating enduring and sustainable changes in children's classroom experiences on a national scale means partnering with governments to strengthen teachers' skills and support. In 2021, we continued to support the ministries of education in Rwanda and Ghana to integrate play-based methods into classrooms and curriculum delivery. We also introduced a new partnership with the LEGO Foundation and BRAC that will see us leverage our experiences in these contexts and support the ministry of education in Sierra Leone to integrate playful learning in primary classrooms.

73% of girls in Right To Play-supported schools in Ghana improved their grade-appropriate reading fluency, compared to 60% of girls in unsupported schools.

26,239 teachers were trained to offer experiential play-based lessons and create safe, inclusive spaces for students.



EMPOWER

In 15 countries, Right To Play-trained teachers and coaches filled classrooms and play spaces with energy and positivity, and gave children a reason and a way to fight against adversity and hold on to hope. Junior Leaders stood up against injustice and supported their peers to do the same. Girls claimed their rights to stay in school and in the game. And we shared our resources far and wide so more children and youth can be empowered through play.

MORE THAN WINNING:

Physical education can encourage gender stereotypes if it's not taught properly. In the Palestinian Territories, girls are encouraged to skip PE class, while boys are sorted into sports teams and told to focus on winning. Haitham is a physical education teacher and coach who is challenging these norms and empowering girls to participate. He's using physical education classes and after-school sports programs to create positive, supportive environments for all children. He helps boys understand that sports aren't just about winning but about self-improvement, and he's been encouraging girls' participation in sports activities they are normally discouraged from. Haitham believes that every child can reach their potential when they have the right support. [READ MORE >](#)

THE P.O.W.E.R OF PLAY

Open-access digital resources can empower more teachers, coaches, parents, and caregivers with tools to help children develop the life skills they need to thrive in today's world. The Play Opportunities for Wellness and Education Resource (POWER) games video collection, released in 2021 with the support of the LEGO Foundation, makes more than a hundred Right To Play games freely available in English, French, and Arabic for the first time, for use at home and in school. The games empower educators and caregivers to teach children everything from managing their emotions and resolving conflicts to building trust and improving their self-esteem.

INCREASING GENDER EQUALITY IN SPORT

Gender-based violence and discrimination prevents girls in Senegal from claiming their rights or finishing their education. We are empowering Senegalese girls to become changemakers who can challenge the forces that are trying to limit their futures through the RECAF-Jeu project, funded by Global Affairs Canada. The program will use sport and play to help girls build their confidence, learn about their rights and address rights violations, and sensitize parents, caregivers, and other adults to the importance of gender equality. The project will also encourage positive masculinities amongst boys and provide girls with sports opportunities where they can develop their abilities and agency in safe, supportive spaces.

“My aim is to prioritize the needs of my students and to show them their uniqueness and their strengths through sports.”

– Haitham, PE teacher and coach, Palestinian Territories

65% of boys showed strong leadership skills in Right To Play-supported schools in Mozambique, up from 57% at the start of the project.

1,617 coaches provided support and encouragement to children and youth.



POWER OF PARTNERSHIPS



Right To Play is fortunate to have many highly engaged partners to drive our mission of protecting, educating, and empowering children in adverse circumstances globally and within over 70 Indigenous communities in Canada. Between corporate partners, individual giving, and in-kind assistance, Right To Play Canada's partners support

children and youth as they strive for a better future for themselves, their families and the communities in which they live. In 2021, our partners in Canada offered invaluable support by creating learning opportunities and offering programmatic sponsorship for our organization.

The Slight Family Foundation

The Slight Family Foundation has been a passionate supporter of Right To Play through their match partnership of the Gender Responsive Education and Transformation (GREAT) program as well as Right To Play's Heroes Gala. A longstanding believer in our mission of protecting, educating, and empowering marginalized children and youth, The Slight Family Foundation have also been integral supporters of Right To Play's Indigenous Programs, particularly the Taking Care Coping Skills program.

