

2009

RWANDA

Play to Learn: Basic Education through Sport and Play for Children in West and Francophone Africa

PROJECT SNAPSHOT:

Project Start Date: 2003 in Kigali, 2007 Gisenyi

Active Locations: Kigali and Rubavu district

Proposed Primary Beneficiary Reach: 54,390 at risk children and young people in Kigali and Rubavu districts

Resources Used: *Red Ball Child Play and Live Safe Play Safe*)

Type of Intervention: Implementation through partner organizations: primary and secondary schools, centres for street children, orphanages and community-based young people-centered organizations

	2008	2007	2006
Active Leaders	625	492	145
Leaders Trained	1,041	783	
Child Reach	50,141	32,748	4,092
Play Days Held	4	3	
Participation in Play Days	6,573	3,084	
Rehabilitated Spaces	1 play space; 2 classrooms	1 play space	
Female Participation	48 %	45 %	

HISTORY OF RIGHT TO PLAY INVOLVEMENT:

Right To Play began operating in Rwanda in 2003. The project was initiated in response to Right To Play's strategy to expand its reach and focus operations in Africa. The project has grown from a volunteer-run operation solely in Kigali, to a country-based office with a local staff of 20. In October of 2007, Right To Play launched an expansion of activities into Rubavu district. Moving away from working solely in Kigali and its surrounding areas, the opening of a second office in the town of Gisenyi marked not only the extension of Right To Play activities to new areas in the country, but also a trend in positive collaboration with local authorities in Rwanda. The true partnership between Right To Play Rwanda and the local authorities in Rubavu district is one of the most defining characteristics of the program and indicates a major point of success for the organization. Rwanda has experienced special challenges as a result of the events of 1994, and as such, games promoting peace-building and collaboration, found in the *Red Ball Child Play* resource are particularly important. Likewise, Rwanda is dealing with the devastation of the HIV and AIDS pandemic that is sweeping the continent, and the *Live Safe Play Safe* resource is used in promoting understanding and preventing the spread of the virus among children and young people.

Kigali and Rubavu District, RWANDA

PLAY TO LEARN: BASIC EDUCATION THROUGH SPORT AND PLAY FOR CHILDREN IN WEST AND FRANCOPHONE AFRICA

COUNTRY CONTEXT

Rwanda is the most densely populated country in Africa, with a population of 9.3 million¹, and is most often remembered for the civil war and genocide that took place in 1994. The country is landlocked, and consists mainly of rainforest and dormant volcanoes. Rwanda shares borders with the Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Tanzania and Uganda. The eastern part of the country shores Lake Kivu, which is territorially split between Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

While the HIV and AIDS rate in Rwanda is significantly lower than in other parts of Africa, Rwanda still remains severely affected by the pandemic with the adult national prevalence rate of 3.1 per cent. 2005 antenatal clinic surveys indicated that 4.1 per cent of pregnant women are HIV positive, of these 13 per cent are in Kigali. Research indicates that HIV prevalence in Rwanda is three times higher in urban areas than in rural areas, with the highest prevalence found in Kigali. There has been an expansion of services aimed at preventing HIV transmission from mother to child; however, these services are still only available in half of the health facilities in country.²



Rwanda's formal education system was devastated by the events of 1994 when a majority of the country's educators were lost and much of the school infrastructure destroyed. Combined with poverty and the challenges of reconstruction, the nation's basic education system is still rebuilding itself. Ongoing societal challenges include conflict resolution, care of orphans from the genocide and HIV and AIDS, gaps in healthy child development, the spread of HIV AND AIDS, and the inclusion of girls and other vulnerable children. The current education system does not have the capacity to adequately address these issues. An alarming 54 per cent of children enrolled in the primary education system do not go on to complete grade five.³

In an effort to address these gaps, the Ministry of Education has developed a nine-year plan to increase the level of the general knowledge and to improve and promote universal primary education. The Government of Rwanda has recognized the need to improve gender equality within the educational system. In this area, the Government has made a commitment to ensure that by 2015 all children, with a focus on girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality. This commitment also includes the development of HIV and AIDS prevention programs in schools (primary, secondary and post-secondary levels) that take into account gender differences that make girls more vulnerable to the disease.

The Government of Rwanda has recognized the need to balance *access, quality and relevance*, with a special emphasis on a curriculum that is outcome-oriented and offers the life skills and values necessary for holistic development. This calls for the introduction of innovative methods to make the existing materials more effective for learners.

