



RIGHT TO PLAY
PROTECT. EDUCATE. EMPOWER.

Impact of the TOGETHER Project

Program Description

The Towards Gender-Responsive and Empowering Education for Refugee Girls and Boys in the West Bank and Gaza (TOGETHER) project supports schools to create inclusive learning environments to help more than 123,000 children learn and thrive. Through the project, we are removing barriers to education for refugee children, especially girls. We are also building teacher capacity to create safe, supportive learning environments and to empower children with life skills that support conflict resolution, social cohesion, and psychosocial well-being.

The TOGETHER project launched in 2019 and will run until 2024. By the project's mid-point, project staff had trained 943 teachers, 567 counsellors, and 356 physical education teachers in 370 schools in the Palestinian Territories.

Context

Children in the Palestinian Territories face many challenges. The impact of precarious living conditions, violence, and displacement affects their mental and physical health and their sense of agency and hope. In recent years, school closures due to COVID-19 and teacher strikes have limited access to education, leading to learning loss and children being cut off from the protective space classrooms provide.

Right To Play supports children to access play-based education and psychosocial support so they can learn, develop, and thrive.

KEY RESULTS

- 1 Improved psychosocial well-being**
94% of school counsellors support children's well-being through play-based psychosocial support sessions, compared to 22% of counsellors at the project's start. 55% of physical education teachers are using play in psychosocial support activities, compared to 16% at the project's start. 28% of children feel they can better cope with challenges, compared to 14% of children at the project's start.
- 2 Greater social connectedness**
50% of children feel they can create positive relationships with their peers, compared to 31% at the project's start. 38% of children can better express and manage their feelings, compared to 20% at the project's start.
- 3 Safer learning environments**
In 58% of classrooms at partner schools, children felt safe and supported in their learning environment, compared to 32% of classrooms at the project's start. 61% of children have positive feelings toward their teacher, compared to 47% at the start.
- 4 Lessons are gender-responsive**
62% of teachers ensure the meaningful participation of girls in their lessons, compared to 20% at the project's start.

LESSONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1** Education supervisors play a valuable role in supporting teachers to apply the play-based learning approach, but they are over-stretched across schools. To leverage their role, supervisors could continue mentoring teachers through remote check-ins.
- 2** All partner schools should hold regular parent meetings because they have been an effective channel to challenge harmful gender norms and promote the schools' gender-based violence referral system.
- 3** Teachers in single-sex schools would benefit from training on how to adapt gender-responsive learning in classes made up of all boys or all girls.
- 4** Signage in classrooms and common spaces that reinforce understanding of gender-responsive playful learning, as well as project monitoring and classroom observations, could support teachers in integrating the approach and contributing to gender equality.



Getting in the Game: Ahmad's Story

When Ahmad was a baby, he survived birth asphyxia, which left him with long-term physical impacts. Growing up using a wheelchair, Ahmad often felt isolated, ignored, and self-conscious. Those feelings were most acute during physical education (PE) classes. His teachers weren't sure how to make their activities more inclusive so that he could participate.

Ahmad's PE teacher, Mohammad, attended Right To Play training sessions on how to respond to inclusion challenges and adapt games and activities to reduce barriers to participation. Now, he's more thoughtful about making sure Ahmad can participate alongside his classmates. For example, instead of using a full-size net during basketball exercises, he encourages the children, including Ahmad, to take turns holding up a hula hoop that they practice shooting at.

Ahmad started feeling more confident and began to socialize with his classmates without feeling awkward or uncomfortable. He even referees the class's football games. Ahmad dreams of becoming a teacher one day and helping to change the way that children with disabilities are perceived.

Over five years, the TOGETHER project will help more than 123,000 children to rise above adversity and access quality education.



In partnership with
Canada