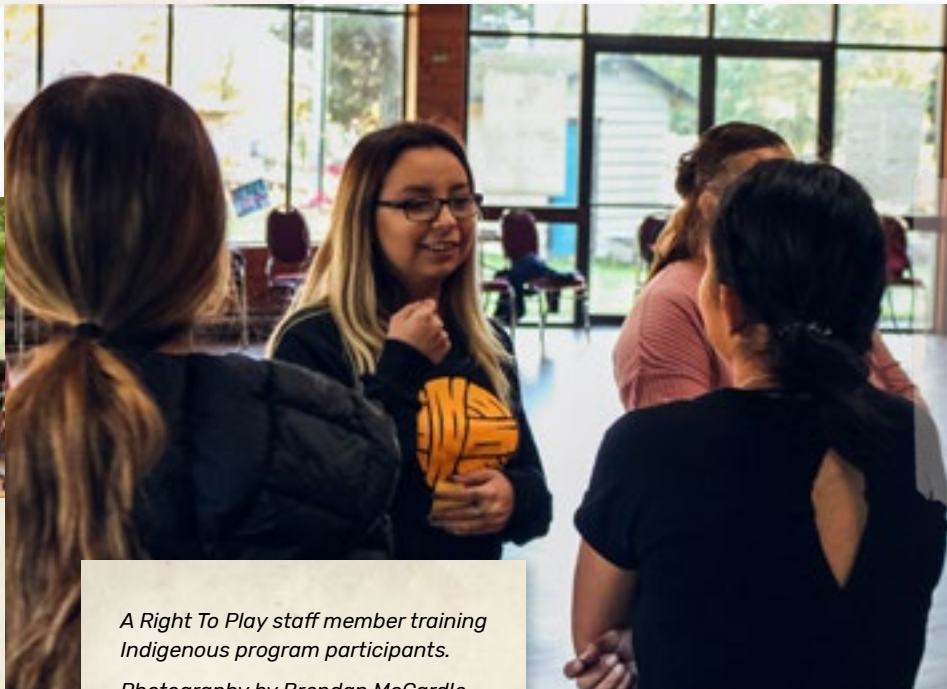


A group of children attend a literacy club supported by the GREAT program.

Photography by the Mozambique Country Office.

Future Skills Centre

Right To Play, alongside Future Skills Centre, Toronto Metropolitan University's Chang School of Continuing Education (formerly Ryerson University), and Toronto Metropolitan University's School of Child and Youth Care, have created a certificate program to address systemic challenges to employment faced by Indigenous youth workers in Canada. Taught entirely through an Indigenous lens, this four-course program enables Indigenous community workers to upskill, make connections, and realize their career ambitions, all while continuing to work in their communities. The first cohort of 25 individuals is expected to complete the course in December 2022, while there is renewed funding for a secondary cohort to begin in 2023.



A Right To Play staff member training Indigenous program participants.

Photography by Brendan McCardle.

National Bank

National Bank has been a Right To Play partner since 2013, supporting The Heroes Gala as well as Right To Play's Indigenous Programs across Canada. In 2021, National Bank renewed their commitment and their generous donation which will go towards The 2022 Heroes Gala as well as Right To Play's Indigenous Programs, specifically Youth Leadership. National Bank's commitment to Indigenous Programs will ensure more Indigenous children and youth will develop financial literacy skills as well as build capacity for Community Mentors across Canada.



A group of Indigenous youth engaging in play-based learning through the PLAY program.

Photography by Jamie MacDonald.

The Government of Canada

Canadian Heritage's Sport Support Program has enabled Right To Play to pilot a program to improve access to local, traditional, and land-based sport programming for Indigenous youth in two Ontario communities. The pilot aims to reduce barriers to participation through land-based and low-resource requirements, strengthen cultural connections to Indigenous identity, and improve holistic health and well-being outcomes. By creating sport environments that are quality, traditional, and land-based, Indigenous youth will have more opportunities for positive experience in sport and greater likelihood of continue sport participation later in life.