¹ UNFPA State of the World's population 2008

² UNAIDS, Sub-Saharan Africa AIDS Epidemic Update, Regional Summary, 2007

³ Data, 2000-2004 www.UNICEF.org

RIGHT TO PLAY'S RESPONSE

Through *Play to Learn*, Right To Play will seek to address a number of key educational challenges, including school retention (in particular girls); quality of learning resources; gender equality and inclusion; and effective HIV and AIDS preventive education. In collaboration with partners and stakeholders at community, national and regional levels, Right To Play will strengthen basic education through the integration of sport and play into physical education and life skills programs. Right To Play will focus on building the skills of teachers and educators in effective pedagogical techniques and incorporating the sport for development programming. Concurrently, Right To Play will monitor, document and share results of successful program implementation in order to influence national young people, HIV and AIDS and education policies, and support the government in the implementation of these policies.

Implementing through primary and secondary schools, Right To Play programs will give teachers tools to increase classroom participation, engagement and regular attendance of students. Secondly, through the Live Safe Play Safe program, children and young people will receive important information about HIV and AIDS, learn how to prevent the spread of the virus, how to protect themselves, what to do if infected and how to treat others who may be infected or affected.

For 2009, the intended outcomes of the program are increased attendance at primary and secondary schools, promotion of regular participation in sport and play activities, increased life skills by children and young people, increased knowledge of HIV preventative methods on the part of teachers, Coaches, parents and children, inclusion of HIV and AIDS prevention education in formal and informal school programs. Reaching these goals will impact communities with a higher proportion of children attending school regularly, and therefore increasing their life opportunities, a decrease in the HIV infection rate and healthier and safer communities where children are participating in sport and play.

Play to Learn Program Goal: Contribute to the improvement of the quality of education (formal and non formal) and the balanced child development through the structured use of sport and play as an innovative and dynamic learning tool among children and young people in disadvantaged communities.

Play to Learn Program Objectives:

1. Enhance the quality of formal and non-formal basic education for girls and boys in Right To Play target communities.
2. Increase children and young people's awareness of preventive measures against HIV and AIDS through the use of sport and play.
3. Increase sensitization and awareness of importance of sport and play as a tool for learning at community and national level

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The cornerstone of Right To Play's methodology is to partner with local CBOs, NGOs, and national government ministries with a focus on children. These organizations and ministries are typically seeking to increase their toolkit and methodologies for effecting change by utilizing "sport for development and peace" programming. However they have a limited level of knowledge and skills on how to utilize or implement sport and play programs that can create positive impacts on basic education, HIV and AIDS, gender equality and peace building. They generally come equipped with strong assets, including local contextual knowledge, community acceptance, a track record of stability and a perceived sustainable future.

Individuals from these organizations are selected to be trained in the use and implementation of Right To Play's technical resources and training methodology. The purpose of the training is to acquire knowledge and develop facilitation skills to prepare them for implementation of the activities with children in and out of schools in target communities. These partner

organization staff members and volunteers then conduct regular weekly sport and play based activities for their cohort of children and young people. Regular monitoring, refresher training and support are provided by Right To Play's in-country staff.

Right to Play Rwanda applies its program through two main resources: *Red Ball Child Play* and *Live Safe Play Safe*. These program resources use sport and play activities as a means to actively engage children in learning the life skills and knowledge critical for their healthy development. These are significant resources, well into a hundred pages each that have been professionally designed, tested and developed by experts in life skills and basic education, HIV and AIDS and peace building. The resources provide a curriculum and lesson plans for incorporation by partner organizations into their regular activities.

The Red Ball Child Play Resource is based on games and activities that promote the holistic development of the child. Games are focused on five main areas: Red Mind Ball, which includes games that promote mental development, Blue Peace Ball, games that promote teamwork, collaboration and peace, Green Health Ball, games that teach children how to prevent and manage common health problems, Yellow Spirit Ball, games that promote positive self-esteem, and Black Body Ball, for good physical development. The Live Safe Play Safe resource is based on games and activities that teach children and young people about HIV AND AIDS. Through the games, children receive important information about how the HIV virus is transmitted, its effects on the body, prevention, and how to treat infected and affected individuals.

The curriculum in each of these resources is intended to be implemented through regular activities with a stable cohort of children on a weekly basis for roughly 40 minutes each week. The core of each weekly activity includes a sporting activity or play session that is designed to foster knowledge development in desired dimensions of change. To foster this learning from the specially designed sporting or play activity, a critical methodology called Reflect-Connect-Apply is embedded into each session. This involves an opening and closing discussion that takes place around each activity in which the key messages from the program resources are introduced and reinforced. Children are asked to share their experience during the activity, what this implies about a topic and how they will apply it in their lives. This technique promotes learning and behaviour change in the intended dimensions.

Another cornerstone of Right To Play Rwanda's program are play days. These special days, which allow children a particular day devoted to play, are also an opportunity to pass key messages relating to the theme of the day to children, their parents and community members. Right to Play Rwanda organizes play days on International Women's Day, Day of the African Child, World Peace Day and World AIDS Day.

KEY ACTIVITIES:

1. Life Skills Development (Holistic Child Development)

Leaders, Coaches and Right To Play staff members will receive core training in Right To Play resources: *Red Ball Child Play* and *Live Safe Play Safe*. Refresher trainings will be held to sustain a base of 983 Coaches and Leaders reaching approximately 54,390 children and young people. Implementation will be supported in 19 primary schools, 28 secondary schools and 10 community centers. In addition to trainings and refresher trainings, 9 Play Days and social mobilization events will be organized to promote community cohesion.

2. HIV AND AIDS Preventative Education

In order to raise awareness at the household and community level, Right To Play staff and Coach Trainers from partner organizations will participate in a workshop to gain knowledge of HIV and AIDS preventative education and reproductive health. A partnership will also be developed with the National HIV Network and Right To Play will engage and participate with member organizations. Athlete Ambassadors will also be used to facilitate community discussions on HIV and AIDS.

3. Inclusion: Gender Equality and Equity

Right To Play staff, partner staff and community Coaches and Leaders will be trained in gender issues and particularly the promotion of girls' participation in sport and in school. Community mobilization events like International Women's Day and Coach Network Meetings will be utilized to hold discussions on female empowerment and participation.

4. Inclusion: Child Protection/Rights and Vulnerable Children and Youth

Through participation in national child protection and child rights networks, Right To Play will increase its understanding of the national child protection referral system and inform Leaders in order to ensure the system is available for participating children. In addition to incorporating Right To Play's global child protection policy, training will be provided to Right To Play staff and partner staff in the principals of child protection and inclusion.

5. Sustainability (Institutional Capacity Development and Policy)

Right To Play's definition of sustainability centers on the capacity of individuals and partner organizations to independently deliver regular sport and play activities that have measurable development effects on children and their communities. In order to ensure sustainability, the organization emphasizes the institutional capacity-building of both Right To Play itself and its partner organizations through training and joint planning of activities.

In 2009, regular meetings with partners, schools and government ministries will continue as a means to share challenges, and lessons learned as well as review project progress. To ensure project sustainability, Right To Play will support Coaches, provide regular monitoring of activities, and evaluate and certify trained Coaches. In addition, Local Coach Network meetings, stakeholder visits and Coach Trainer trainings will be organized and support measures put in place to increase staff and community capacity to implement sport and play programs.

"Before I joined the Right To Play and Anti-AIDS activities I used to isolate due to my HIV status. I spent a long time with this bad attitude, thinking that by joining other people they would discover my status and discriminate against me... Due to this attitude of self rejection, I experience depression to the extent that I was about to drop out from school... Through games and other activities, I realized that there way of getting support from peers and especially those who are members of the Anti Aids club's. After some time that I decided to disclose my status to our coach, who was very supportive with advices on how to behave before my peers and on how I can live positively with HIV wherever I will be."

Told by Mutabazi Emmanuel, IFBK coach who has since succumb to illness

As a result, the following **OUTCOMES** will be achieved:

- Children demonstrate new life skills and adopt healthy practices as a result of ongoing / regular participation in Right To Play programme.
- Increased knowledge of teachers, Coaches, children of HIV and AIDS preventive methods and acceptance of people living with HIV and AIDS
- Inclusion of HIV and AIDS prevention and education in formal and non-formal school program
- More parents and community/opinion Leaders sensitized on girls' right/need to participate in sport and play activities in Right To Play target communities.
- Increased acceptance by boys/men of girls' participation in sport and play activities in Right To Play target communities.
- Right To Play Program demonstrates child protection from planning through implementation.
- More children, Coaches and communities are using child protection system of referral.
- Increased number of communities, Coaches teachers and children who have developed sense of ownership of the program
- Increased ability of Right To Play Country office to take decision-making lead for programming
- Increased recognition by the ministry of Youth and Sport and the Ministry of Education
- Inclusion of Right To Play modules in the National Physical Education Curriculum

BENEFICIARIES

Right To Play Rwanda works with pre-school, primary school, secondary and out of school children and young people in Kigali and Rubavu district. The Play To Learn program also reaches vulnerable groups of children and young people including street children. Right To Play Rwanda supports Teachers, partner organizations and volunteers to reach the targeted beneficiary group.