In Beausoleil, youth learn the science behind water sampling through Reach Ahead, a land-based program.

Photography by the Indigenous Programs team.



GLOBAL LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

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

Johann Olav Koss (Chair)
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Future Skills Centre

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We thank the following funders who contributed CAD \$10,000 - \$24,999 to Right To Play between January 1, 2021 and December 31, 2021.

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D Dream Unlimited Foundation	M M.E.H. Foundation Kate McGilvray & David Pathe Susan McIsaac	V Susan Vardon & Kevin White
E Andrew Edgell & Wendy Chong		

AMBASSADORS

Thank you to all the Ambassadors who supported and amplified our work in 2021.

Nathan Adrian, Swimming, United States
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
Billy Bridges, Sledge Hockey, Canada
Marco Büchel, Alpine Skiing, Switzerland
Anastasia Bucsis, Speed Skating, Canada
Dario Cologna, Cross-Country Skiing, Switzerland
Eva De Goede, Field Hockey, 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
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Lauritz Schoof, Rowing, Germany
Alex & Maia Shibutani, Ice Dancing, United States
Pascal Siakam, Basketball, Cameroon
Birgit Skarstein, Rowing, Cross-Country, Norway
Sami Jo Small, Ice Hockey, Canada
Fanny Smith, Ski Cross, Switzerland
Lauren Stam, Field Hockey, The Netherlands
Jeroen Stekelenburg, Sports Journalist, The Netherlands
Johannes Thingnes Bo, Biathlon, Norway
Thijs Van Dam, Field Hockey, The Netherlands
Tessa Veldhuis, Rugby, TV Host, The Netherlands
Anouk Vergé-Dépré, Beach Volleyball, Switzerland
Anouk Vetter, Athletics, The Netherlands
Sarah Wells, Track & Field, Canada
Hayley Wickenheiser, Ice Hockey, Canada
Erica Wiebe, Wrestling, Canada
Mats Zuccarello, Ice Hockey, Norway

SELECT 2021 PARTNERS

We are deeply thankful to the following global partners who showed significant commitment to Right To Play in 2021 by generously providing funding, supporting program implementation, and amplifying awareness of the impact of our work at a global level.



GLOBAL CONSOLIDATED FINANCIALS

For the year ended December 31, 2021

	2021	2020
	\$	\$
Assets		
Current assets		
Cash	38,489,497	35,336,286
Contributions receivable	5,441,000	3,218,883
Harmonized Sales Tax receivable	171,277	128,636
Prepaid and other expenses	1,227,976	1,229,921
	45,329,750	39,913,726
Capital assets	554,421	549,722
	45,884,171	40,463,448
Liabilities		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	4,649,590	4,332,554
Deferred contributions	24,963,901	22,431,841
Deferred lease inducement	35,756	33,133
	29,649,247	26,797,528
Long-term		
Deferred lease inducement	268,749	176,712
Deferred capital contributions	587,159	816,902
	30,505,155	27,791,142
Net assets		
Invested in capital assets	308,796	74,354
Internally restricted net assets	4,155,782	4,155,782
Unrestricted	10,914,438	8,442,170
	15,379,016	12,672,306
	45,884,171	40,463,448
Revenue		
Restricted	38,679,980	32,687,934
Unrestricted	13,917,991	13,704,956
Government subsidies	1,775,536	2,846,275
Total Revenue	54,373,507	49,239,165
Expenses		
Program expenses		
Program implementation	42,202,904	37,207,734
Public awareness and education	1,669,974	1,735,448
Total program expenses	43,872,878	38,943,182
Non-program expenses		
Administrative	4,120,203	2,240,988
Fund raising	3,673,716	4,444,106
Total non-program expenses	7,793,919	6,685,094
Total expenses	51,666,797	45,628,276
Excess of revenue over expenses	2,706,710	3,610,889

Visit our website to see a full audited report of Right To Play International's 2021 Financials, including notes that are an integral part of these consolidated financial statements.

See our full audited financials

BOARDS OF DIRECTORS

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