In 2009, Right To Play Mali plans to reach:

- **54,390 children and youth** (40 per cent female; 60 per cent male)
- **983** (60-70 per cent male; 30-40 per cent female) **Coaches, Leaders and Teachers**
- **47 Schools and 10 Community Centers:** 19 Primary and 28 Secondary Schools

PARTNERS

The Rwanda Guides Association: An implementing partner since 2007, the Rwanda Guides Association works with children and young people on Guides principles, human rights, economic access for women and girls, education and female empowerment. Right To Play trains and supports the Association's Leaders and Coaches to implement *Red Ball Child Play* activities with children aged from three to 12. Right To Play has chosen to partner with this Association with the aim of increasing female participation in regular activities.

The Sport for Peace Foundation: An implementing partner since 2005, the Sport for Peace Foundation implements cultural and sport activities, provides education in peace and reconciliation and supports scholarship opportunities for vulnerable children. Right To Play trains and supports staff who implement *Red Ball Child Play* and *Live Safe Play Safe* activities with children.

SOS Children's Villages: Right To Play has maintained a successful implementing partnership with SOS Children's Village since 2007. Right To Play trains primary school teachers who implement regular *Red Ball Child Play* and *Live Safe Play Safe* activities

Centres for Street Children: Right To Play has a long history in Rwanda partnering with Centres for Street Children. These centres provide counselling, professional training, family reintegration, formal education (primary and secondary school) and sport and play activities. Centres are based in Kigali in three districts, Gasabo (FIDESCO), Kicukiro (CEPAJ) and Nyarugenge (CARITAS).

Right To Play Rwanda also maintains strategic partnerships with important government Ministries such as the Ministry for Sport and Culture, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Youth and the Ministry for Gender and Family.

RECENT RESULTS

- An average participation of 25,860 (11,935) children and young people in regular programs during 2008
- Conducted 6 resource trainings for 194 new Coaches and 9 refresher trainings for 314 Coaches to sustain a base of 561 (308) active Coaches at the end of 2008
- Held 10 community mobilization and special events such as International Women's Day and Day of the African Child with a combined participation of 15,359 (6,502) children and young people.

- The promotion of female inclusion was demonstrated by an average female active coach rate of 55 per cent and female child participation rate of 46 per cent
- **Program expansion:** The expansion of the program to Rubavu was in part the result of a request on the part of local authorities for Right To Play programs in their district. Local authorities have been highly engaged in Right To Play programs since 2007, and this critical support is one of the reasons for the program's success. At the end of 2008, there were 17,833 children participating in Right To Play activities in Rubavu through ten implementing local partners.
- **Collaboration:** Involvement of local authorities involved in the organization and implementation of the Community Group Network, a Right To Play initiated association of like-minded NGOs focused on child protection and the promotion of child rights. Local authorities helped with the establishment of the network and actively participate regularly in meetings, lending accountability and influencing its work.
- **Sustainability:** In Rubavu, local authorities have been involved in establishing new partnerships and sustaining positive momentum. The extent of their belief in the program is demonstrated by the fact that local authorities often co-sign collaboration agreements between Right To Play and local partners, further ensuring that these partners will be active in implementing sport and play programs for local children and young people.
- **Classroom Rehabilitation:** Right To Play recognizes that while adults require tools and knowledge to implement play programs, a safe environment is also a key ingredient for improving the quality of child education. To this end, the Gisenyi office initiated the rehabilitation of class rooms at Bihe primary school. This work has been supported by the local authorities, with the involvement of the Mayor, District Director of Education, Head of Infrastructure Development and the President of the Local Parents' Committee. Stakeholders were involved in the rehabilitation process, the call for proposals, the selection of contractors and establishment of a monitoring committee.

PHOTOS



Coach at CPAJ leads activities